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Aspects of Koinonia: Developing an ecclesiological approach to music in contemporary Christian worship

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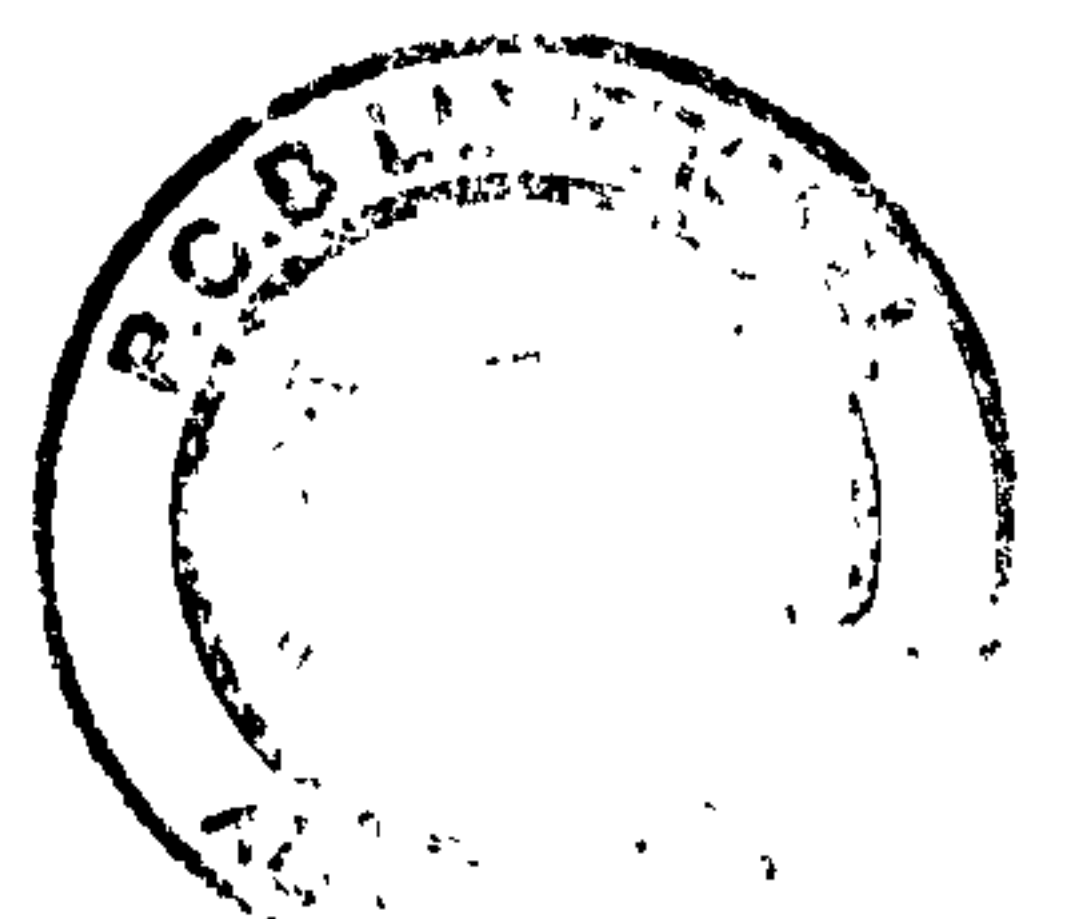
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ASPECTS OF *KOINONIA*:
DEVELOPING AN
ECCLESIOLOGICAL APPROACH
TO MUSIC IN CONTEMPORARY
CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Douglas Galbraith

*Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the
degree of Ph.D.*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis takes the form of an exploration and discourse on *koinonia* (a New Testament concept meaning ‘communion’ used by St Paul in his discussions of the nature of the church) and its potential application to the shaping of a better understanding of music for worship and its use in liturgical worship. It falls into three parts. While the investigation is relevant and applicable to the Western Church in general, the thesis relates specifically to the locale, culture and religious traditions of Scotland.

Part One (chapters 2-5) begins with a consideration of recent debate on liturgy and music, taking as its starting point the outcomes of the 1997 congress of Societas Liturgica on that theme. This is followed (chapter 3) by a review of recent theological writings about music and music in worship, and (chapter 4) a consideration of five dimensions of *koinonia* derived in particular from reports of recent ecumenical dialogue and a related ecclesiological model (following on from Gordon Lathrop) as the basis for an alternative mode for discourse on music in worship with greater potential for application and implementation in the local church. This part ends with a summary overview of selected branches of musicology as resources to enhance theological discussion of liturgical music.

Part Two consists of just one long chapter (chapter 6). Here the findings from wider theological discourse on music and the insights gained from aspects of musicology are used to inform the investigation of each of the five dimensions of *koinonia* as the basis for the evaluation of liturgical music within an ecclesiological model: eucharistic

community, relational community, community growing into maturity in Christ, diaconal community, diverse community.

Part Three is more applied. Three contrasting case studies are explored (chapter 7) for signs of *koinonia* that might illuminate the preparation of a usable resource derived from the findings of Part Two. Each is directly related to the writer's own experience: the preparation of the third and fourth editions of the Scottish-produced *Church Hymnary*; the Wild Goose Worship Group of the Iona Community; the Craigmillar Festival. As evidence of current practice and attitudes, two enquiries into local churches are reported (chapter 8). The final chapter offers an outline for a discourse based on the findings of the thesis so far in a form that might be used in a local church. Taking each of the five dimensions of *koinonia*, this addresses both the strengthening of that church and its individual members through the discussion of music, and the better understanding of the evaluation and use of music in worship through the exploration of faith and the nature of church.

PREFACE

This thesis represents more than simply the opportunity for the study of a particular topic, albeit one that is of some importance at the present juncture. It also has allowed me to reflect on a career of some fifty years working, in the context of broader duties in church and academy, in church music.

Within this there has been a welcome variety of situation and circumstance: local organist and choirmaster, a community arts project, serving the Royal School of Church Music in both Queensland and Scotland, concert reviewing, hymn book editing, composing for church, establishing and editing two magazines about church music, devising and delivering music courses for students for the ministry, tutoring in church music courses in Bangor and St Andrews universities, oversight of the music and worship policies and programmes of the Church of Scotland.

Common to most of these was that in various different ways choices had to be made, in the main directed more by pragmatism than principle. What this study has afforded is the chance to reflect more carefully about these experiences as well as the general picture in the church, and I am greatly appreciative of the opportunity afforded by the Schools of Music and Religious Studies of Bangor University to dwell on these matters during the last few years.

It was my good fortune to have Professor John Harper as the main supervisor of this work in that his own writing and experience straddles the musical, the liturgical and the day-to-day reality of the local church. I was also glad to have in Dr. Robert Pope, as a second – theological - supervisor, someone who in addition to his academic role is a practising minister in a denomination related to my own.

Douglas Galbraith

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The demands made by Christian ritual music spring from the ultimate goal of this music, which is to make manifest and make real a new humanity in the risen Jesus Christ. Its truth, worth, and grace are not only measured by its capacity to arouse active participation, nor by its aesthetic cultural value, nor by its popular success, but because it allows believers to cry out the Kyrie eleisons of the oppressed, to sing the Alleluias of those restored to life, and to uphold the Maranatha of the faithful in the hope of the coming of the Kingdom.

Music and Liturgy, Universa Laus

INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to establish a new approach to the perception and evaluation of music in worship. It is based on ecclesiology, and specifically on the concept of *koinonia*. *Koinonia* is a familiar Greek term within Christian theology, but not in the musical and musicological worlds of some potential readers of this thesis. First adopted in English theological writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, its origins are found in the writings of St Paul, and it is concisely defined as ‘Christian fellowship or communion, either with God or, more commonly, with fellow Christians’ (*Oxford English Dictionary*). As that definition demonstrates, it has two dimensions: a fellowship in communion with God through the Holy Spirit shared by Christians (‘The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship [*koinonia*] of the Holy Spirit, be with you all’, 2 Corinthians 13.14), and the human fellowship of a Christian community, most often identified as a church. The two dimensions of *koinonia* are inseparable. Thus, the Greek word *ekklesia* which literally means ‘assembly’ is imbued with the theological and the spiritual in its Christian application as the fellowship which is ‘church’. This thesis therefore explores aspects of *koinonia* in the understanding of music – that shared activity (whether as player, singer or hearer) often used in Christian gathering for worship – as a dimension of the expression and formation of church, in other words as a dimension of the study of church: ecclesiology.

The work falls into three parts. The first part (chapters 2 to 5) sets out the foundations of the study; the second part (chapter 6) forms the kernel of the thesis in applying *koinonia* to music in Christian worship; the third part (chapters 7 to 9) explores the implications of that thesis in the understanding and manifestation of three case studies based on past experience, reviews its application in a consideration of two churches in the present, and finally puts forward a model for implementation in a local church.

The thesis, therefore, straddles the theological and the musicological. Within those disciplines it spans both the practical and the applied as well as the theoretical and conceptual; it also migrates into specialist sub-branches of those disciplines. In an age

of almost micro-specialism the thesis therefore risks treading on thin ice. It cannot encapsulate the most recent thinking in every area, nor give each area due weight on its own merits. There has to be a measure of selectivity, and in some cases that risks emphasis on specific work or over-simplification through summary.

There are few scholars who are equally proficient as both theologian and musicologist. There are musically-informed theologians, and theologically-aware musicologists. Even those with expertise and credentials in both areas have individual characteristics. For instance, Jeremy Begbie, a professional musician and theologian, whose writings are widely respected by both musicians and theologians, comes from a specific tradition of the Church of England, and his writing about theology is much influenced by contemporary musicological thinking (especially critical musicology). Thus, there is a particular stance taken in his writing across the two disciplines. Some of the most profound observations about music and theology have come from composers like James MacMillan, or from practitioners with a strong bias to social action and justice like John L. Bell.

In many ways it is as a practitioner – as ordained minister and professional musician – that I approach this thesis, and as someone most recently engaged in the national secretariat of the Church of Scotland, specifically in the work of the Office for Worship and Doctrine (which also encompasses the ordering of church buildings for worship). Thus, this thesis is not written from the perspective of pure and detached intellectual enquiry but is rooted in praxis, and any positive outcomes from it should be made manifest in praxis.

Debate and dispute about the nature and place of music in Christian worship has prevailed since the early Christian centuries, often influenced by the broad philosophical thinking of the time and the place and not just by theology. Such discourse has often been addressed specifically to the musical treatment of text. This thesis is not directed to the study of musical setting of text. However, it is impossible to separate text from music, especially in a religion which places so much weight on the authority of the Bible. (One key Scriptural text – the Gospel of St. John – begins by expressing God as *logos*, the Word who became flesh.) Nevertheless, this thesis

endeavours to focus on the operation of music – with or without text – in worship, rather than the expression of worship embodied in text through musical rendering.

This separation of text from music was an approach adopted by the 1997 congress of the international society for those working in the area of liturgy, *Societas Liturgica*, held that year in Turku, Finland – the first time the society had addressed a musical topic, and therefore in its way a landmark gathering.¹ The proceedings of that conference, therefore, form a natural starting point for this investigation. In reviewing the outcomes of the conference, it is apparent that there is a problem. These are the writings of intelligent, middle-class (and mostly middle-aged) people. For the most part, they have experienced the transformation of contemporary worship (in the Roman Catholic Church what has almost been a revolution), and mostly come from social groups which value culture, quality and order. Therefore, their discussion of popular culture is laden with value judgements about its merit and worth.

The Turku delegates also presume much, because this was a conference of *cognoscenti*. This thesis also risks similar presumptions of a specific and relatively narrow readership. In recognising that it may perhaps be read by those with either greater theological or greater musical background, it will include expository and explanatory passages that may seem unnecessary for those with knowledge in that field.

The theme chosen for the Turku congress, ‘Liturgy and Music’, was a response to an intensification of study and reflection on issues of music in contemporary worship which had been increasing over the previous forty years as the principal denominations of the Christian church had addressed the reform of their worship, the challenge of being church in an increasingly post-Christian world in the advanced West, and the consequent tension of contrasting values between sacred and secular and contrasting cultures. While this mirrors to a certain extent the position of the Christian community as a minority in the early centuries before its adoption as the religion of the Roman Empire, the present trends of decline and even of marginalisation (especially in Europe) are distinct. The vestiges of Christian culture

¹ The composition of this Society is outlined below, page 9.

are still prevalent – not least in the built environment – but church attendance is generally a minority activity (again especially in Europe). That contraction has been accompanied by an expansion of the variety of styles of worship and music for worship as churches seek ‘fresh expressions’² which will have greater appeal for contemporaries. There has also occurred a re-evaluation of traditions as different branches of the church have opened up their practices to each other, seeking in greater unity a strengthening of their witness.

The resulting experiments and changes in practice have made demands on the ordinary people of the local churches, often causing discomfort and sometimes alienation. This enquiry therefore also has a pastoral dimension. Frank Burch Brown’s remark that ‘few things at present create more persistent conflict within Christian congregations than differences over worship style, music and media (especially ‘contemporary’ versus ‘traditional’)³ is widely supported. John D. Witvliet reports a loss of ‘theological and pastoral equilibrium’,⁴ while Nicholas Wolterstorff notes, ‘We are dealing with passions. I have yet to come across a church member for whom the music of the church is a matter of sheer indifference.’⁵ It is common in American literature to speak of ‘worship wars’,⁶ with examples given of the displacement of traditional musicians by technology or by styles of music they neither like nor can produce,⁷ causing ‘total breakdown’ and ‘wide chasms’ between different positions,⁸ with a ‘growing cleavage between traditionalists and modernists’,⁹ resulting often in

² The title given to a movement across the churches by which new formations of church are encouraged to emerge from within contemporary culture.

³ Frank Burch Brown, *Good Taste, Bad Taste and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), chapter 1.

⁴ John D. Witvliet, ‘The Virtue of Liturgical Discernment’, in Charlotte Kroeker, ed., *Music in Christian Worship* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2005), 88. Witvliet outlines several typical situations of change, and the resulting damage to relationships between clergy, congregations, and musicians.

⁵ Nicholas P. Wolterstorff, ‘Thinking About Church Music’, in Charlotte Kroeker, *Music in Christian Worship*, 5.

⁶ For example, Troeger, Jansen, Witvliet, the latter making it clear, for example, that his contribution is not to be seen as supplying ‘more ammunition for worship wars’.

⁷ For example, Don E. Saliers, ‘Liturgical Music and Electronic Technology: Contemporary Soundings’, *Studia Liturgica* Vol.28 (1998), No.2, 166ff.

⁸ Robin Sheldon, ed., *In Spirit and Truth* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1989), Preface.

⁹ Lionel Dakers in Sheldon, ed. *In Spirit and Truth*, 75. This assessment of the British situation is borne out by occasional news stories of local musical conflict, such as that in the *Guardian*, 9th March 2007, headed ‘Tears and Accusations as Rector Suspends Choir’.

the division of congregations along liturgical lines in two Sunday morning services.¹⁰ Most of these observations come from North America, but Europe also experiences these dilemmas. The British writer Jeremy Begbie, in his recent book *Resounding Truth*, remarks that none of his readers will need to be reminded that ‘fights over music can tear a church apart quicker than almost anything else’.¹¹

These writers represent Protestant denominations. From the Roman Catholic Church, Mgr. Francis Mannion notes ‘an enormous polarisation with few in the middle ground’ and observes that ‘the best musicians and composers ... are deeply alienated’.¹² For the Catholic Church, the debate is as much about changes in liturgical practice as about music, with criticism of ‘structures and forms that reverse the visionary work generated by the Second Vatican Council’.¹³ At Turku,¹⁴ Virgil Funk, then President of the (RC) National Association of Pastoral Musicians in the USA, summed up the cost to his church, as he sees it, of the widespread experimentation in the wake of the Council: ‘We in the United States have paid a great price for the freedom of experimentation with secular music. We have gone down some blind alleys. We have made some mistakes. So far, the rewards for this freedom are not overwhelming’.¹⁵

Various solutions and approaches are advocated in these writings, but with these is a growing consensus that a way must be found to carry this debate beyond considerations of musical style and idiom, beyond personal taste and professional (musical or liturgical) diktat, and that this should be in the development of theological criteria. This thesis offers to contribute to this task by proposing an approach through ecclesiology, the study of the nature and purpose of the church, on the grounds that its music and worship is not a function or compartment of the church but its most central

¹⁰ Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, ‘A Decade of Christian Song: Observations on Recent Hymnals and Songbooks’, *Studia Liturgica*, Vol. 31 ((2001), No.2, 193.

¹¹ Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (London: SPCK, 2008), 23.

¹² Francis Mannion, ‘The Need for an Adequate Liturgical Musicology’, *Worship*, Vol. 64 (1990), 78-81.

¹³ Tucker, ‘A Decade of Christian Song’, 193.

¹⁴ The 1997 congress of Societas Liturgica, referred to above.

¹⁵ Virgil C. Funk, ‘Secular Music in the Liturgy? Are There any Rules?’, *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No.2, 192.

expression. It further proposes that, out of many ecclesiological projects, attention should be paid to the particular configuration of ecclesiology that has emerged in ecumenical dialogue over recent decades, as churches and groups of churches have sought common ground and shared what is distinctive in their traditions.

These dialogues, and accompanying ‘faith and order’ studies under the aegis of the World Council of Churches, have been based both in Scripture and Tradition and in the interaction between them. Since the church is not a human construct and therefore beyond definition, references in the Bible are in the form of images, capable of elasticity of meaning and significance. Of the many images of the church in the New Testament, that of *koinonia*, with its Latin equivalent *communio*, most often translated as ‘communion’, has been the one appealed to most in ecumenical dialogue. By attending to the contexts in which it is used in (principally) Pauline writings, it has been possible to isolate textures and modes of ‘being church’ and thus to enable different denominations to test their own faithfulness to these ideals and to consider how they might move closer to the fullness of the communion in Christ that the image encapsulates. The term is of interest also in that it is often explored through liturgical practice, as participants in dialogue are led in the study and practice of worship to a deeper perception of the mystery that is the church.

The study thus seeks through this image a set of criteria which – just as ecumenical debate seeks the fullest expression of the church – might enable those who write, choose or make the music of the liturgy (and perhaps also the music which accompanies other aspects of the life of the church) to come to a fuller understanding of what qualities are to be sought and how these are to be identified.

In chapter 4, a survey is made of the ecumenical dialogue, and its results are codified into five characteristics that are agreed to be true of the church. Since theological and musical language cannot be translated directly in terms of each other, a partnership is then sought with musicology (chapter 5) – a discipline enabling the same critical reflection on music as ecclesiology provides for the church – in the hope of finding elements of interchange between the two modes of expression. Prior to this, the ground is prepared by clarifying the terms of the discussion as it is conducted in all branches of the church, by individual writers and by church pronouncements and

exploratory conferences (chapter 2), and by reviewing and assessing other possible theological approaches (chapter 3).

These enquiries are brought together in chapter 6, the kernel of the thesis, which attempts to marry theological insight with musical practice, allowing each characteristic of *koinonia* to illuminate the nature of liturgical music in its own way (inevitably there is overlap, given that the image is one), and to comment on the practice of the musicians and on the structures which support the music of the church. It is understood that this project applies to music of any idiom or genre and to whatever culture or circumstance within which the church takes shape.

As stated at the outset, this thesis seeks outcomes in praxis. Part 3 therefore, in two different ways, sets out to test the conjunction proposed between theology and music. Chapter 7 examines three working examples known to the writer, in two of which he was directly involved, each representing a point of development in the use of church-related music. In these, aspects of *koinonia* are identified, and the question is asked what the presence or absence of its five dimensions might reveal about how fully expressive each is of the church. One of these examples is different from the other two in that it was initiated from outwith the church and was not intended as an expression of church (the Craigmillar Festival Society). What interests this study, however, is that this secular initiative bears many marks of the church and might be seen as commenting on the faithfulness of the church to its own nature and purpose. The second possible practical outcome of the thesis is the application of its conclusions in the local church, particularly when there is need of reconciliation between differing views. Chapter 8 ‘listens to the conversation’¹⁶ in two congregations before offering (chapter 9) some raw material, based on the findings of chapter 6, which might be developed into a resource for local use.

¹⁶ Erik Routley’s requirement for the church musician; see below, page 194.

PART ONE

Chapters 2 - 5

2

ANALYSES AND PROPOSALS

The writings and reports that are surveyed in this chapter generally indicate a level of concern about the condition of church music today. Book titles like *Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste*,¹ *Weary and Ill at Ease*,² *Good Taste, Bad Taste and Christian Taste*,³ *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*,⁴ or articles such as 'It May be Refreshing, but Is It Reformed?',⁵ suggest that for a significant number of people church music is seen as being in crisis. At the same time, the situation has given rise to rich strands of reflection and a quality of exchange between churches not known before. This chapter essays an account of the current situation, under the following headings:

1. The Turku Congress of Societas Liturgica, 1997
2. The Liturgical Movement
3. Reformed, Lutheran, and United Churches
 - 3.1 The Scottish Churches' Music Consultation (Dunblane)
 - 3.2 Individual authors
4. The Anglican Communion
 - 4.1 *In Tune with Heaven*
 - 4.2 The Royal School of Church Music
 - 4.3 Individual authors
5. The Roman Catholic Church
 - 5.1 Vatican documents
 - 5.2 Other Catholic reports
 - 5.3 Individual authors
6. Directions for further proposals

A chronological starting point would be hard to find, given that so many of the changes being experienced today are in some way caused by the recoveries and insights that have

¹ Thomas Day, *Why Catholics Can't Sing: the Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste* (Crossroads, 1991).

² Robin Rees, *Weary and Ill at Ease: A Survey of Clergy and Organists* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1993).

³ Frank Burch Brown, *Good Taste, Bad Taste and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁴ Marva Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: a Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

⁵ D.G. Hart, 'It May Be Refreshing, But Is It Reformed?', *Calvin Theological Journal* 32, no.2 (November 1997), 407-22.

emerged during the century-long Liturgical Movement and in response to cultural developments of recent decades. The sixteenth international congress of *Societas Liturgica*, its theme 'Liturgy and Music', begins the narrative both because of its timing and because of the nature of its membership. In respect of timing, it came, in 1997, after the publication of the major documents on music arising out of the Second Vatican Council,⁶ matched by equivalent discussion in other denominations, and at the end of a significant period of revision of denominational liturgical books and hymn collections. With regard to membership, this is drawn from church and academy, represents both East and West, and consists of those involved in teaching and research as much as those who prepare liturgies for Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic branches of the church. Many present had also been participants in the consultations and bodies which had produced the reports referred to. Thus the congress drew together current research and liturgical revision while clarifying new subjects and directions. One such was the call, in the closing session in which the work of the congress was reviewed, for a more sustained search for a theological critique of liturgical music than the congress had been able to achieve.

In this chapter, papers delivered at the congress are scrutinised to identify the most common themes and approaches. Thereafter, following a sketch of the Liturgical Movement, to which all parts of the church are indebted, contributions from within Reformed, Anglican and Catholic branches of the church are reported in turn.⁷ The chapter ends by drawing out two strands which have been common to the experience of all churches.⁸

⁶ The last of these, the Snowbird Statement, had been published in November 1995. Two of the bodies which produced these reports have, however, since issued further reports, the American Catholic Bishops and *Universa Laus*. These are reviewed below, pages 63 and 64.

⁷ There is occasional overlap between denominations in respect of individual writers when it is more important to complete a theme or point.

⁸ Notable omissions from this scheme include charismatic and African-American churches. Concentration has been on families of churches which have cohesive structures of reflection giving rise to statements and reports. However, there is now some emerging work on the traditions mentioned. See James H.S. Steven, *Worship in the Spirit: Charismatic Worship in the Church of England* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2002) and Mary McGann, *Exploring Music as Worship and Theology: Research in Liturgical Practice* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002) (based on her own research in an African-American congregation). Of interest also is John Lampard, 'The Empire Strikes Back: the Impact of Ghanaian Methodism on Methodist Worship in London', *Anaphora*, Vol.3, Part 2 (December 2009), 23ff.

1. THE TURKU CONGRESS 1997

The biennial congresses of *Societas Liturgica* take as their themes topics which are seen to be of greatest import ecumenically and academically at a given time. That church music should have been the focus for this congress was evidence of a recent increase in research, of a considerable expansion of composition, and of a concern in most churches about liturgical practice. The pattern of the congress consisted of some eleven main papers, twenty-three case studies selected from a list submitted, and seventeen ‘short communications’ offered by members, one of which the present researcher contributed and from which, in a sense, this study has grown.

1.1 Presidential address: Irmgard Pahl⁹

Preparing the ground for the principal papers, the President, Professor Irmgard Pahl, called at the outset for more musicological enquiry into how music works on people and the level within them to which it speaks. There was a necessity also for ‘critical criteria of a qualitative nature’, not only for the testing of the suitability of modern songs for liturgical use but to address the phenomenon of music in society at large, where the music that surrounds us ‘is not necessarily identical with the deepest feelings of people, with what they long for, with what leads them to themselves and to each other, and with what provides them with genuine, meaning-giving fulfilment’.¹⁰ In terms of liturgical music, how was it possible, as human beings searched for and encountered God, for the ineffable to take on acoustical form? How was our relationship with God to be expressed today? What criteria could be established to identify what music was ‘true art’, that enabled the ‘active participation of the faithful’, that did not contradict ‘the dignity, the seriousness, and the sanctity of the liturgy’, as required by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution on the Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council?¹¹

⁹ Irmgard Pahl, ‘Music and Liturgical Celebration: Presidential Address’, *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No. 1, 1-13, translated from the German by Robert J. Daly, SJ.

¹⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹¹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1964), para. 112. Promulgated by the Second Vatican Council. In International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1982), nos. 1-131, pp.4-27. Also http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html.

For Pahl, a Roman Catholic, at least part of the answer was to be found by studying the liturgy itself and deriving from this the necessary characteristics of its music. These were:

1. Music is one with the *Word of God* and must express the whole of its truth.
2. Music expresses the *doxological* character of the liturgy.
3. Music serves the *dialogue* between God and the people.
4. Music, making room for the *incarnation* of the Word, expresses both the conditionedness of humanity but also its ability to make new creations.
5. Music serves the multiplicity of *liturgical roles* and enables the whole community's responsibility in the liturgy, both in 'listening co-performing' and sharing more actively with the professional singers.
6. Music, naturally suited to give the most intense expression to life, can effectively serve the *festive* character of the liturgy, both as when developed to the highest level of artistic form and as contributed by the whole assembly, of which more should be expected.
7. Music does not merely set particular words but acts as a 'necessary and *integrating component*' of the whole liturgy. Here, it takes on a meaning it does not have apart from worship.

1.2 Philipp Harnoncourt¹²

Philipp Harnoncourt, the Director of the Institute of Liturgiology, Christian Art, and Hymnology, Graz, Austria, also a Roman Catholic, was critical of recent developments in his Church, arguing that the essential role of music in liturgy had been lost when the mass evolved from being domestic and congregational to become a clerical and private act, and that the resulting view of music as decorative and optional, employed when special solemnity was required, had prevailed through, and even distorted, the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. Also, as confession of faith had turned more and more into doctrine, it had ceased to be so singable. The introduction of the vernacular had had the effect of placing song at a further distance since it threatened to remove what had just been gained into yet another language. Before discussing music in worship, Harnoncourt offered a survey in anthropological terms of the development of humanity's fundamental vocal capacity and noted that speech had an inherent musical component. Music and song

¹² Philipp Harnoncourt, 'The Anthropological and Liturgical-Theological Foundations of Music in Worship', *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No. 1, 14-31.

were signs of life but also of mortality in that, while a work of art continued after its creation, music only existed in time.

The purpose of music in liturgy was explored. Expressive of the transformative encounter with God, yet in our lost state our song was also of reproach and complaint (although almost silenced in the songs of Christians). It was appropriate for Scripture to be sung since it was already a confession of faith. Texts sung were more easily assimilated, therefore song is a means of remembrance. Song and music deepened faith already present and awakened faith that was as yet lacking; they could express what was beyond verbal utterance; they were signs of the presence of the Spirit. As eschatological signs, they tied together time and eternity. Even liturgy which was not sung had a musical quality.

However, the church's architecture, ritual and song were determined only in part by the functional needs of the liturgy. They also were representative of the identity of the church in the culture. As the texts of the liturgy became fixed, it was only in the sphere of liturgical art and music that elements meeting the needs of the times could find their place; song and music rendered a liturgical celebration relevant to its context. For this, the entire assembly¹³ had the principal responsibility; the *schola cantorum* had a representative function, providing what the congregation was unable to. Two kinds of integration were required of music: into the congregation as it really was (when imposed, true integration will not take place); and into the totality of the specific act of worship (requiring modesty on the part of specialists).

1.3 Virgil C Funk¹⁴

This and the following three papers were concerned in different ways with what is seen as one of the key issues in the debate about church music, one that has been present since earliest times in the church, namely the relationship between the sacred and the secular.

¹³ The term used for the body of worshippers in Roman Catholic documents.

¹⁴ Virgil C. Funk, 'Secular Music in the Liturgy? Are There Any Rules?', *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No.2, 177-193.

Funk, a Roman Catholic priest and at that time President of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians in the USA, noted the contrast between the Orthodox who can say: 'Our traditions state that we do not use secular music', and the post Vatican II approach in the USA which encourages the drawing upon everything that is 'good in creation'. Funk was seeking boundaries and 'rules' governing the latter approach, from both a theoretical and a pastoral perspective. The parameters were set by comparing the views of Consortium International Musica Sacra (CIMS)¹⁵ and Universa Laus (UL). The former took the treasury of sacred music and chant as its base line and asked how this repertoire could be adapted to congregational participation, whereas the latter, believing that there was no series of notes or progression of chords which in and of themselves were 'sacred', would start with a clean slate and relate the music which emerged to the tradition. Funk noted the significance of the shift in language between the CIMS's 'sacred music' and UL's 'Christian ritual music'. The opposite of ritual music was non-ritual music, and this implied that secular music was neither excluded nor included as liturgical music, while traditional music must face the same test.

Funk then drew a contrast between the cathedral, the parish, and the monastic tradition. Cathedral acoustics favoured chant and polyphony but not highly rhythmical forms or even the slower syncopation of much popular music. The dimensions of cathedral buildings also affected modes of performance. This was true also, with an opposite result, of the many modern parish church buildings erected since Vatican II, with sanctuary and assembly drawing closer together and with the use of materials which deaden sound, creating a sense of intimacy. Here, amplification was usually necessary and the acoustic contributed to the weakening of communal and choral singing. In terms of repertoire, there was a tendency to choose music which 'charmed the parishioners' cultural ear' and which ensured congregational participation. Funk noted that some composers who drew on secular sources were able to mask them and developed a principle that popular music may be used if encoded in such a way that it did not draw attention to itself. The monastic

¹⁵ This was founded as *Consociatio Internationalis Musicae Sacrae* in 1963 by Pope Paul VI. The Church Music Association of America, also known as 'Musica Sacra', is affiliated to this body.

tradition, for its part, was counter cultural, with the music well crafted to endure repetition.

His final point related to the need for well-made music. The opposite could not endure the requirements of ritual repetition. 'Music must obey the rules of music.' Certain composers who had mixed musical 'codes', making connection between religious tradition and contemporary sounds (he cited Richard Proulx and Marty Haugen) had also succeeded in strengthening the borrowed idiom. That recourse to secular idioms may be justified was underlined by the fact that in the USA, as he saw it, it could not be presumed that the sacred codes of Gregorian chant would be recognised and valued; indeed, to promote these, as some did, in the marketplace may cause the next generation to associate them with new age culture. He ended:

We in the United States have paid a great price for the freedom of experimentation with secular music. We have gone down some blind alleys. We have made some mistakes. So far, the rewards for this freedom are not overwhelming. But experimentation is the American way. If we are to have a worship music for our times, it is not the time to stop the experimentation. What is needed is greater exchange among countries in a forum such as this.¹⁶

1.4 Claude Duchesneau¹⁷

Duchesneau, of the Institut Catholique de Paris, and one of the authors of the *Universa Laus* report,¹⁸ continued the theme. He reported how in France, following the Second Vatican Council's recognition of the living language of the faithful as a liturgical language, a considerable body of song which had been unofficially used had now, unchecked and without adequate assessment, become the norm. The result had been that, of an 'explosion' of religious songs, most were not 'liturgical', that roughly half the repertoire had been captured by rhythmical song that belonged in the first place to jazz and show music, and that the sole criterion brought to bear when these were used in worship was the taste of the users. This body of songs in a pious and subjective vein was due, as he saw it, to a lack of liturgical, biblical, and theological formation on the part of

¹⁶ Funk, 'Secular Music in the Liturgy', 192.

¹⁷ Claude Duchesneau, 'Liturgical Song and Song Collections for the Liturgy in the Francophone World', *Studia Liturgica*, Vol 28 (1998), No.2, 129-142.

¹⁸ See below, page 56.

authors. A corresponding absence of serious musical study had made for a weakness in the quality of the music which accompanied these. Duchesneau suggested this weakness could be tackled through an official compilation giving Catholics in France a ‘common, stable, and “liturgically correct” repertoire’,¹⁹ as had already happened in isolated dioceses.

1.5 Didier Rimaud SJ²⁰

Didier Rimaud is a Jesuit priest and poet. His talk (with musical examples) reported an ongoing project, namely the attempt to replace a deficient repertoire (music and text) of liturgical song with another, in the creation of which Rimaud collaborated with different composers. One collaboration had been with Joseph Gelineau, another with Jo Akepsimas who in his composition draws on the chorale, Gregorian chant, and French chanson. With Jacques Berthier he produced a troparion for an Ignatian mass, ‘At the name of Jesus’. With Marcel Godard, he wrote three nocturns based on the mystical life of Ignatius of Loyola. His collaboration with Christian Villeneuve represented an attempt to make a happy connection between church and contemporary music; one example was the retelling of the book of Joel. These projects had been undertaken within the customary liturgical and devotional provision of the church.

1.6 Kaj-Erik Gustafsson²¹

Gustafsson, a lecturer in the Department of Church Music at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, had on the evening previous to his address involved congress members in a folk mass, which he had composed. He outlined the situation in Finland where, on the rare occasions the churches were full, those present were an audience rather than a congregation, unfamiliar with what was being played out before them. In this situation, should the church mark out its own domain, with its own music, or attempt to create community by means of a mass in the popular idiom? The speaker then showed how the

¹⁹ Duchesneau, ‘Liturgical Song’, 139.

²⁰ Didier Rimaud, ‘The Collaboration of a Poet with Composers for Contemporary Catholic Liturgy in the French Language’, *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No.2, 152-165.

²¹ Kaj-Erik Gustafsson, ‘Popular Music in Worship: Stylistic Breakdown, or Fresh Opportunity?’, *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No.2, 143-151.

material of the folk mass had been created from a Finnish-Swedish folk song, possibly influenced by Gregorian chant.

1.7 Don E Saliers²²

Saliers, a Methodist, was until 2007 Professor of Theology and Worship in Candler School of Theology, Emory University. His paper discussed the increasing use of electronic and digital technologies in liturgical gatherings. New technologies had been welcomed by the church in the past, influencing the worship space as well as the flexibility and effectiveness of instruments, not least the organ – whose sound and aural impact, in terms of the acoustic properties of design and materials, had changed over the centuries. Such changes had affected how we hear, move, and (in a context of Holy Communion) even taste. These were not merely external sensations but shaped the interiorisation of God and the human assembly. In the matter of music, new technologies were embedded in the musical styles that people listened to. It had been asked, in the interests of outreach: ‘Why does the church continue to use a music style foreign to 98% of the population?’ Saliers suggested that there was a sense in which the new advances were in direct continuity with previous ones, which had been welcomed and integrated into Christian practice: for example, the Gospel music of the 1880s and 1890s (whose success, similarly, derived from skilful marketing) or the player pianos of the 1920s. However, a more basic task was to assess the uses and applications of available technologies vis-à-vis music, for which two criteria were suggested: the continuity of identity and the relevance to the cultural context of the worshippers.

In developing these, Saliers privileged the human dimension. Did the music on offer honour the human voice as the primary instrument in worship? It might be argued that the expressive nuances of traditional instruments better facilitated this. Did the music honour the human hearer as well as the performer? Music perceived as artificial or manipulative or overly associated with commercial interests could diminish the liturgical effect. Did the music deepen the human affections appropriate to the liturgical action it accompanied

²² Don E. Saliers, ‘Liturgical Music and Electronic Technology: Contemporary Soundings’, *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No.2, 166-176.

or expressed? Was the music capable of communicating mystery and grace? Did the music enable a balance of emotional range over time? One did not ask these questions equally in all circumstances: eucharistic liturgies required more continuity with the past than music for evangelism and para-liturgical gatherings, which could be more open to technological innovation. Saliers' conclusion was that we should not reject what sophisticated technology may do for music in liturgy provided that the 'living presence and collaborative sense of worship itself is not impeded or distorted'. He concludes: 'I am convinced it will take more artistry, not less, and more attentiveness to the primary features of what makes good liturgy, not less'.²³

1.8 Karen B Westerfield Tucker

Professor Tucker's remit was to offer information and reflection on the liturgical role of hymnody in those parts of the church which made most use of it. Her approach was twofold: hymns 'as helping to construct the liturgical ordo and as supplying liturgical propers'.²⁴ Two approaches were employed: the exploration of the liturgical use of hymns by noting rubrics in liturgical orders or determining customary placement where printed orders were not used; and by examining the organisational structure of hymnals as testimony to their liturgical usage. After a comprehensive survey of the hymn from earliest times to its re-establishment in English and American practice, Tucker noted the parts of the liturgy where hymns were deemed to have their place. Following or during the distribution of Communion was, in many traditions, the first point in the liturgy at which the hymn was introduced, thus unwittingly recovering the communion chant of the western mass and the eastern divine liturgy.²⁵ More recent hymnals had seen a notable increase in the provision of hymns for Communion. Other points were between the exposition of Scripture and the long prayer before the sermon, at the beginning of worship as a gathering, at the end as a summary and motivation for discipleship, after the sermon to reinforce the message. The hymn might function as an ordinary when

²³ Ibid., 176.

²⁴ Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, 'Congregational Song as Liturgical Ordo and Proper: the Case of English-Language Hymns and Hymnals', *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No.1, 102.

²⁵ Ibid., 106.

associated with the offertory, or a doxology might accompany the presentation of the offerings.

Today, some denominations used hymns to determine the shape of the entire ordo, and occasionally books were arranged liturgically. A hymn between the readings was reminiscent of the gradual psalm, and as one of the propers it often corresponded with the lectionary gospel reading or with the designated season or holy day. In 'contemporary worship' (a term Tucker has questioned in a later paper)²⁶ music, often congregational, had become the driving force of the service. Proponents of this style, however, believed that the classical hymn was no longer relevant to modern Christians. Regarding seasonal propers, even congregations who did not pay much attention to the liturgical year would admit carols of the nativity and resurrection hymns. The recovery of the daily office among some Protestants had given rise to new compositions for morning and evening. Compilations for para-liturgical use had been published, just as in his time Ira D. Sankey had collected *Sacred Songs and Solos* into one volume.²⁷ Through popular services outside of mass and office, such as the benediction of the blessed sacrament and devotions to the Virgin and the saints, Roman Catholics also had incorporated vernacular hymnody.

1.9 Other speakers

Three other main speakers addressed issues not directly relevant to the theme of this thesis. Dimitrije Stefanovic,²⁸ the Director of the Institute of Musicology, Belgrad, offered a history of the development of liturgy in the eastern churches, Paul Maniyattu of St. Ephrem's Theological College, Satna, discussed the influence of music in Hindu

²⁶ Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, 'A Decade of Christian Song: Observations on Recent Hymnals and Song Books', *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.31 (2001), No.2, 193.

²⁷ *Sacred Songs and Solos: Compiled and Sung by Ira D. Sankey* (London: Morgan and Scott Ltd.). Many editions were published from the late nineteenth century onwards. Co-terminous, and equally celebrated, was *Redemption Songs: A Choice Collection of 1000 Hymns and Choruses* (London: Pickering and Inglis Ltd.).

²⁸ Dimitrije Stefanovic, 'The Theological Dimension of Liturgical Music from an Orthodox Perspective', *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No. 1, 32-45.

worship on Christian liturgical music in India,²⁹ and Alexander Volker gave a presentation on German hymns and hymnals.³⁰

1.10 Conclusions

The Turku Congress, because of the breadth of provenance of the participants, was not geared to the drawing of clear conclusions or the devising of strategies, designed as it was round the giving of papers on a wide variety of topics (both study and praxis), which were received and responded to on their own terms. At best, it could be said that those engaged in academic research encountered the issues faced by those drafting liturgical texts and making collections of hymns and music (and *vice versa*), while members of liturgical commissions of, and scholars working from within, different ecclesiastical families were brought into dialogue. Nevertheless, participants left with tasks to pursue. Since the congress, two significant bodies, of which representatives were present, have gone on to publish sequels to their earlier reports: the American Catholic Bishops³¹ and the Universa Laus Group.³² Further, the call for further theological work has issued in a number of more developed studies (where previously sets of guidelines to assist practice had been more common), such as those by Mary McGann, Don Saliers, and Kathleen Harmon.³³

2. THE LITURGICAL MOVEMENT

So far, the matter of church music has been presented as if it were a problem. From another perspective, this era might be presented as a time of great richness in the music of the church. As Erik Routley has remarked, in retrospect the twentieth century may well be seen to be of equal interest musically to the sixteenth.³⁴ Behind this might be seen the

²⁹ Paul Maniyattu, 'Music in the Hindu Traditions of Worship and its Influence on Christian Liturgical Music in India', *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No. 1, 46-73.

³⁰ Alexander Volker, 'The Tradition of Hymns and Hymnals in the German-Speaking World', *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No. 1, 74-101.

³¹ *Music in Catholic Worship* (1972), *Sing to the Lord* (2007). See below, pages 59 and 64.

³² *Music and Liturgy* (1980), *Music in Liturgies* (2002). See below, pages 56 and 63.

³³ The first two are outlined in chapter 3.

³⁴ In conversation.

recoveries of what has been known as the Liturgical Movement, a continuing event whose origins are hard to define and which might be better understood as a coming together of habits or emphases which became more pronounced and more coherent as the twentieth century progressed.³⁵ It is against this that the initiatives in church music which came into their own in the 1950s and 1960s might best be understood. Gordon Lathrop acknowledges, and further defines, this movement as he outlines the scope of the new sub-discipline of 'liturgical ecclesiology':

The church is an assembly. The church is a gathering of people in a particular place who are, together, through concrete means, participating in the mystery of Christ and so are being formed into the holy assembly. The church is not a collection of consuming individuals, choosing religious goods according to their own self-perceived needs or desires. It is not a club supporting a particular ideology. It is not the audience for a speaker's eloquence, a choir's concert, or a priest's rituals. The local church-assembly is itself, as gathering, the primary symbol. By its participation, by its communal mode of song and prayer around scripture reading, meal keeping, and bathing, it is being transformed into a primary witness to the identity of God and the identity of the world before God. These assertions can be taken to summarise the deepest insights of the twentieth-century liturgical movement.³⁶

For the Catholic Church, a significant originating moment was an address given by the Belgian Benedictine Lambert Beauduin at a congress in 1909.³⁷ This developed the idea of the liturgy as a transforming influence in a secularised world, and called for full and active participation in the life and worship of the church of all its members. Behind this lay two other significant events. One was the publication in 1903 of the *motu proprio* of Pius X on sacred music, which emphasised the liturgy as the true source of the church's life and encouraged the participation of the people through plainsong. The other was the refounding of the abbey of Maria Laach to become a centre for liturgical study, the most celebrated writings connected with it being those of Odo Casel, with their recovery of the idea of the church as the mystical body of Christ, expressed symbolically through sacramental participation. Signals of a new liturgy-centred church life had been seen also in the refounding of the Benedictine community and abbey of Solesmes (1833, 1837) by

³⁵ In this, it might be seen as similar to 'postmodernism', which is seen as less a programme, more what one commentator called a 'social and cultural set of circumstances'.

³⁶ Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy People: a Liturgical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press: 1999), 49.

³⁷ Paul Bradshaw, ed., *The New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* (London: SCM Press, 2002), article on 'Liturgical Movement', 283ff.

Prosper Guéranger round a recovery of medieval practice in liturgy, including Gregorian Chant.

However, this movement may be traced also through other branches of the church. For example, the Oxford Movement in the Church of England, dating from the 1830s, concerned with the recovery of the Church's traditions in theology and liturgy as well as embodying a social concern, emphasised the place of sacramental worship and a restored ceremonial. In Scotland, the significant and sustained work of the Church Service Society, founded in 1865, concerned both to recover the liturgical insights of the Reformation (and to republish its texts) and to learn from medieval and earlier approaches to worship, culminated in the high principles of the 1940 *Book of Common Order*, by then the publication not of a reforming society but of the Church of Scotland itself.³⁸

Common to these shifts and developments seems to have been a reaction against the subjectivism which had prevailed for some centuries.³⁹ Certainly there was now an emphasis on the corporateness of the church. It was the People of God, the Body of Christ meeting round Word and Table and witnessing to the world, the latter emphasis affecting the content of the liturgy. Here was a re-appropriation of the understanding of the priesthood of all believers, their knowledge of the Bible and their participation in the Sacrament, and the shaping of society round Christian precepts, that was a feature of the Reformation. But the post-war twentieth-century world was a different world, and these principles needed recovery in fresh terms. They found expression, for example, in the Parish Communion movement in the Church of England⁴⁰ and the 'lay' movements like

³⁸ *Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940). Accounts of the Church Service Society can be found in John Kerr, *The Renaissance of Worship: The Origins, Aims, and Achievements of the Church Service Society* (The Lee Lecture, 1905) (Edinburgh: J. Gardner Hitt, 1909), and in Stewart J. Brown, 'The Scoto-Catholic Movement in Presbyterian Worship c.1850-c.1920' in Duncan B. Forrester and Doug Gay, eds., *Worship and Liturgy in Context: Studies and Case Studies in Theology and Practice* (London: SCM Press, 2009), 152ff.

³⁹ F.L. Cross, ed., *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, article on 'Liturgical Movement' (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 815. There is a Third Edition, ed. F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, 1997, rev. 2005.

⁴⁰ Donald Gray has pointed out connections with the nineteenth century Christian Socialist Movement in Donald Gray, *Earth and Altar* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1986). The 1951 (rev.1957) report of the

the Kirchentag in Germany and Kirk Week in Scotland, the two latter strengthening the connection between church and world through the conscious activity of the people of the church as they lived out the Gospel in an industrial society. Holy Communion was given a central place because of the declaration at its heart of the goodness of the material world. Participation was not in following a given liturgy but in the offering of the world within worship, necessitating a modification and expansion of language. Sometimes this was expressed as a 'reversal of roles' as ordained clergy moved 'from church to world', as in the case of the worker priest movement in France during the 1960s. Characteristic was a new interest in traditional patterns of religious community, both for their recovery of the indissoluble link between work and worship and for their standing in contradistinction to, the better to be able to affirm and to challenge, human community. The founding of both the Iona and Taizé Communities at this time serves as an illustration, with the former in particular contributing to the increased awareness of the 'ordinary' Christian as representing the 'church in the world' (a prominent ecumenical theme at the time).⁴¹

The expansion of the vocabulary of worship extended also to hymnody as an awareness grew of the restrictiveness of the texts in use and what was seen as the limited appeal of the traditional hymn tune. The first move had come from the Twentieth-Century Church Light Music Group, who published their work in the 1950s.⁴² This group of London clergymen was concerned initially only with tunes, seeking to replace standard hymn tunes with melodies in popular dance and ballad styles which, it was believed, would prove more attractive to young people of the day.⁴³ These pioneers had recognised the emergence of the 'youth generation' which was to dominate the agenda of the music industry and of the market in general, although the style of music they favoured was judged to be already dated. In a scene which then began to unfold with rapidity, a

Archbishops' Committee on Church Music, *Music in Worship*, notes the 'ever-increasing tendency to make the Holy Communion the central service of Sunday, together with the introduction in many places of the "Parish Communion"'.

⁴¹ Prominent theologians of the recent phases of this movement included Yves Congar in France and T. Ralph Morton in Scotland.

⁴² Publications of the Twentieth Century Church Light Music Group included *27 20th Century Hymns* (London: Weinberger, 1962).

⁴³ See for example 'Living Lord' by Patrick Appleford, in several current collections.

landmark event was the Bristol Congress of the Student Christian Movement in 1963⁴⁴ where the worship included lyrics written for the event to the popular tune 'Telstar', celebrating the launch of the first communications satellite. The theme of the conference was 'Jesus Christ the Servant' and the emphasis was on a world much in need of Christian ministration. The use of this tune and the nature of the text spoke together of a desire that the Christian Gospel should be seen to be 'relevant'⁴⁵ to the life of society. Conference worship also included some songs by Sydney Carter, then little known. These songs, written by a Quaker who was also much influenced by the lively folk revival of the time, offered to bring a new sensibility to Christian song, with texts which startled by their outspokenness and by melodies which echoed the simplicity but also the irony which characterised folk melodies.⁴⁶

The founding of the Dunblane Music Consultation in Scotland was in direct response to these new compositional styles and also to the furious debate that ensued. This group, although Scottish-based, was UK wide in its membership, but it is relevant to record at this point its purposes as being not only to regulate the discussion but also to contribute to the development of music written in contemporary styles which now seemed inevitable – and appropriate. While the Dunblane group interpreted 'contemporary' widely, there was at the same time much experimentation with purely popular styles. Following the publication of *Sing!*,⁴⁷ containing a range of material from an early 'Iona' Gloria to new charismatic songs, the series *Faith, Folk and Clarity/Nativity/Festivity*⁴⁸ was to gather a similar range of songs from England. The first Iona contribution to the growing music repertoire was in the form of a 78 rpm record called *Comings and Goings* where a traditional Iona morning service, featuring the voice of George MacLeod, the founder and leader of the Community, was partnered by the same service using contemporary song.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Attended by the present writer as a student.

⁴⁵ This word was much in use at the time.

⁴⁶ 'It was on a Friday morning', first heard at the conference, contained the lines: 'To hell with Jehovah, to the Carpenter I said; I wish that a Carpenter had made the world instead'. Carter's songs were published in *Songs of Sydney Carter: In the Present Tense*, Vols. 1 and 2 (Great Yarmouth: Galliard, 1969).

⁴⁷ *Sing!* Published by the Youth Department of the Church of Scotland in 1965, ed. by the present writer and Ronald Beasley.

⁴⁸ Peter Smith, ed., *Faith, Folk and Clarity* (Great Yarmouth: Galliard, 1967). The others followed at annual intervals.

⁴⁹ Produced by the present writer.

Reference has already been made to the publication by the Iona Community of African hymns.⁵⁰

These developments did not take place in a musical vacuum but were part of an impulse towards church renewal through the reviving of its 'frozen assets' – the members of the church as opposed to the clergy. This had been an emphasis in the founding of the Iona Community: the reversal of roles as the craftsmen and stonemasons took the lead in the rebuilding of the Abbey while assisted by ministers in training was intended as indicative of the ideal situation in the church at large. The 'Kirk Weeks' in the 1950s, reminiscent of the Kirchentags in Germany, took the same emphasis, while a landmark radio programme of the time consisted of a series of talks from lay people⁵¹ reflecting on the place of the Christian faith in the sector they served. There were also in Scotland versions of the 'worker-priest' movement, as well as of the radical approach of the Sheffield Industrial Mission. Following upon the writings of Yves Congar, the book which caught the flavour of this movement was *God's Frozen People* by Ralph Morton (deputy leader of the Iona Community) and the English theologian Mark Gibbs, which became a UK best seller.⁵² In this context, new hymns were not just fresh expressions of doctrine but key documents in the re-orientation and renewal of the church's life. Typical were the opening lines of a hymn by Ian Fraser, warden of Scottish Churches House, Dunblane, and a member of the Iona Community, with a tune by Erik Routley, secretary of the Dunblane Consultation:⁵³

Lord, look upon our working days,
 busied in factory, office, store;
 may wordless work thy name adore,
 the common round spell out thy praise?

⁵⁰ Above, page 6.

⁵¹ In the aftermath of the Reformation, the term 'lay' disappeared from Reformed church vocabulary since all were seen as equal in the governance of the church, although distinctive roles and authority were retained. However, it is sometimes difficult to do without the term.

⁵² Mark Gibbs and T. Ralph Morton, *God's Frozen People* (London and Glasgow: Collins Fontana, 1964).

⁵³ As well as *Dunblane Praises*, sources include the *Australian Hymn Book* no. 560.

3. REFORMED, LUTHERAN, AND UNITED CHURCHES

This heading embraces the churches with roots in the European Reformation of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – except for this purpose the Anglican Communion which, because of its proximity to this thesis as well as its distinctive contribution, is treated separately. It includes the Methodists, although originating in Anglicanism, as well as the several united churches which have been formed from Methodist, Reformed and other independent denominations. This section, in the main, surveys symposia and individual writings but it begins with an encounter, not unlike those that produced the seminal reports outlined in the Catholic and Anglican sections, but which, without producing a written report, had a significant influence on the course of developments.

3.1 The Dunblane Music Consultation⁵⁴

This initiative, ecumenical but within Scotland, is mentioned first not only because of the present author's direct involvement but also because its work took place at a key stage in the development of contemporary writing and had an influence broader than the country of origin.⁵⁵ Apart from descriptive reports,⁵⁶ it did not produce a manifesto except in its published collections and, it might be said, in its manner of working. The consultation met between 1962 and 1969 at Scottish Churches' House, Dunblane.⁵⁷ The process was one of both praxis and reflection. The practical work was done through the writing and trying out of new texts and tunes as well as in hearing from practitioners, while the reflection was in the form of two collections entitled *Dunblane Praises*,⁵⁸ followed later by two

⁵⁴ Also known as the Scottish Churches' Consultation on Music.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Charlotte Kroeker, ed., *Music in Christian Worship* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), xv, 163-170.

⁵⁶ Ian M. Fraser, 'Beginnings at Dunblane'; in Robin A. Leaver and James H. Litton, *Duty and Delight: Routkey Remembered* (Hope Publishing Company / Canterbury Press: 1985), 171-190. The present writer has also contributed entries to a dictionary of hymnology edited by J.R. Watson on 'Dunblane Praises' and related topics. This becomes available in the first instance online: www.hymnology.org.uk (from July, 2010).

⁵⁷ The only critical appraisal that has been made to date, to my knowledge, of Scottish Churches House and its first Warden, Ian M. Fraser, against the ecclesiological, political and social background of the time is that in the Edinburgh University Ph.D. thesis, *A Practical Theology of Church and World: Ecclesiology and Social Vision in 20th Century Scotland*, by Douglas C Gay. It may be accessed at: http://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/bitstream/1842/1699/1/Gay_thesis.pdf.

⁵⁸ Published informally, 1965, 1967 respectively.

volumes called *New Songs for the Church* which built on these,⁵⁹ and not least the prefaces to these volumes, together with occasional writings from members of the consultation. It was hoped that these volumes, particularly the earlier two, would, as well as field-test new hymns, stimulate further composition and experiment.

Scottish Churches' House itself was established in 1960 as an ecumenical centre to host conversations between different branches of the church and to promote dialogue with groups representative of the life of contemporary society. It was as this programme unfolded that the first Warden of the House, Ian Fraser,⁶⁰ realised that the encounters taking place, which were putting questions to the church, were also challenging the quality and relevance of its worship and music. This was as true of the new hymns of the 1950s⁶¹ as of the traditional hymns which formed the main body of the church's praise.

To be Secretary of the new consultation Fraser enlisted Erik Routley, who had recently left a teaching post at Mansfield College, Oxford, to become minister of Augustine-Bristol Congregational Church in Edinburgh, and who by then was well known as a prolific and authoritative commentator on hymns and church music. As well as the core group, which included Alan Luff⁶² and the composer Peter Cutts,⁶³ such writers as Sydney Carter and Brian Wren (the latter at that time completing theological research in Oxford) were part of a wider circle of correspondents and occasional visitors.

The aim of the consultation was to write, and encourage others to write, hymns and songs which took account of the issues and insights of the time, but, equally, to foster discussion in the church over what contemporary hymns needed to say and sound like, and what issues arose in the attempt to source and introduce these into the worship of the church. The consultation derived some of its characteristics from the programme of the centre in which it met. One was its ecumenical composition. Seven Protestant Churches

⁵⁹ *New Songs for the Church: 1. Psalms, Children's Songs, Ballads; 2. Canticles* (Great Yarmouth: Galliard, 1972). Published with the Scottish Churches' Council

⁶⁰ Rev. Dr. Ian M. Fraser, a Church of Scotland minister, an early member of the Iona Community, later World Council of Churches, Geneva, and Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham.

⁶¹ Particularly in the public eye had been the work of the Twentieth-Century Church Light Music Group.

⁶² Then Precentor of Manchester Cathedral.

⁶³ The writer was also a member

were represented, including the Anglican and Free Church traditions in England, so that from the beginning there was an acceptance of a variety of musical and liturgical experience, together with an expectation that the practice of one church might legitimately learn from the practice of another. Second was the current emphasis on the church's penetration of society through the people of the church and on the unique witness of each individual Christian in and through his/her life and work, and the consequent need for this to be expressed in the hymns that sent people out to live the gospel. A third theme common both to House and consultation was community, not just through the informal links that existed with the Iona Community but in relation to the current emphasis on the need for interaction and accountability at the heart of the church, and the focus of this in common worship.⁶⁴ This commitment to a healthier common life was echoed not just in the themes of hymns but in the consultation's approach to writing them, in that from the outset it saw itself not as a college of hymn writers and composers but a workshop in which members were accountable to each other, shared the results of their endeavours and sought criticism. It was for this reason that in the earliest volume of *Dunblane Praises* texts and tunes by members were printed anonymously.

The inclusion of material in the published volumes from people outwith the group was indicative of the fact that the gathering became in time a reference point for contemporary writers and composers. Sydney Carter's reminder of the catholicity of the clubs through which the folk music revival was currently taking place and the strong feeling of fellowship that grew within them through the music was taken as a call to widen the musical idiom of the church. The folk tradition addressed the church also in that its songs tended to speak for seekers rather than finders and, at a time of theological ferment (John Robinson's *Honest to God* was published in 1963) and cultural change, it was the former whose voice was most needed. Carter's reminder that devotees of folk music were often not musicians only but representatives of other branches of the arts guided the consultation into acknowledging the relationship of music to other modes of expression and participation. It was seen that there was room for song which took its

⁶⁴ Characteristics of the Liturgical Movement.

place within a more dramatic view of liturgy, and which would contribute to greater spontaneity in public worship.

This conviction was behind the inclusion in *Dunblane Praises No. 2* of songs designed to be sung not by a congregation but by a soloist or small group, and which could also make use of humour and irony. These were often intended to be used in relation to other events within worship rather than as stand-alone items of praise – in preparation, say, for the act of confession or intercession, or in association with the biblical narrative, and their inclusion implied a need to address the content of worship as a whole. Thus in the preface the secretary warned that ‘this book will be of very limited use to those who are quite sure that they know what contemporary public worship ought to be doing, and who are content with the traditional views on this subject’. The breadth of content constituted a gesture in favour of opening out the idiom of the church’s worship and an invitation to ‘renounce the tyranny of 4-part uniformity, and to experiment by the use of solo voices and separated singing groups within the whole congregation’.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the consultation did not see its role as in any way rejecting the traditions of the church. This second volume also contained sixteen canticles, written with the new Anglican (‘Series II’) eucharistic liturgy in mind, but arising also from a conviction that chants and canticles might illuminate worship traditions which had not so far seen the need of them, and further that these traditional forms too needed to be clothed in new sounds.

In retrospect, the Dunblane consultation may be seen as one of the catalysts of the ‘hymn explosion’ of the 1960s and the decades which have followed,⁶⁶ for, if relatively few of the hymns from its collections have survived, the process itself was an encouragement to others to try their hand. However, the invitation to experiment was given a strong underpinning of a call for quality.⁶⁷ The consultation had in its work challenged the view that the church’s musical requirements were to be found solely among ‘good music which required and deserved serious attention’ and had sought to show that no musical form should be taboo in itself, whether it had an ‘ecclesiastical accent’ or no. The musical

⁶⁵ Preface to *Dunblane Praises 2*.

⁶⁶ See above, footnotes 55 and 56.

⁶⁷ Expressed in the prefaces and occasional writings mentioned above.

establishment was to be humble and teachable before ‘the rhythms and modes which have gained the ear of our contemporaries’. Nevertheless, whatever the idiom, what was sought must wear well. Already, some of the music that was being written for the church ‘represented no less than a failure of love and mission towards those who were musically aware’. A criterion proposed by C.S. Lewis for measuring literary worth was adapted to define this quality: that the church’s music should be capable of receiving all the best that the worshipper can give.⁶⁸

3.2 Individual reflection on contemporary developments

The Dunblane group flourished in the 1960s. In the forty years between then and now, the Protestant church music scene has been transformed. Characteristic has been the renewal of *psalm-singing traditions*, with an emphasis on fresh metrical versions as well as a recovery of chant and responsory forms. The proliferation of *new hymn texts* has been a marked feature, shared with the Anglican communion, an ‘explosion’ of writing which has partnered and supported initiatives in church life and mission, not least in its revealing of new insights from Scripture. At the same time the western church now lives within a *cultural diversity* as indigenous cultures have re-appropriated the musical forms that had been displaced by missionaries and have shared this with the rest of the church. The *ecumenical movement* has opened up new repertoires and led to the singing of Communion texts and other ‘liturgical’ items, not to mention the aforementioned surge in popularity of responsorial psalmody (fuelled also by the common academic *study of historical liturgy* and the *sharing of liturgical material*, including that relating to the Christian Year). In particular, ecumenical gatherings, such as the World Council of Churches’ four-yearly Assemblies where songs are given high profile, have injected a common repertoire into all denominations. Large-scale religious festivals, like Greenbelt and Spring Harvest (to mention only two examples from the United Kingdom), contribute their own repertoire and, often, song books.

All parts of the church are affected by the *charismatic movement*, emerging in what is often referred to as the ‘contemporary worship music’ or ‘praise and worship’ style. This

⁶⁸ Erik Routley in the *British Weekly*, n.d.

movement has signalled the shift from a rational to a more affective approach to worship, leading to the abandonment of longer psalm and hymn texts in favour of shorter choruses which engage the emotions more simply and directly. This has also been taken up by those sections of the church which would describe themselves as ‘evangelical’, and the ‘outreach’ potential of this music has been highly valued. These interests have been the most ready to take advantage of the information revolution which has enabled the fast circulation of new material, where the ease of access to websites is a determining factor in the choice of music. ‘Megachurches’, like Willow Creek in Chicago and Hillsong Church in Sydney, have influence far beyond their own congregations, serving almost as ‘music factories’ where material composed locally and on a weekly basis is published, recorded and disseminated speedily through this means.

The contemporary scene is therefore characterised by *diversity*. One way that these churches have responded to this surge of composition in varied styles has been the revision of their core hymn books and the publication of hymn book supplements. In so doing, revision committees have had to take account of the large number of other supplementary collections, many of which have been produced outwith denominational control and whose editorial principles would not necessarily correspond with those of the churches in question. Copyright licences enable congregations to access this huge range of musical material, while the availability of much of it on the web has given it ‘equal authority’ with the denomination’s own prescriptions. Thus, a characteristic of most new ‘official’ collections has been that they have included a more diverse range of styles, all in fact that a denomination may need in all the departments of its life. There is a sense in which this is not a novel departure but different only in that previously a denomination may have published, or encouraged the use of, separate publications directed towards specific situations – mission services, children, youth, etc. These new compilations have often been called ‘blended collections’, meaning not only that they consist of a mixture of styles but implying that congregations ought to ‘blend’ their styles if they are to engage fully in worship and mission in today’s world. Karen B Westerfield Tucker remarks that ‘while economic need may have dictated the compilation of such collections, a desire on the part of denominations to keep different approaches united has been an important

contributory reason – to create unity within diversity. This, however, has often given rise to misunderstanding in the local church where a hymn book may be seen as prescriptive rather than enabling'.⁶⁹ It should be possible for a core collection to contain a blend of material without it being assumed that on one occasion a selection ought to be made from the whole range.

The transformation referred to has not only consisted in an expansion of repertoire but in changes in practice. One is the growing tendency to consider public worship a primary vehicle for evangelism, giving rise in the USA to the term, 'seeker-sensitive worship', in which elements, language, and concepts which might be foreign to potential worshippers are excised. With this, in many places, choirs, organs, and the repertoire associated with these have disappeared. It might be possible to welcome this trend and to consider it on its merits, finding a comparison in such approaches as that of Moody and Sankey in reaching out to people not normally touched by the church, were it not for the fact that this style and approach has affected, and has often become the norm for, established Protestant Sunday worship. One factor has been the appeal of much of this music for regular worshippers; another has been the acceptance of the fact that the middle and younger generations in today's congregations (and society) are not steeped in the traditions – the biblical narratives, hymns, rote prayers, religious language – that have formed the church as it now appears. However, there are also social factors.

Michael Perham has identified an additional contributing factor in that many congregations now try to incorporate all that was formerly spread across seven days within one hour on Sunday morning – worship, education, outreach, the creation of fellowship – all of which may have musical implications, often different.⁷⁰ Today, when people's lives revolve around many foci and time is at a premium, a congregation 'of all ages and stages' may only come together one one occasion in the week. D'Arcy Wood describes this as 'overload', when the Sunday liturgy is expected to shoulder the tasks

⁶⁹ Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, 'A Decade of Christian Song', 193.

⁷⁰ Michael Perham. 'Grasping the heel of heaven' (Church Service Society Lecture 1995). *The Record of the Church Service Society*, Vol.31, Christmas 1996, 12. See also Baldovin's similar analysis from a Catholic perspective, below, page 69.

separately undertaken when people spent more time during the week in church activities, when, also, different musical idioms (and publications) would have been employed.⁷¹ The result can be the compression of diverse liturgical and musical needs into one hour.

Another trend is away from the minister as sole conductor of worship to group-led worship, very often from a music group incorporating a 'worship-leader', who would be given responsibility for entire sections of the worship, and within this selecting the songs – often extempore, introducing them, leading the congregation in singing, controlling the mood of the service, leading in prayer, and judging when to move on to the next stage of the service.⁷² Emily Brink and John Witvliet see this as an extension of the Reformed belief in the 'priesthood of all believers' but note that a truer expression of this might be seen in the Catholic version of this development. In this, the song leader, or cantor, stands in front of the congregation, with any 'backing' band situated to the side, 'trained as to the subtle but crucial difference between singing for the congregation and enabling the congregation to sing'.⁷³ However, it would be true to say that the move towards such a broader leadership is found in all styles of worship and not only in evangelical contexts, with readers, leaders of prayer, and givers of children's addresses sharing in worship whose conduct remains in the hands of an ordained minister or other authorised person.

The term 'worship wars' is most typically employed in the denominations under current scrutiny, albeit mainly in the USA, and protagonists are heard on both sides of the argument. In his contributions to the symposium, *Music in Christian Worship*,⁷⁴ Frank Burch Brown refers to a call by Charles Trueheart to cut free from all that is weighing the church down. The 'Next Church' will, by Trueheart's reckoning, be one where there will be: 'No spires. No crosses. No robes. No clerical collars. No hard pews. No kneelers. No

⁷¹ D'Arcy Wood, 'Sunday Worship Can Suffer from Overload'. Report of address given to the National Consultation on Worship, Adelaide, January 1982, in the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia newspaper, *Life and Times*, n.d.

⁷² See descriptions in James H.S. Steven, *Worship in the Spirit*, 91ff (see footnote 8).

⁷³ Emily R. Brink and John D. Witvliet, 'Contemporary Developments in Music in Reformed Churches Worldwide'; in Lukas Vischer, ed., *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches Past and Present* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 336.

⁷⁴ Frank Burch Brown, 'Religious Meanings and Musical Styles'; in Kroeker, ed., *Music in Christian Worship*, 135

biblical gobbledygook. No prayerly rote. No fire. No brimstone. No pipe organs. No dreary eighteenth-century hymns. No forced solemnity. No Sunday finery. No collection plates'. Trueheart sees music, more than any other issue or symbol, as that which divides congregations 'on the cusp of growth'.

The pipe organ, the old hymnal, and the robed choir are emblems of continuity and cohesion to those who uphold tradition, of encrustation and exclusion to those who don't. Whether a church uses contemporary music or not defines which kind of people it wants. When it uses contemporary music, it's saying it wants unchurched people – particularly those of childbearing and child-rearing age.

He quotes the chairman of a company which supplies churches with contemporary praise and worship music as saying, 'We better think about our sound and how we are reaching our community, or we will be the Amish of the twenty-first century'.⁷⁵

A British version is found in a collection of writings which put the arguments against traditional practice in particularly sharp focus. They make up a volume promoted by what was then the Music in Worship Trust⁷⁶ and is now the Music and Worship Foundation (MWF) – although one or two cathedral musicians not part of that group were invited to contribute and to argue from a contrary point of view. Writers are Anglican, Baptist, and Catholic, but with this spread and because most writers belong in the more evangelical or charismatic wings of the Church of England, and espouse the worship style which is loosely defined as 'contemporary worship music', the views expressed are reported in this section. It is possible that the MWF has broadened its view in subsequent years (the publication date was 1989), but the volume has been on sale within the last three or four years.

For most of the authors, the church for too long has been in the grip of one particular form of 'cultural and religious conditioning',⁷⁷ represented by an elite group that seeks aesthetic satisfaction from its music. That approach, they allege, sees no other consideration as valid,

⁷⁵ Charles Trueheart, 'Welcome to the Next Church', *The Atlantic Online*, www.theatlantic.com/issues/96aug/nxtchrch/nxtchrch.htm.

⁷⁶ Robin Sheldon, ed., *In Spirit and in Truth: Exploring Directions in Music in Worship Today* (London and Sydney: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Fellingham, 59.

but only ‘the ultimate quality of the music itself, both in choice and performance’.⁷⁸ While not attempting to ‘denigrate or dismiss all the wealth of beautiful church music that has been written and performed sincerely over the years’,⁷⁹ their call is for a greater readiness to displace this in the local parish church by music which has popular and rock music roots, seeing this as representing the musical language of the vast majority of the population up to the age of 45.

In the course of these analyses and arguments other themes emerge. Prominent is the suggestion that those who insist on music which is aesthetically satisfying are not only mistaken but obdurate. They regard worship ‘merely in .. cultural terms’ and prefer ‘pure art music for its own sake’, in the defence of which they evince ‘classically-oriented entrenched attitudes’.⁸⁰ Aesthetic considerations may even be seen as inimical to true worship. Church music has become married to art-music and its use in worship has become divisive.⁸¹ Traditional church music, in striving for excellence has strayed into ‘musical self-indulgence’ and involves ‘over-complicated arrangements which distract from the sense of worship’.⁸² In Fellingham’s understanding, ‘(God’s) command to us to be worshippers is based on who he is, not on what he will give us, or aesthetic pleasure’. Negative attitudes to the ‘simple choruses conveying simple truth’, which have ‘greater cultural relevance to people today’ are rooted in ‘prejudice’, bolstered by ‘musical taste, theological background and church tradition’.⁸³

A common thread running through the critique offered by these authors is that of *class*. The tendency to explain, categorise and analyse is seen as inimical to the need for worship to be ‘expressive’ and ‘open’. Choruses are ‘good and simple means’ to express love to God, whereas hymns are ‘generally statements of doctrine about God’.⁸⁴ Cray takes this a step further when he observes that ‘the musical styles of the poor, the alienated or the more basically educated are no longer part of the world of the upwardly mobile middle class. The

⁷⁸ Ibid., Sheldon, vii.

⁷⁹ Ibid., Lawson-Johnston, 162.

⁸⁰ Ibid., Sheldon, viii.

⁸¹ Ibid., Wilson-Dickson, 42.

⁸² Ibid., Lawson-Johnston, 163.

⁸³ Ibid., 51-52.

⁸⁴ Ibid., Lawson-Johnston, 162.

music of “comfortable Britain” and the music of the “other Britain” have little common ground ...’.⁸⁵ Here, those who are seen to control church music are defined by their social and economic background. The need is to challenge church musical practices which are ‘a hangover from the culture of the privileged classes’. The Spirituals are seen to be in contrast to ‘the respectable and easy music of our times’.⁸⁶

This siting of prevailing styles of liturgical music within ‘privilege’, in ‘the ghetto of the educated and the affluent’,⁸⁷ means for these critics that it is therefore cushioned from contact with the real life of society; it is ‘too removed from the world, in the desire not to be polluted by its values’.⁸⁸ Is the kind of music which has been the church’s staple diet for so long really able to acknowledge and convey ‘the tension of social injustice’? is the question put by the editor. His answer is that rock music is ‘more suited than classical’ to the task of expressing in full in worship the nature and needs of society today.⁸⁹

The consequences of policies similar to those argued in this symposium have raised widespread concern. A book review referred to a gathering of ministers and musicians at a recent North American conference who had been asked to pinpoint the causes behind what they saw as the current ‘malaise’ in worship. As they saw it, the planning of worship that would not assume too much knowledge of Christian traditions or which might overcome reluctance to attend had led to the choice of music where superficial attraction was a dominant quality. The review put the question: ‘Has the church forgotten why it worships? A theological amnesia seems to be played out in its attempt to fill pews on Sunday morning by employing the “madison avenue” philosophy of giving people what they “need” to make themselves feel better about who they are. Packaged in an attractive and upbeat way, its worship moves inexorably away from being God-centred to being worshipper-centred.’⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁸⁶ Ibid., Sheldon, 1.

⁸⁷ Ibid., Wilson-Dickson, 92.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Lawson-Johnson, 163.

⁸⁹ Ibid., Sheldon, 1.

⁹⁰ Alan Barthel, book review, *Worship*, Vol. 75 (2001), No.3, 277.

The review was written by Alan Barthel, of the United Church of Canada and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Association of Musicians (North America). In a further paper⁹¹ given at Ceiliúradh (= Celebration), Dublin 2000, Barthel offered these correctives to current practice:

- that worship should not be used as a tool to ‘entice the world to be church’;
- that inculturation should not lead to the excision of essential elements from gospel or liturgy;
- that we do not replace the participatory with the presentational;
- that we address the question of who in reality is forming the church’s sacred music (namely, the global music industry, which produces music with a very limited life span to satisfy the tastes of a certain segment of the public).

He further expressed the view that it was impossible to invent a sacred music that never referred to the past, since no music can sound sacred when no one in the community had learned to hear it that way. Much of the music that had ‘invaded’ the sanctuary was essentially a solo vocal style which was at core anti-congregational. The harmonies were over-simple, leaving uninspiring melody to carry the weight. The greatest liturgical music must appeal on many levels, and only musical languages endowed with sufficient symbolic import will inspire everyone ‘from the highly trained music minister to the young child’. The church had never avoided teaching complex doctrines; why then, he asked, did we hide away our greatest musical treasures simply because they are complex?⁹²

Karen B. Westerfield Tucker criticises ‘the misnamed “contemporary” worship, devised principally for evangelism and utilising the vocabulary of business and marketing’.⁹³ This results in a musical emphasis on the accessible and the appealing, where music is deliberately employed to elicit a planned response. In the now common model of worship being ‘led’ by a praise band, within which may operate a designated ‘worship leader’, usually not an ordained minister, sequences of music and song are played to ‘move’ people, for example, from praise to prayer.⁹⁴ The effect is of designing a corporate

⁹¹ There were several papers. That of John Harper is referred to below, page 46.

⁹² This paper can be found on www.cathedral.dublin.anglican.org/heritage/archive/cyber-archive/conference/2000-ceiliuradh/cell-prog.html

⁹³ Tucker, ‘A Decade of Christian song’, 193

⁹⁴ See the account in James H S Steven, *Worship in the Spirit*, 91ff.

emotional response. The need to achieve this, and to do so instantly, means that subtlety (both in text and music) has to give way to that which will be 'effective'.

Frank Burch Brown questions some of the assumptions commonly made: the view that worship music must be upbeat and animated to be 'culturally relevant'; that classical music is stodgy and ossified; that religious words guarantee genuinely religious music, as long as the music is likeable; and that music can be treated as a 'package' that contains the Gospel message instead of being treated as an art which embodies and interprets the Gospel by its structure and the way it sounds.⁹⁵ He expresses concern at the way the easy-listening 'lounge-style' music of the megachurches used to embrace seekers is being used more and more for 'finders'. The issue is not the importation of secular styles, which has a long history in the church, nor is an entertainment factor wrong in itself (Mozart's mass settings can entertain as well as compel). His concern is when entertainment eclipses everything else rather than pass as a moment in a larger context. He also confronts the claims made for secular styles by showing how narrow, in fact, the spectrum of styles employed is. Proponents like William Easum, who prescribes the soft rock provided by most of the radio stations 'worship guests' listen to as the truly contemporary alternative for Christian music today,⁹⁶ are challenged to hear the echoes of the gospel in some of the starker and more questioning lyrics and music of contemporary rock albums, as well as lyrics from Wild Goose songs, or settings by such as MacMillan. For Brown, the question to be asked is:

What sort of God are worshippers envisioning as they sing or look or move? To what sort of life and growth do they suppose they are being called? The possibility that a relatively casual and unchallenging style might be all there is to a given community's worship life or musical language is bound to be deflating to those whose call to discipleship causes them to yearn for something more by way of aesthetic formation and development.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Brown, 'Religious Meanings', 141-2.

⁹⁶ William Easum describes professional church musicians as elitist, and 'more interested in music appreciation than in helping people find new life'. For them, 'making disciples is not so important as making good music'. Easum argues that the best music for church is the music of the churches that grow fastest.

⁹⁷ Brown, 'Religious Meanings', 152.

The 'seeker service' format, which desires to make worshippers feel they belong is questioned by Gordon Lathrop who asks whether the participation sought bears sufficient relation to what true participation in worship and discipleship must consist in. This 'marketing response' characteristically abandons *ekklesia* (i.e. the gathered assembly), sees participation as being in an audience, where word, sacrament and intercessory prayer are absent. He asks:

Can Christian faith be reduced to an idea, without the body of the Bible, communally read, sung and preached, and without the body of the sacraments? Will not the very manner of the seeker service, with its studied attempt to make no demands upon the audience, communicate a Christianity without assembly, a Christianity that has become only an individually useful commodity? In fact, can the gospel be authentically presented without the assembly?⁹⁸

What has resulted, it is argued, has been a hollowing out of liturgical tradition as the priority given to warmth and intimacy has reduced the dimension of transcendence. Edward Farley, for example, sees a loss of mystery occurring when the message the music bears fails to match the context into which it has been transplanted:

To attend the typical Protestant Sunday morning worship service is to experience something odd, something like a charade. ... Lacking is a sense of the terrible mystery of God, which sets language atremble and silences facile chattiness. ... If the seraphim assumed this Sunday morning mood, they would be addressing God not as "holy, holy, holy" but as "nice, nice, nice".⁹⁹

However, these and other authors, as well as offering a critique, are concerned to find ways in which the discussion can be moved on, and make a variety of proposals intended as an invitation to people of different views to think further and engage in dialogue about the underlying issues. Four of these are noted.

Frank Burch Brown sees the issues as first and foremost aesthetic, and his several publications represent a thorough investigation into the question of *taste* as it applies in the sphere of church music. Response to any artistic medium requires not only the intellectual and the moral but also the aesthetic. Dismissing the view that tackiness in

⁹⁸ Lathrop, *Holy People*, 92.

⁹⁹ Edward Farley, 'A Missing Presence'. *Christian Century* (March 18-25, 1998), 276. Also http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_n9_v115/ai_20460250/

religious art is testimony to something greater working through it, and the theological viewpoint that art belongs to the depravity of the human condition and can only ‘glimpse Canaan from a distance’, Brown notes how we have relied on quality of construct (the stories of Jesus, the chants of monks, the skilfulness of a Wesley hymn, the soundness and satisfaction of a good building) to convey our traditions. ‘At its highest, taste enters into the sense of God and the sense of good’ and should be placed among the spiritual gifts and disciplines. Its three aspects: perceiving, enjoying, judging, all have to do with stretching and learning as well as with a person’s inherent disposition.¹⁰⁰ However, it may be that disputes based on taste are potentially productive. Noting that there can be no ‘global’ solution and that no-one can presume to speak to all situations equally, Brown proposes the development of an ‘ecumenical taste’, based on certain principles and guidelines, encompassing diversity but in a discerning and discriminating way. ‘The rule of love’ may require of us a learning to attend in new ways to arts not historically part of one’s own tradition, as is developed an approach ‘both generous and exacting’.

Don E. Saliers founds his critique on the concept of ‘sung prayer’, where music brings to expression the dynamics beyond and behind the gathered people. Music voices ‘these emotions which constitute the Christian life itself’, indeed the only way that such deep feelings and memories (including the corporate memory of the church on its journey from the past to its ultimate destination) can be accessed, named and uttered. It serves the actions of worship and the mutual relationships of the gathered people and therefore that which binds worshippers to the object of their worship. This, however, is a matter of theology and not merely of psychology of mood or affect. ‘We are not in the business of manipulating people nor of creating musically induced psychological environments, or even artistic environments.’ The question must not be, ‘Will it work?’ or ‘Will this create the right mood?’ but ‘What will articulate the word in such a way as to contribute to the whole action and to the word specific “moment” of corporate prayer which employs the form?’¹⁰¹ Given, therefore, that in sung prayer we are engaged in forming and expressing these emotions which constitute the very Christian life itself, if we use something

¹⁰⁰ Brown, *Good Taste*, 23.

¹⁰¹ Don E. Saliers, ‘The Integrity of Sung Prayer’, *Worship*, Vol.55 (1981), No.4, 290ff.

tensionless or ultra bright, if we settle for the pompous, the grandiose, or romantically self-assertive, our praying will be the same. It is easy to confuse depth of emotion with intensity of immediate feeling. By the same token, precocious complexity can make faith experience in liturgy difficult and cluttered.

Although John D. Witvliet echoes Burch Brown's call for discernment, his approach is not so much aesthetic as concerned with the nature of the relationship between music and the activity of worship. Indeed, he speaks of the need to ground musical and aesthetic judgements in 'something other than taste', namely 'liturgical discernment'.¹⁰² His approach is to highlight aspects of the continuing discussion where protagonists are not managing to meet and to introduce further considerations into each. For example, we need to discern between what is about style and mechanics and what about content, purpose and form. We should try to avoid judgements based on socio-economic classism, but rather ask how much we are driven by spiritual concerns and how much by attitudes about the company we keep.¹⁰³ Having done this, however, he raises the radical question as to whether our Christian communities are strong enough to sustain the kind of honest, open process of discernment that is needed. A lot of our problems, he feels, are not as much about worship as about the shape of the Christian community.

The identification of areas in the continuing discussion which could lead to greater discernment was continued by Witvliet, in partnership with Emily Brink, in a contribution to an international consultation on 'The Place and Renewal of Worship in the Reformed Churches' in 1994. Four in particular are mentioned.¹⁰⁴ A helpful starting point is to define music as 'sung prayer', the area developed by Saliers (above), when it is seen to enact the personal, relational, self-giving encounter between God and the worshipping community. Second, the Reformed tradition has emphasised that music should be offered by the entire congregation, itself a profound witness to its experience of *koinonia*, where the musicians are not 'performers' but, rather, the congregation is the

¹⁰² John D. Witvliet, 'The Virtue of Liturgical Discernment': in Kroeker, ed., *Music in Christian Worship*, 93.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 95.

¹⁰⁴ Brink and Witvliet, 'Contemporary Developments', 339ff.

‘primary choir’. Third, the Reformed insistence on rigorous theological discourse should lead to consistency of practice and not, for example, proclaim God as transcendent but also personal, but only sing songs which emphasise the latter; or teach a high view of creation but disregard the potential contribution of visual artists. Finally, recalling Calvin’s view that the ‘upbuilding of the church ought to be variously accommodated to the customs of each nation and age’, it should be remembered that particularisation to a culture can be understood in such a way as to threaten the universal relevance of the gospel to *all* cultures, ‘local and global’.

Two things may be noted from the above survey of Protestant commentary on contemporary church music-making. One is the difference of approach between aesthetically-based judgements and evaluation in terms of music’s liturgical function. This dichotomy will be seen also running through the discussions within other branches of the church. The other feature worthy of note is that, although most, as might be expected in Protestant and Reformed traditions, give high place to theology in approaching evaluation, at the moment what is mainly offered are lists of guidelines and principles rather than coherent theological structures. That is not to say that Brown’s work on taste and aesthetics is not extensive and theologically-grounded, and Saliers has since set out to develop a more coherent theological approach, as we shall see in the next chapter. However, these authors have wished to address directly, and with urgency, the situation they observe and experience, and for this, Brown’s twelve assumptions for the guidance of discussion about preferences in church music,¹⁰⁵ Witvliet’s twelve questions for discussion between people with an interest in church music but taking different views,¹⁰⁶ and Wolterstorff’s five principles that relate to how music serves the ‘diverse actions of the liturgy’,¹⁰⁷ have been of great value.

¹⁰⁵ Frank Burch Brown, ‘Religious Meanings’, 152ff.

¹⁰⁶ John D. Witvliet, ‘The Virtue of Liturgical Discernment’, 92-95.

¹⁰⁷ Nicholas Wolterstorff, ‘Thinking About Church Music’, 11ff.

4. THE ANGLICAN CHURCHES

The distinctive style and quality of Anglican worship and the structures of its support and delivery has prompted its own range of study and analysis, addressing its particular case but readily applicable more broadly. In this section, most attention is paid to the Church of England, from which the largest number of provinces in the Anglican Communion derive, but writers from North America are also cited.

4.1 *In Tune with Heaven*, the Third Archbishops' Report

Reference is made later to the first and second Archbishops' Reports on church music, illustrative as they are of a particular critical approach no longer directly applied.¹⁰⁸ Of greater relevance to the issues being discussed in this thesis was the third of these reports, published in 1992.¹⁰⁹ Set up in 1988, its remit was 'to consider the place of music in the Church's worship and life; to survey the present situation with regard to music and musicians in the Churches both in Britain and world-wide; and to make recommendations'. The Commission took evidence, including from Anglican Churches outside England as well as from other denominations. In exploring the 'theological and theoretical background',¹¹⁰ the Report takes as its starting point the presence of music in the natural order. Music is an integral part of God's great act of creation, designed at base for communication, one of the most accessible and universal of all languages and especially suitable for religious ritual. But it also tells us something about God, reflecting various aspects of the divine nature. 'By means of it we may glimpse his majesty and his simplicity, his righteousness and his mercy, his power and his gentleness, his mystery and his love' (section 59).

Too often worship is planned with other priorities in mind than giving glory to God, viz. teaching, evangelism, or promoting fellowship. These things may in fact happen but they

¹⁰⁸ Below, pages 171ff.

¹⁰⁹ Report of the [Church of England] Archbishops' Commission on Church Music, *In Tune with Heaven* (London: Church House Publishing/London & Sydney: Hodder and Stoughton, 1992).

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 33-73.

are God's prerogative not ours. The relationship between public worship and personal prayer is of paramount importance, as is the need for a 'reservoir of prayerfulness' as an undercurrent to the liturgy. Music can assist this, as in the singing of choirs; so can silence – which has largely been lost to our worship (80-82). In worship, music is almost always used in conjunction with words. While music has a greater capacity for expressing subtleties of meaning, words are needed also. However, where speech can oversimplify, music can heighten the value and significance of the words. Language for worship is an issue today, some preferring the old, some the most widely acceptable. In church, however, words have to satisfy a number of needs and greater flexibility is required. Today, inclusive language brings a necessary corrective. Hymns and psalms are the most commonly set words, the music often being the stronger partner. Much music in worship, however, remains independent of words (124-136).

The power of music to foster and deepen the fellowship of the congregation is acknowledged, in mutual joy, encouragement and acceptance. It can also confront those present with the Gospel. It is not always possible to plan such things but we are not absolved from trying to plan as best as we may – the miracle performed by God is perhaps in direct proportion to the quality of material we offer. While it is true that some music is 'performed', this is for the benefit of everyone – who do not just listen but 'pray with their ears' (109-110). Some 'performers' may not have made explicit Christian commitment, but their contribution to worship is real, as is that of sculptors, embroiderers, architects, even publishers.

But what music can we offer? Some feel music with 'too much of the world about it' has no place in church, others find a priority in music that is instantly communicable. However, if a secular musical idiom is compatible with a Christian view of life, why should it not be used? It is dangerous to make too clear-cut a separation of life inside and outside a church building. Discernment, however, should be cultivated. The Report notes that the view that 'only the best is good enough for God' leads to difficulties with definitions. In the end, the question must be, 'Within the style which is suitable, comprehensible and helpful to my congregation, is this of the best quality I can find?' (167). Any style is potentially

appropriate for a particular act of worship. Diversity of preference arises from people differing enormously in their temperament and personalities. We must accept, too, that a once common musical language may no longer be so. Much sensitivity is called for, particularly in a rural setting where there are fewer options. The highest possible standard should be sought, whatever the style, as part of the church's offering to God. The popular notion that the standard of performance does not matter as long as it is sincere, however, has no justification (176-7). In questions of choice, 'it is important that neither within a congregation nor within the wider Church should there be a single group which assumes that it alone has the right approach' (185). The Report makes some 56 recommendations.

Any assessment of this report must welcome its thoroughness, its inclusiveness, and the support and encouragement it contains for all who are involved in the church's music. One of its strengths, its firm location within what is actually happening in music in the Anglican church and its concern with the pastoral dimension, may also serve to place a limit on its judgements from the outset. It might be observed that the report tends towards a functional role for music in worship,¹¹¹ starting from where the concerns are being expressed and weighting the analysis perhaps in the direction of the experience of the musicians involved. There is therefore a sense in which the judgments have to involve accommodation. However, if music is to be seen not so much as an adjunct to worship but as inherent in the act of worship itself, the criteria offered in the Report may not start far enough back. Thus, questions are still raised as to how to measure 'the best quality' in a given style, and whether, as is suggested, any style is 'suitable, comprehensible and helpful' without re-working or re-appropriating. Colin Buchanan makes the further criticism that the Report offers 'scanty treatment of music groups'; they are mentioned, but there is no solid discussion. Further, although this area is mentioned, perhaps the special problems and opportunities of Local Ecumenical Projects could have been addressed.¹¹²

¹¹¹ In making its initial survey, respondents were asked to choose from a list of what music might be seeking to achieve: a medium for evangelism, to establish a mood, to uplift the soul, to praise God, to help people pray, to promote corporate awareness, to intensify the words set.

¹¹² Sinclair J, *Keeping in Tune with Heaven*, Grove Worship Series No. 122 (Nottingham: Grove Books Ltd., 1992), 12-13.

4.2 The Royal School of Church Music

The Archbishops' Commission was set up following a proposal by Dr. Lionel Dakers, then the Director of the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM), a body which, although having world-wide influence, has a particular relationship with the Church of England. Both in its work and in its writing and reflection, the RSCM has made a major contribution to the music of the church and to the contemporary debate with which it is surrounded. For several decades after its founding by Sir Sydney Nicholson in 1927, the RSCM was associated with a search for excellence in the performance of church music, with the cathedrals of England seen as providing model and goal. In more recent years, however, this body has sought to support the church in 'achieving the best use of good music in worship – whatever the resources, whatever the styles'.¹¹³ This has been reflected in the expansion of its publications to include such compilations as *Sing With All My Soul*, where choruses and worship songs are given arrangements of sounder musical construction than some of the originals and which provide more interest for a choir.¹¹⁴

The policy of addressing the issues raised by praise and worship songs was particularly developed during the 1990s and was charted in the articles of Lionel Dakers' successor as Director, Harry Bramma,¹¹⁵ in *Church Music Quarterly*, where typically he would both challenge and affirm the repertoire being explored in many churches, even those affiliated to the RSCM. Thus he accepts that it is true that the worship song repertoire has broadened the devotional scope of worship, and acknowledges that there are times when the church 'needs to be immediately welcoming and informal'. However, he challenges the view that young people *require* lighter styles of music in worship, finding that a fourteen-year-old is just as likely to be engaged by traditional hymns and fine music in the classical tradition, a fact borne out in the experience of schools and youth orchestras – as well as of cathedral choirs. The facile assumption that the traditional will no longer do is not even supported by the music of the worship song, he finds, referring to a much heard composition of the time. 'A piece like "Majesty" is sub-Verdi – suitably orchestrated with brass and percussion, it

¹¹³ See www.rscm.com.

¹¹⁴ William Llewellyn, ed. *Sing With All My Soul* (Croydon: Royal School of Church Music, 1992).

¹¹⁵ Retired 1998.

would not sound too different from some of the marches in *Aida*'. It is more often the trimmings which are different – instrumentation, style of singing etc.¹¹⁶

Bramma, within this context of acceptance of diversity, calls, however, for 'rigorous assessment'. The criterion for such an assessment is, again, 'quality' in both music and words, which must be 'theologically appropriate', 'good poetry', and 'a help as a vehicle for the worshipper's response to the Word and the Sacraments'. Such a rigorous approach was necessary if people were to be encouraged through music and the arts to develop the whole of their personality. Where music is not approached with sufficient seriousness, and seen as an optional extra, this function will not be carried out. To guide people on the journey of faith 'not only means the teaching of Christian doctrines, but rather the teaching of how the precious talents and skills implanted in each human soul are capable of development as part of the redemptive process through which God brings wholeness and life to the whole created universe'.¹¹⁷

Bramma's successor, Professor John Harper,¹¹⁸ held office through a time of intensifying discussion and research, bringing the additional perspective of an academic background in liturgy as well as music.¹¹⁹ Harper saw that the time had come to go beyond commentary and analysis to tackle the situation that had developed. A contribution made to the Dublin gathering Ceiliúradh, which in 2000 made church music its focus, offered an overview of the current situation as he saw it:

Underlying the lecture are my concerns that the Church has lost its musical voice; that its ordained ministers can for the most part neither sing nor really understand the place of singing; that its people have in many instances lost the will and the skill to sing; that even its musicians, where they exist, are uncertain what to sing. ... Yet there is hope, because the ministers, the people and the musicians all sense that they ought to sing, that they need to sing, and that liturgy would be better if they did sing. ... For all the valiant attempts to

¹¹⁶ Harry Bramma, 'From the Director', *Church Music Quarterly*, October 1995.

¹¹⁷ Harry Bramma, 'From the Director', *Church Music Quarterly*, July 1993.

¹¹⁸ Harper was Director General of the RSCM 1998-2007, prior to which he was Professor of Music and Head of the School of Music, University of Wales Bangor. He is currently Director of the International Centre for Sacred Music Studies, Bangor University and RSCM Research Professor in the School of Music.

¹¹⁹ John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century: Historical Introduction and Guide for Students and Musicians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

find a liturgical music suited to the contemporary Church, we still have to discover what to sing, and how to sing it.¹²⁰

A prime factor in creating this situation was the complexity, in comparison with the time of the RSCM's founding, of the choices facing local churches: an increased range of liturgies, a plethora of publications offering congregational song (commercially-driven rather than denominationally provided), a diversity of style and idiom, and different approaches as to what in worship should be sung and how it should be presented. In addition, costs relating to choral provision had risen, and recruitment for choirs had become more difficult, these all related to a wider decline in a culture of singing. The situation was not helped, he further observed, by a continuing absence of education and training in theology, spirituality, and liturgy, affecting both church musicians and clergy.

Three themes are given prominence in this lecture and are developed in some of Harper's other writings and presentations. One is the loss of a core style and repertoire, a strong and stable body of material enshrining certain principles and capable of acting as a model for contemporary composition. This deficiency results less from deliberate policy than from movements in thought and attitude in contemporary society. Here, a loss of confidence in heritage and tradition¹²¹ is part and parcel of a post-modern culture 'where the elitist language and styles of the past (which have dominated the Church as well as all literate parts of society) are challenged by social and cultural phenomena which are both highly fragmented and selective, and also global and shared'.¹²² Coupled with this has been a move in the direction of 'pastoral liturgy' where greater attention is paid to enabling full participation on the part of the people as well as to the 'effect' that a liturgy has on those present. A result can be that 'the pressures of pastoral liturgy, and specifically the expectation of active musical participation, often force us to write and use music that may be readily accessible but is also anodyne or dull or incompetent or all three. Such music lacks both identity and integrity; it is no more than utilitarian'.¹²³

¹²⁰ John Harper, 'By the Waters of Babylon: Rediscovering the Voice of the Church', on www.cathedral.dublin.anglican.org/heritage/archive/cyber-archive/conference/2000-ceiliuradh/cell-prog.html

¹²¹ Perham, 'Grasping the Heel of Heaven', 12.

¹²² John Harper. 'Throughout All Generations'. *Church Music Quarterly*, December 2005, 7.

¹²³ Ibid.

In worship are embodied the traditions and the people who have gone before. How do we reflect that living tradition in the music of the church?¹²⁴ Within liturgy we have to find a way of embedding a core of sung praise and prayer, individual and collective, containing the qualities valued in the tradition of chant and contrapuntal polyphony. The desire to re-establish such a core should not be confused with conservatism, archaism or nostalgia¹²⁵ but seeks rather to express and display the true nature of liturgical music. Usually composition is an extension of the person of the composer, but liturgical music is the very reverse. Such music has to be part of a larger, collective identity; it has to contribute to the ‘larger music’ of the liturgy itself.¹²⁶ ‘The challenge for us is to define the voice ... whose strength lies not in artistic self sufficiency, but in its artistic limitation’; its wider context is important, drawing strength from and giving strength to that larger music.¹²⁷ This is not to dismiss music of an instantly accessible kind; the ‘rhetoric of persuasion’ has its place – for example, beyond liturgy as part of public witness and mission. That said, given the reality of the situation, in which more popular idioms are not confined to outreach contexts but are used liturgically, it may be that what is needed is a cluster of repertoires to suit the style and circumstances of particular examples of worship rather than a monolithic list.¹²⁸

A second theme that comes to the fore in Harper’s writings arises from engagement in the provision of musical settings for new liturgical texts, particularly to accompany the new Church of England resource *Common Worship*.¹²⁹ What is at issue here are new and different requirements arising out of contemporary liturgical practice. Surveying points of change in the practice of liturgy over the centuries (including the spread of popular devotions, the new spiritualities of Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the emphasis

¹²⁴ John Harper, ‘Renewing the Past in the Present: the Living Tradition of Church Music’; in Stephen Darlington and Alan Kreider, eds., *Composing Music for Worship* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2003), 171.

¹²⁵ Harper, ‘By the Waters of Babylon’, 10.

¹²⁶ Harper, ‘Renewing the Past’, 157.

¹²⁷ Harper, ‘By the Waters of Babylon’, 9.

¹²⁸ John Harper, ‘Engaging with the Past: the Early Irish Dimension’, *Church Music Quarterly*, March 2006, 15.

¹²⁹ *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000). In addition to this core volume, there are other volumes as well as downloadable resources: www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship.

on literal understanding through the use of the vernacular, the inclusion of hymnody and the provision for the parochial singing of responses, psalms and canticles by the people and not just by clergy and choirs in nineteenth-century Anglicanism), Harper takes the view that ‘the most radical phase is in progress now. Pastoral liturgy has offered the people not just more participation in the liturgy, but promises increasingly greater ownership of the liturgy’.¹³⁰

The *Common Worship* project undertaken by the RSCM, remarkable in itself for its commissioning by the Church of England at a time when the singing of liturgical texts had been declining, was noteworthy also for the prescription which was the result of a preliminary consultation, embracing a range of styles and idioms beyond what would have been recognised as typical of weekly worship even a few decades before. Before even the particular demands of this agenda were tackled was the underlying challenge of setting prose texts drafted by theologians and liturgists where ‘what may be intelligible, even elegant prose rarely lends itself to straightforward let alone imaginative musical setting’.¹³¹ Difficulties composers faced included: how to set an extended irregular prose text in a way that was rhythmic and upbeat; how catch the transient spirit of worship song and yet make something sufficiently durable for a book to have a life of several decades; how to make use of idioms of Taizé or Orthodoxy without the spirituality that lies beneath them; whether, with some of the most successful music for worship written recently being strophic, prose texts should be replaced with strophic ones.¹³² In the event, many, if not all, of these difficulties were overcome, or at least convincingly tackled, in *Music for Common Worship* and its companion volumes. Widely varied settings are supplied for eucharistic celebrations, including for the prayers themselves, for services of the Word, and for psalms and canticles. Not only is there traditional plainchant but contemporary settings which derive from this. With traditional psalm settings are ‘psalm-songs’ where the text is reworked and easily learned responses provided. Some liturgical texts are rendered in metre. The Introduction justifiably claims: ‘The books contain music for all those attending and sharing in worship. All of it can be sung by everyone

¹³⁰ Harper, ‘By the Waters of Babylon’, 4.

¹³¹ Ibid., 5.

¹³² Ibid., 10-11.

present'.¹³³

A final theme developed by Harper is the need for education and training of church musicians and clergy. This has always been something that the RSCM has addressed in its programmes, providing courses at international, national and regional level designed to support those who make the church's music. This is now taken to another level with the provision, through the International Centre for Sacred Music Studies at Bangor University, of distance-learning courses in music, theology and liturgy. The provision, delivered in a partnership of the University and the RSCM, now includes a Master's degree.

4.3 Other writings

Several other Anglican authors have made substantial contributions, two of which, Jeremy Begbie and Albert Blackwell, will be referred to in more detail in the following chapter. However, although both are engaged in pursuit of larger theological themes, they occasionally make reference in the bygoing to the 'issues on the ground' that concern other writers and practitioners. Inevitably, these include questions of quality and idiom. Blackwell addresses the 'rhetoric of persuasion', alluded to by Harper, when he expresses his dislike of 'music that is most insistent in its claims to be Christian'. It tries too hard to engender the feelings and convictions it harbours. 'To sing a sermon is to preach once too often'. Quoting Paul Westermeyer, he further comments: 'Much contemporary Christian music merely skims the effects off more substantial music and more profound texts. It is not surprising that the result is at best "poorly crafted attempts to tell God how we feel", and at worst "spiritual entertainment"'.¹³⁴ Begbie, discussing the way that music can create expectations but defer the satisfying of these, enabling the facing of tensions while providing the foretaste of resolution, is critical of Christian music which 'goes for the goal' in the most direct and predictable way. Music which truly partners worship must reflect the fact that the Christian disciple proceeds by paths which are not easy,

¹³³ John Harper, ed. *Music for Common Worship I: Music for Sunday Services* (Westhumble: RSCM, 2000). 5.

¹³⁴ Albert Blackwell, *The Sacred in Music* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1999), 150-151.

straightforward or expected.¹³⁵ This is further illustrated in his discussion about the layers of metric waves which contribute to music's momentum, waves of intensification and release which never fully resolve. In contrast, so much popular music evinces very low levels of such waves, reducing the possibilities of meaning, leaving little to chance, the kind of music which defines and holds markets, which channels particular types of consumption, which dictates a response. Such music might be found at odds with the movements within worship.¹³⁶

A common response to contemporary developments is the compilation of symposia where the variety and flux of the current situation is tackled with the strength of authors writing together. Sometimes authors have been deliberately invited from a broad spectrum of denominations,¹³⁷ others come from a group of authors largely working in the same milieu. One collection of mainly Anglican writings has already been noted.¹³⁸ More recently, *Creative Chords* centred round the role of music in Christian education.¹³⁹ The volume is worth far more attention than the brief reference it is given here, where only one or two contributions regarding the use of popular idioms in worship, the most insistent theme in contemporary discussion, are cited.

For some, the very fact of music for worship written in popular styles means that quality is lacking. John Sloboda issues a timely corrective in his reminder that the contemporary oeuvre will always compare unfavourably with the surviving historical material:

By and large, what survives from ages past is the interesting and unusual rather than the trite. Contemporary music, on the other hand, contains much which is of little value, precisely because history has not been able to weed out that which people do not value. I am convinced that many of the value judgements about genres suitable for worship are based on average 'triteness' ratings on the pieces of each genre known to an individual. On these grounds, the average pop track is bound to be more trite than the average sixteenth-century anthem in press. The average piece of music especially written for

¹³⁵ Jeremy Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), Chapter 4 passim.

¹³⁶ Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, Chapter 6 passim.

¹³⁷ Examples are: Kroeker, ed., *Music in Christian Worship* and Robin A. Leaver and Joyce Ann Zimmerman, *Liturgy and Music: Lifetime Learning* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998).

¹³⁸ Above, page 33.

¹³⁹ Jeff Astley, Timothy Hone and Mark Savage, eds., *Creative Chords: Studies in Music, Theology and Christian Formation* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2000).

church use in the twentieth century is also likely to be more trite than the historical canon.¹⁴⁰

This does not, of course, mean that music of any quality should be accepted for use in worship, leaving it to time to winnow the good from the bad. It is today, after all, that it is being used within worship and the meaning and quality of worship is affected by weakness in any part. Peter Porter recalls Stravinsky's wry remark, 'One should worship God with a little talent if one has any.'¹⁴¹ There is also the danger of keeping at arm's length those whose musical sensibilities are well developed. Timothy Hone warns that if the church fails to continue to find a home for music of real intellectual and spiritual power, and simply reduces its musical activity to the disposable, instantly accessible musical products which are typical of our fast food culture, then it risks alienating those with creative sensitivity and intellectual curiosity. Noting that some of the best selling recordings around 2000 had been of sacred music (for example, Tavener, Gorècki, as well as music from an earlier day, such as Hildegard, or from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, music which in its day would only be heard by wealthy patrons), Hone finds it ironic that at the same time many churches seem to be rejecting their musical heritage, running the risk of alienating many serious seekers.¹⁴²

5. ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCUMENTS AND COMMENTARY

5.1 Vatican documents

5.1.1 Documents from the Second Vatican Council

There is a sense in which the debate about church music today is being driven by the Roman Catholic Church, partly because of the global reach of that Church but partly also because the Second Vatican Council's pronouncements represented a radical departure from the practice of that Church to date. The resulting breadth and urgency of the

¹⁴⁰ John Sloboda, 'Music and Worship: a Psychologist's Perspective'; in Astley, Hone and Savage, eds., *Creative Chords*, 122-3.

¹⁴¹ Peter Porter, 'Depth Soundings', *Eureka Street*, Vol.7, No.6 (July/August 1997), 30.

¹⁴² Timothy Hone, 'When in Our Music God is Glorified'; in Astley, Hone and Savage, eds., *Creative Chords*, 143-4.

response of Catholic authors, practitioners, and researchers has served to sharpen the issues, with the result that work on these matters in other parts of the church has taken place within an awareness of the progress of that discussion.

The work of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) in the area of liturgy and music had been preceded by a number of pronouncements of varying status and over several decades. The *motu proprio*, *Tra le sollecitudini*, of Pius X in 1903, which sought to move the singing of Gregorian chant from specialists (choir and cantors) to the assembly itself,¹⁴³ at least for the common of the mass, had called for a ban on music of an operatic type. Then there was the apostolic constitution of Pius XI in 1928, *Divini cultus*, which expressed concerns at the employment of ‘modern forms of music’ and the use of instruments other than the organ in worship. Further, it prescribed that seminarians be taught Gregorian chant, called for choirs and choir schools to be set up locally, and recommended that congregations be encouraged to join in the singing of the chant. In 1947 came the encyclical *Mediator Dei*, which took a quite different tack in drawing attention to the importance (under certain conditions) of not severing sacred music from the potential contribution of the surrounding musical culture. The later encyclical *Musicae sacrae disciplina* (1955) went further and proposed a place for popular religious song, a stance confirmed by the Congregation of Rites’ instruction *Musica Sacra et Sacra Liturgia* 1958, while adding certain restrictions.

The Second Vatican Council produced some sixteen promulgated texts of which one was the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy – Sacrosanctum Concilium*.¹⁴⁴ As Leaver and Zimmerman remark, this document ‘has served as a blueprint and impetus for liturgical renewal among virtually all Christian sacramental denominations ... truly, an ecumenical document’.¹⁴⁵ The sixth chapter concerned music. This had been necessarily brief and has

¹⁴³ ‘Assembly’ is the term employed in Catholic documents for the congregation, and is now increasingly being used across the church.

¹⁴⁴ See footnote 11.

¹⁴⁵ Leaver and Zimmerman, eds., *Liturgy and Music*, ix.

received subsequent augmentation, most notably in 1967 by an Instruction, *Musicam Sacram*.¹⁴⁶

The *Sacrosanctum Concilium* chapter on Sacred Music acknowledges music as a greater treasure in the church than any other art. It is intimately linked with liturgical action, which latter is given a more noble form when sacred rites are solemnised in song. Choirs are to be promoted but so also must the faithful be able to contribute. Gregorian chant is recognised as ‘proper to the Roman liturgy’ and should be given pride of place, but other kinds of sacred music, especially polyphony, ‘are by no means excluded’. In certain parts of the world, ‘especially in mission lands’, ‘a suitable place’ is to be given to a people’s own musical traditions. The pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, adding ‘a wonderful splendour’, but other instruments also may be admitted ‘on condition that they are suitable for sacred use, or can be made so’. Composers must not confine themselves to works for large choirs but also for small choirs and to producing music to enable ‘the active participation of the entire assembly of the faithful’. All forms of music – if they are proven to be ‘true art’ and ‘as long as they do not hinder the active participation of the faithful and do not contradict the dignity, the seriousness and the sanctity of the liturgy’ – are pronounced in principle suitable for worship.

Musicam Sacram was an extended document which, some three years later, set out to apply the principles and directives found in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* to the particular situations and circumstances faced by worshipping communities round the Roman Catholic world and to assist in their implementation. This wide-ranging document, embracing both the theoretical and the practical, is usually taken along with the parent document when musical issues are being discussed.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ *Documents on the Liturgy*, nos.4122-4190, pp.1293-306. Also http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_instr_19670305_musicam-sacram_en.html.

¹⁴⁷ For discussion of this and all documents emanating from the Roman Catholic Church, see Jan Michael Joncas, *From Sacred Song to Ritual Music: Twentieth-Century Understandings of Roman Catholic Worship Music* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997).

5.1.2 2003 Chirograph of Pope John Paul II

Two more recent documents, from the current Pope and his immediate predecessor, are particularly worthy of mention. Pope John Paul II's 2003 Chirograph for the Centenary of *Tra le Sollecitudini*¹⁴⁸ is a 'creative re-reading of the original Apostolic Letter in the light of contemporary developments'.¹⁴⁹ This continues to give pride of place to Gregorian chant but is also open to music which is imbued with the same spirit. Music which is ugly in style, distasteful in expression and uninspired, is unsuitable for liturgical celebrations, but no guidance is given as to what would give rise to these negative judgements. 'Renewed and deeper thought about the principles' is required, but this would embrace the 'special development in popular religious song' that followed Vatican II.¹⁵⁰

Although it uses the same three categories of evaluation as the 1903 document – holiness, true art, and universality – Joncas finds that the document breaks new ground. Holiness is no longer solely in the music itself but in the degree to which it is intimately linked with liturgical action. Not all without distinction that is outside the temple is fit to cross its threshold. As to form, liturgical music must be true art, but this alone will not suffice; it must also meet the specific prerequisites of the liturgy – adhering to the text, synchronising with the time and moment, appropriately reflecting the gestures. A question is raised by a new interpretation of the concept of 'universality', which in the original document intended that all 'should receive a good impression when hearing Roman Catholic worship music sung and played'.¹⁵¹ For later documents, this reception was narrowed to recognition within the particular culture which produced the music. In this document, however, reception rests with all together even as different cultures make their own adaptations. Joncas's assessment is that the document does not advance the discussion very far but offers insights in a number of areas.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/2003/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20031203_musica-cra_en.html.

¹⁴⁹ Jan Michael Joncas, 'An Anniversary Song', in Kroeker, ed., *Music in Christian Worship*, 47.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 52.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 58.

¹⁵² Ibid., 60-61.

5.1.3 *Sacramentum Caritatis* 2007

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI issued an Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*,¹⁵³ which, although it primarily concerned the Eucharist, contained some reference to music. Particular emphasis is placed on the ‘liturgical category of beauty’, which is ‘no mere aestheticism, but the concrete way in which the truth of God’s love in Christ encounters us, attracts us and delights us’ (35). Continuing to discuss the *Ars Celebrandi*, liturgical song is seen as having a pre-eminent place, here put firmly in a traditional context. Augustine is cited: ‘the new man sings a new song. Singing is an expression of joy and, if we consider the matter, an expression of love’. The document warns against the view that one song is as good as another. The church’s musical heritage must not be lost. The meaning of the liturgy is to be respected; text, music, execution should correspond to the mystery being celebrated. Finally, Gregorian chant must be ‘suitably esteemed and employed as the chant proper to the Roman liturgy’ (42).

The document also revisits the Second Vatican Council’s call for the ‘active, full and fruitful participation of the entire People of God’. Misunderstandings have arisen if participation is seen to refer to mere external activity during the celebration. ‘In fact, the active participation called for by the Council must be understood in more substantial terms, on the basis of a greater awareness of the mystery being celebrated and its relationship to daily life’ (52). Active participation is not per se equivalent to the exercise of a specific ministry, and the specific function of the priest is to be guarded (53).

5.2 Other reports and documents

5.2.1 *Universa Laus*

The work of this international study group for liturgical music is placed first because, although it was not officially constituted until 1966, several participants had already been working and publishing, and their contribution to the Second Vatican Council was seminal. Afterwards, *Universa Laus* was active in the interpretation and implementation

¹⁵³www.vatican.va/holy.father/benedict_xvi/apost.exhortations/documents/hf_ben_xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis_en.html.

of the reforms of the Council. The group's manifesto, not published in an English translation until 1992¹⁵⁴ consists of a two-part document, comprising 'points of reference' and 'beliefs held in common', together with an extended commentary. The document is of high importance for the whole church, for its searching nature, its acknowledgement of the cultural factor, and its attempts to offer criteria for evaluation.

The opening statement, 'Music in Christian Celebration', was largely based on an earlier text by Joseph Gelineau. At the outset, the statement defines its terms, finding those usually applied (e.g. 'church music', 'liturgical music') somewhat nebulous. The group's preference is for *(Christian) ritual music* ('Points of Reference', 1.3). The central affirmation, what the group called a 'working *credo*', has been that every act of singing is a 'vocal gesture' which possesses both bodily roots and a socio-cultural environment. This has involved the group in incursions into the areas of semiology, cultural anthropology and socio-psychology. The statement gives pride of place to the assembly who gather to celebrate; even when one person is playing or singing, it is always a communal action (3.2). Each person's contribution is seen not as a professional contribution but as a sign of the action of the Holy Spirit in the group; thus the concern is not simply with competence but with 'ministry' (3.4).

Singing is the 'primary point of departure' (meaning anything from recitative to melismatic singing).¹⁵⁵ Since music has multiple uses in liturgical celebration (transmission of a message, the savouring or assimilation of recited words, singing 'with one voice', pure praise for its own sake), different genres will be brought into play. Text and music do not remain distinct when put together; the act of singing enlarges both so that there is a new, single unity. 'Thanks to language, music can articulate the name of the God of Jesus Christ; through music, the human voice can attempt to utter the unutterable' (5.1-5). The special place given to singing does not exclude the use of instruments (6), both for accompaniment

¹⁵⁴ Claude Duchesneau and Michael Veuthey, *Music and Liturgy: the Universa Laus Document and Commentary*, translated by Paul Inwood (Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1992).

¹⁵⁵ Edward Foley, Capuchin, has produced a seminal study of music in the earliest Christian church, suggesting that any gap between what was spoken and what sung was negligible. Edward Foley, *Foundations of Christian Music: the Music of Pre-Constantinian Christianity*, Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 22-23 (Nottingham: Grove Books, 1992).

and on their own. A musical act may constitute a rite (bells, music for meditation) or be integral to a rite (procession). Music can turn a moment into an event, give a certain quality to the passage of time, signify a feast, assist in contemplation, and can itself become an act of prayer. Composers listen and respond in such a way as to discover the appropriate ways for a group to express its faith.

Ritual music, like every symbolic sign, refers to something beyond itself. ‘Taken in terms of faith, music for the believer becomes the *sacramentum* and the *mysterion* of the realities being celebrated. ... In the final analysis, ritual music is always aiming at whole human individuals and their free and unfettered encounter in the assembly of believers with the God of Jesus Christ’ (7.4-5). The strength, indeed the necessity, of using an existing repertoire (8) is acknowledged – for practical reasons, aesthetic considerations, and for the rich connotations that have accrued to a work. There is a place, however, for improvisation and spontaneity as well as for the new and unfamiliar; this adds to the uniqueness of any one celebration.

Having fully discussed the function and practice of Christian ritual music, the statement turns to questions of quality and value, a section (9) of special interest to this study. At the outset, it is noted that there are two sets of criteria commonly applied: the first expressed in terms such as *dignity, beauty, appropriateness, good taste, quality, art* etc., and the second in terms of the *holiness* of the action which has to be *prayerful* and *sacred* (the approach favoured by the authors). In an important section, the document calls for musicians to pay close attention to the reactions of the assembly, ‘not to adjust themselves to the taste of their public’ but to recognise the parameters in that particular assembly within which the signs and rites of the Christian faith can unfold. Then, in company with their fellow-believers, they search for the most suitable forms (9.4).

These points form part of the main text, and are elaborated upon in a Commentary which is appended. The commentary on the matter just mentioned notes that opinions as to quality are always diverse and depend on cultural habits (what people are accustomed to, what the schools teach, what music groups tend to perform, and the fashions imposed by the media).

It is observed that musicians tend to favour the first of the two sets of criteria, although they tend to be applied in a negative way, i.e. it is their absence that is noted. Further, it is often assumed that if music is ‘not beautiful’ it is therefore incapable of promoting the conditions for prayer.¹⁵⁶

Because of the lack of precision in the language used to assess the quality and suitability of music for worship, the document claims that it is not possible to devise formulae which can be applied across the board. However, in advocating a patient and persistent programme of listening on the part of musicians to try and define parameters, it is not being suggested that ‘a mean average’ is a sufficient criterion, since such a solution would level out the differences and exclude the most precise and trenchant opinions – the ones that ought particularly to be heard. Instead, a ‘working space’ is to be sought which strikes a balance between the music ‘that is capable of drawing forth or supporting the radical conversion demanded of every believer’ and the degree of receptivity of the believers gathered together.¹⁵⁷

This statement, worthy of universal study, is not only analytical but visionary. The ultimate goal of the music it has discussed is no less than ‘to make manifest and make real a new humanity in the risen Jesus Christ’. Its truth, worth, and grace are measured by whether ‘it allows believers to cry out the *Kyrie eleisons* of the oppressed, to sing the *Alleluias* of those restored to life, and to uphold the *Maranatha* of the faithful in the hope of the coming of the Kingdom’ (10.1). The final call in the statement is missionary and inclusive: ‘many voices are still missing’, either because the Gospel has not been heard or because, even though present, it needs to be renewed (10.3). The last words are ‘Let there be *Universa Laus* – universal praise’.

5.2.2 *Music in Catholic Worship*¹⁵⁸

The work of *Universa Laus* has been influential, with echoes being heard particularly in subsequent Catholic reports and documents. In 1972 the American Catholic bishops judged

¹⁵⁶ *Universa Laus, Music and Liturgy*, 103.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 103-4.

¹⁵⁸ *Music in Catholic Worship* (American) Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, 1972.

that the time was ripe to provide guidelines further to those outlined in *Musicam Sacram*. The latter had spoken of the celebration requiring ‘songs which correspond to the needs, spiritual preparation, and attitudes of the participants’, acknowledging that groups might have different needs, and different competence (15).¹⁵⁹ However, the liturgy may in some circumstances need to function as a tool for evangelism, and ‘greater liberty’ should be taken so that the music may serve as a ‘bridge to faith as well as an expression of it’ (16). Within one assembly, there could be diversity, and people should be ready to share not only in what they liked but also in what they disliked (17). Music must serve and never dominate; it is to express and share the gift of faith and to nourish and strengthen interior commitment; it is to heighten the texts, and, imparting a sense of unity and setting the tone for the celebration, adds its own peculiar quality of joy and enthusiasm (23). It also unveils a dimension of meaning and feeling, ideas and intuitions which words alone cannot yield (24). On this foundation, the document moves on to discuss evaluation.

This calls for a threefold judgement to be made – musical, liturgical, pastoral, a trio of perspectives which have been widely taken up in subsequent discussion. Competent musicians must be the judge of the technical adequacy of music, so that the cheap and trite are not admitted (26). Music of quality should be created and found, from past and present and from other churches, but in the meantime St Augustine’s warning should be heeded: ‘Do not allow yourselves to be offended by the imperfect while you strive for the perfect’ (27). Style and value, however, are two distinct judgements (28). Not all good music is suitable for the liturgy (29). As to liturgical judgements, one should not select elaborate music for less important parts of the mass (31). The text should be interpreted correctly (32). Congregation, cantor, choir and instrumentalists have their distinctive roles (33). Music must be within the performers’ ability and the congregation should also be comfortable with it (34). A competent cantor can perform an important ministry without a display of virtuosity (35). Choirs should be diligently promoted but should work in relation to the whole body of the faithful (36). The document also addresses the role of organ and instruments, the placing of organ and choir. The pastoral question to be put is how far the music helps people express their faith in this time, place, and culture (39, 40). Those

¹⁵⁹ The numbers refer to paragraphs in *Music in Catholic Worship*.

responsible for planning the music should have a clear understanding of the structure of the liturgy (42).

5.2.3 The Milwaukee Report

The continuing debate between two broad emphases, typified in the exchanges in the USA between *Universa Laus* and *Musica Sacra* as described by Virgil Funk,¹⁶⁰ came to further expression in two reports published within a few years of each other, and both containing criticism of *Music in Catholic Worship (MCW)*. The Report of the Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers (1992)¹⁶¹ continued themes outlined in *Music in Christian Worship*, the discussion of church music in terms of its ritual function but giving weight also to the culture within and from which music and ritual were being offered. Believing that previous documents were deficient in philosophical or theological reflection on Christian ritual, being too tied to the function of music within the liturgy, the Report approached its task by developing the concept of sacramentality, seeing music not as a mere adjunct but, like icons, avenues of approach to God and a medium in which the numinous may become present. Music is part of the symbolic language of worship, and part of its symbolic 'thrust' is the fact that it takes place within the constraints of temporality, enabling a recognition of the God who is active in creation and history, a God both present and hidden, who calls us into dialogue, whom we perceive as personal, a God who has intervened to transform our temporal existence. Music plays its part further in helping create the unity that is part and parcel of that transformation, opening up the assembly to new meaning in sung texts, heightening the experience, expressing and shaping our image of God.

Given the nature of worship and of music in worship, the report recognises the necessity of a thoughtful approach to the realisation of ritual events. No casual approach will suffice but the assembly must seek its own formation and growth the better to participate. Musicians also need to be formed, not only in music but in liturgy as well. Of importance is the cultural background to worship. Recognising the cross-cultural situation many are in, it warns against seeing the Northern culture, which has coloured the inherited tradition, as the

¹⁶⁰ Above, pages 12f.

¹⁶¹ www.archmil.org/resources/userfiles/TheMilwaukeeStatement.pdf. © 1992 Archdiocese of Milwaukee

norm. The report advocates the deliberate cultivation of good material in the appropriate cultural style, the learning of another culture's music (a powerful gesture of hospitality), and the development of multi-lingual resources. Implicit criticism of traditional patterns is to be found in its proposal for a wider definition of musical leadership as calling forth of the song of the assembly, a warning against visually dominant musicians (rather, they should be aurally central) and an acceptance of the role of technology. Music should be within the assembly's grasp, simple enough to be sung relatively well on first hearing, but substantial enough to inspire and to stand up to repetition.

Although the Milwaukee Report affirms many of the insights of the earlier *MCW*, it is critical of the latter's seeming to put musical, liturgical and pastoral judgements against each other. These are not three separate judgements set, as it were, in chronological progression. What is required is a single judgement, albeit with several facets. To achieve this, there is a need to integrate various perspectives. Quality is not an abstract element, and must be judged within the style and genre in which it is written. Performance is another factor in judging quality. Judgements of this kind are to be arrived at only with the participation of musicians competent in the music of the genre in question.

5.2.4 The Snowbird Statement

The Snowbird statement emanated from consultations held in 1992 and 1993, and was published in 1995, with 18 signatures.¹⁶² The statement criticised the emphasis on the pragmatic, the ideological and the political seen in the Milwaukee Report, which could only obscure the primary necessity for the music of worship to be aesthetically beautiful. The more music had this quality the better it could be the sacramental sign of God's presence. Quality was about excellence in composition and performance, and this should apply even in the case of the smallest parish. Aesthetically high-quality music had the ability to make rituals more powerful. Today much ritual music was hampered by an excessive academicism and an artless rationality. Snowbird's main critique of *MCW* was that out of the three categories to be assessed in terms of evaluation, only the liturgical and the pastoral had been given adequate treatment, leaving the musical undeveloped.

¹⁶² www.canticanova.com/articles/liturgy/art9o1.htm

Questions about quality could not be compromised by cultural considerations but must remain objective, adjudicated by people with training and talent. The compilers challenged the stylistic boundaries within which Milwaukee moved; many styles used today were dialects of the same larger musical language, and a discussion of musical quality across such boundaries was valid.

One of the most serious problems in present-day practice was the indiscriminate incorporation of an entertainment or therapeutic ethos into liturgical music. To adopt popular musical styles and idioms was to court the danger of embracing sentimentality, consumerism, individualism, introversion and passivity. Snowbird affirmed the need for renewal in liturgy but called the church to find this renewal in the characteristic traditions of Catholic music, and to reinvest in existing structures, offering better education and training to choirs (choir schools were by no means obsolete, nor did the existence of choirs threaten the role of the congregation), parish musicians, seminarians, and the congregation itself. Full-time professional musicians should be affirmed. A common repertoire should replace the plethora of publications. The statement proposed a programme which included the recovery of Gregorian chant, the exploration of vernacular chant, the revival of office hymns and the exploration of new strophic hymns, the drawing of melodic cells from the church's collective memory to use in a new way, the discouragement of recorded music, the need for more choices to be made centrally rather than this be left to local situations, and the affirmation of the pipe organ.

5.2.5 The Second Universa Laus Report

The policy of listening with the aim of learning what, and how, we should sing together, rather than seek objective criteria, is given a new dimension in a more recent report from the Universa Laus group,¹⁶³ where listening is seen as an essential component of liturgy. There can be no liturgy without a communal listening to the word of God. It is the primary form of participation and is what leads to response in prayer, song and actions. Listening engenders silence, which is not to be defined as the absence of noise. Word and song take

¹⁶³ *Music in Liturgies*, Universa Laus Report II, translated Paul Inwood; in *Music in Liturgy* (Spring 2004), 20-22.

their value from the silence from which they are born and from the silence they bring about. Ministers are the ‘listening ones’ and create the conditions necessary for the ear of the assembly to be opened. Ministers of song, likewise, listen to the assembly in order to awaken its own voice and set free its own song.

Singing brings the whole human being into play. The report notes that in moving from speech to singing, the voice tends to become richer, clearer, more sonorous. The singing voice illuminates the word and one’s entire being. It also unifies, both individual and assembly. To listen with others is different from listening as an individual, interiorising the voices of others and thus what they are listening to. Thus it gives rise to a new quality in the relationship between persons. It also leads to actions of Christian service. What makes music sacred is not something measurable objectively but the baptised singing in and with Christ. Beauty also does not exist by itself but arises from place, rite or the singing assembly. Music and singing is a hospitable act, opening people to listening, creating a space of mystical identity where human beings can share the things that are fundamental to them. So that the least may find a place there, the music must not be inaccessible. Yet it has the particular character of being both well known and unheard of as the faithful, like travellers sojourning in a strange land, produce a new song, one which accompanies and expresses the passage from death to life which is the fruit of all sacramental action.

5.2.6 *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*¹⁶⁴

In this sequel (2007) to *Music in Catholic Worship*, the American Bishops seek to provide specific direction to those preparing for the celebration of the liturgy. This being so, the report does not add greatly to the former discussion of the nature of and the evaluation of liturgical music. A new note is a greater emphasis on the tradition of the church, a dimension that had, and has, been less in evidence as the new themes of Vatican II were tackled. Congregations should be able to say or sing in Latin the parts of the Mass which pertain to them. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* had affirmed that Gregorian chant is specially suited to the Roman liturgy and should be given pride of place. To this end, each

¹⁶⁴ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* (2007); www.usccb.org/liturgy/SingToTheLord.pdf.

worshipping community, ‘including all age groups and all ethnic groups’, should at a minimum learn certain (named) settings of the Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei. Not only should the organ be given its place where an instrument exists but, when planning for the building or renovation of churches, the possibility of incorporating (or retaining) an organ should be taken into account. The report also discusses the role of instrumental music, both in accompaniment and in its own right. Improvisation is to be encouraged. There are instructions about the placing of cantor and choir, and a warning against the use of recorded music in liturgy due to its lack of authenticity.

Matters of choice and evaluation are not absent. Musicians are encouraged to seek guidance as to the quality of sacredness by returning to the church’s treasury of sacred music. Composers are to concentrate on craftsmanship and artistic excellence in all musical genres. Only artistically sound music will be effective and endure over time. To admit to the liturgy the cheap, the trite, or the musical cliché often found in secular popular songs is to cheapen the liturgy, to expose it to ridicule, and to invite failure. The report recalls the three categories made famous by its predecessor, but acknowledges subsequent criticism in saying that these are to be seen not as three judgements but aspects of one evaluation, a process which required co-operation, consultation, collaboration. and mutual respect. The report then goes into much detail about the duties of the different music ministries and the partnering of different liturgies and their constituent parts with appropriate music.

It was perhaps to be expected that this document would attract criticism from Musica Sacra (the Church Music Association of America), concerned as this body is with the preservation of the tradition of Gregorian chant as a model for contemporary sacred music, but William Mahrt, its President,¹⁶⁵ says more than simply to state a position.¹⁶⁶ Describing it as a thoroughgoing replacement of *Music in Catholic Worship*, he finds that the document incorporates the views of many without reconciling them. ‘Everyone will find something in the document to like, but the astute will notice that these very things are in conflict with other statements in the same document.’ Although there is a return of

¹⁶⁵ And Associate Professor of Music at Stanford University.

¹⁶⁶ William Mahrt, ‘A Critique of *Sing to the Lord*’, *Sacred Music* (The Church Music Association of America), Spring 2008.

an emphasis on chant, it is not sufficiently strong, and there is no mention of the special status of sacred polyphony. Mahrt also expresses concern that, in allowing the use of instruments, the document ‘avoids the vexed issue of whether instruments with strong associations with popular music, such as those of a rock band, but even the piano, are really apt for sacred use’.

Where the critique most impinges on our purpose is when it notes that ‘some more negative aspects’, survivals from *Music in Catholic Worship*, particularly the anthropocentric focus upon the action of the congregation and its external participation, rather than being in balance with a theocentric focus upon giving glory to God. The emphasis in the document is mainly upon what the congregation does, and how music expresses their faith; even the action of Christ is mentioned in the context of how the assembly joins itself to it. For this is recommended easily memorised refrains, ‘limited in number and repeated often’. This, believes Mahrt, is a ‘prescription for triviality’. With regard to the three criteria first propagated in the earlier document (Mahrt notes that the first – the musical judgement – was ‘relegated to the dustbin before the ink was dry on it’), now priority is denied to any of the three judgments, with the musical judgment listed last. Even though the document regularly uses terms like sacred music and sacred liturgy, there is practically nothing about what constitutes the sacred and its role in the liturgy.

5.3 Individual writings

There has been a great volume of individual writing among Catholics in the aftermath of Vatican II and it is not possible to give a full account here. Reference will be made to a small handful of representative authors who have made significant contributions to the debate. A strong voice has been Edward Foley whose seminal study of music in the earliest Christian church has already been referred to.¹⁶⁷ Beginning an earlier study of

¹⁶⁷ See footnote 155

music in ritual,¹⁶⁸ he ruefully remarks that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is now quoted in support of almost any stance taken on music in the Catholic church. James MacMillan is also has misgivings about subsequent misinterpretation of the intentions of the Council:

Mostly I am distressed, I must admit. I see the principles of Vatican II being thoroughly misrepresented and the tradition of the Church being thrown out. ... There has been an iconoclasm in the Catholic Church about what it means to be a Catholic in a cultural sense, in a musical sense. For the last ten years ... there has been an embarrassment about the great wealth of Catholic tradition, and that was never meant to be. If you look through the Vatican II documents, plainsong, for example, is held up to be one of the most spiritual channels of music and a music suitable to be used in a modern liturgy. The great choral tradition is also discussed as an aid for the faithful to a deeper spiritual understanding, and that seems to be disappearing as well.¹⁶⁹

The perception that contemporary developments in church music have resulted in a marked loss of musical quality is commonly held. A *Tablet* essay¹⁷⁰ on 'Hymns fit for Eurovision' accuses the Church of 'exercising a preferential option for poor quality', and attacks contemporary hymns for their manipulation of emotional responses and for exploiting a merely physiological reaction ('organised breathlessness') to achieve a spurious enthusiasm. This lack of quality is attributed to the preference for popular contemporary styles of music which grew as congregations and composers sought to satisfy the need, as expressed by Vatican II, to increase participation on the part of the assembly and draw upon the cultural background of participants. This seeming departure from traditional practice gave rise to a false dichotomy between the 'classical' styles which had characterised the past and the more immediately accessible sounds of the mass market music of the day. Francis Mannion is one who questions the 'either .. or' nature of this position, arguing that the debate has become confused by a false juxtaposition of pairs of alternatives. 'Neither the false proletarianism that would give people only popular music, nor the false elitism that would deny them anything else is in keeping with the teaching of Vatican II.' Much of the seemingly profound discussion about 'traditional' and 'contemporary' music, 'performance' versus 'assembly' music, 'classical' versus 'folk'

¹⁶⁸ Edward Foley, *Music in Ritual: A Pre-Theological Investigation*, American Essays in Liturgy 1 (Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1984), 1.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with James MacMillan, 'Creation and the Composer'; in Astley, Hone and Savage, eds., *Creative Chords*, 19.

¹⁷⁰ Cecilia Hatt, 'Hymns fit for Eurovision', *Tablet*, 22nd June, 1996, 823.

music would be revealed by adequate musicological analysis, he believes, as profoundly unscholarly and isolationist.¹⁷¹

However, it is recognised by this and other authors that we are not here simply talking about musical repertoire but a difference in atmosphere that is commonly found, the trend towards a greater intimacy, friendliness, informality, and spontaneity in worship. Such qualities were characteristic of the charismatic renewal movement of recent decades but Mannion and others would connect this to a growing trend in society at large. Mannion speaks of the ‘intimisation of society’ or ‘the process by which social complexity is eschewed in favour of a model of human coexistence that puts ultimate value on bonds of intimacy, personal closeness, and radical familiarity’.¹⁷² As Michael Hawn warns, intimisation can by-pass social complexity, resulting in a gathering of the like-minded rather than a true worshipping community.¹⁷³

Quoting Mannion’s interpretation of this trend as reflecting a belief that only intimate relationships are authentic and worthwhile, John Baldovin remarks that those who say: ‘I don’t like those liturgies where everyone is anonymous’, may actually be saying: ‘I don’t want to deal with people who are different from me’. He acknowledges that there is nothing wrong with friendliness and warmth, and no reason why Christian worship needs to be stiff. However, to his mind ritual always contains an inbuilt formal element. There need be no conflict between friendliness and formality, unless we imagine that the only real relationships are intimate. True intimacy is achieved only in gatherings of a limited number of people. Furthermore, truly participative liturgies need to be fostered in a context of the local church community, with much of the getting-to-know-one-another occurring outside the liturgy. The responsibility for engendering the quality of participation in worship cannot lie only with the worship itself. Baldovin remarks insightfully that attempts to engender participation can often fail to allow people to

¹⁷¹ Francis Mannion, ‘The Need for an Adequate Liturgical Musicology’ (Forum). *Worship*, vol. 64, 1990, 78-81.

¹⁷² Quoted C. Michael Hawn, ‘Reverse Missions: Global Singing for Local Congregations’; in Kroeker, ed., *Music in Christian Worship*, 105.

¹⁷³ C. Michael Hawn, *Gather into One: Praying and Singing Globally* (Cambridge and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), xv.

participate genuinely and in accord with their individual capacities. The eucharist, like every ritual, must be a blank screen on which people can project their own needs and preoccupations. He cites with disapproval the presiding minister who scolds the assembly for not saying ‘Good morning’ heartily enough. This misplaces the focus of worship on the president and attempts to prescribe a response.¹⁷⁴

Nathan Mitchell, who writes a commentary of consistently high quality, in each issue of the journal *Worship*, on Roman Catholic worship practice, notes that one of the most frequently heard complaints about the Catholic liturgy since Vatican II is that church music has suffered a ‘loss of mystery’ and that with this has gone a decline in decorum and reverence among participants,¹⁷⁵ a criticism that would be echoed in other traditions. One cause, it is suggested, has been an undue emphasis on the community of worshippers rather than a focus on the divine transcendence. Mitchell notes that there is a complex relationship between reverence, worship, and culture. How does cultural variation shape reverence among diverse peoples? Is reverence a bodily or a mental attitude? Can reverence survive in cultures that prize informality? Is reverence simply the same thing as decorous demeanor? Mitchell believes that, far from the problem being the emphasis on the assembly, there can be no transcendence without community, nor indeed *vice versa*. The best metaphor is not the two-way street but the perfect circle that embraces God and humankind in a reconciled relation made possible by Christ’s cross. Here Mitchell introduces an insight which might helpfully be applied to music. Reverence, he suggests, is our means of being or becoming right-sized, creaturely. It begins when we no longer confuse ourselves with God.¹⁷⁶

Baldovin suggests other factors which have contributed to the departure from more traditional practices in worship and the move towards liturgical materials which will not put obstacles in people’s way. Given the frenetic pace of life in post-industrial society, Sunday will most likely be the only time that most Christians come into formal contact

¹⁷⁴ John F. Baldovin, ‘Must Eucharist Do Everything?’; in Leaver and Zimmerman, *Liturgy and Music*, 124.

¹⁷⁵ Nathan D. Mitchell, ‘The Amen Corner’, *Worship*, Vol.78 (2004), No.1, 61.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

with the church, and so the opportunity is taken of getting everything in. The problem is that once liturgy becomes an instrument to achieve other ends it loses its fundamental *raison d'être*.¹⁷⁷ The result has been the emergence of an attitude that the primary reason for worship is edification. 'I often think our major problem in worship today has to do not so much with the liturgy itself as with our lack of faith that what is done when we come together to worship really is "for the life of the world".'¹⁷⁸ Baldovin argues that if the weekly Eucharist is to be successful it must be allowed to be precisely what it is: the ritual celebration of the dying and rising of Christ. He further notes the prevalence of the drive to entertain in our culture and regrets its influence on worship, which, though there may be an 'entertainment factor', must always avoid the temptation of being mere entertainment. Worship must be grounded in the conviction that our ritual celebration of the dying and rising of Christ is vital to the welfare of the world. A Sunday eucharist that does not attempt to do too much will, in the final analysis, do a great deal.¹⁷⁹

The balance is difficult to strike between reflecting the culture from which worship arises – for example, in the valuing of informality – and the challenge worship makes to the partial and the broken that is characteristic both within and between cultures. Some would emphasize the sovereignty of the cult. Leading Roman Catholic liturgist Aidan Kavanagh trenchantly argues that the accommodation of liturgy to culture invariably results in the former's demise. This is not to say that liturgy can exist apart from culture. People who take part in liturgies inevitably live in and are immersed in a particular culture, yet the liturgy sustains a certain ascetic tension in relation to its cultural milieu. The liturgy sympathises, so to speak, with its culture's plight, but it never seeks to offer cheap or superficial fixes. Liturgy's duty is to en flesh and serve *logos*, and true liturgy celebrates nothing but the active presence of the Three in all. To do other is like a gifted poet who throws up his craft to write doggerel for television commercials. 'Liturgy either dies at the hands of the Trendy, or it slays them. Neither alternative is comfortable, but the last is what Christian *logos* ultimately requires.'¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 118-119.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 124.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 127.

¹⁸⁰ Quoted Funk, 'Secular Music in the Liturgy?', 193.

The present Pope, as Michael O'Connor notes, would tend towards the same view. For Benedict, 'the Bible not only provides the texts for singing, it also underwrites a particular kind of performance. The method of singing the psalms that the Christian Church inherited from the synagogue – we think of reciting notes, cadential figures, speech rhythms – is for Benedict an artistic style that reflects a religious decision'.¹⁸¹ This became the 'standard that served as orientation for any new singing of the new song',¹⁸² leading to a distinctive Christian musical culture. There is no place in this for 'pop' music, 'rock' music, nor indeed for contemporary 'classical' music. The first of the three is a consumer product 'evaluated according to how well it sells'.¹⁸³ With little that is sound or enduring about it, it offers a 'cult of the banal'.¹⁸⁴ For its part, rock music 'seeks redemption by way of liberation from the personality and its responsibility' and is 'diametrically opposed to the Christian notions of redemption and freedom'.¹⁸⁵ Again, contemporary classical music has made a virtue out of difficulty and inaccessibility and has manoeuvred itself into 'an elitist ghetto'.¹⁸⁶ For Benedict, the renewal of church music is to be found within the church's own tradition, as developed in *Sacramentum Caritatis*, for example.¹⁸⁷

A different kind of analysis of the malaise in Catholic music is offered by Peter Jeffery, writing as a chant historian and responding specifically to the recent document *Liturgiam authenticam*. He laments the refusal of the drafters to consult with those who might have given advice as to what texts were suitable for being set to music, and expresses the view that those responsible for this and earlier documents do not have sufficient awareness of the nature and place of music in the liturgy. Like Harnoncourt,¹⁸⁸ he finds little appreciation in the Vatican II pronouncements of the role of the non-verbal in liturgy.

¹⁸¹ Michael O'Connor, 'Return to the Source: Pope Benedict on the Way Forward for Church Music', *Church Music Quarterly*, December 2005, 19.

¹⁸² Joseph Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord* (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 104. Quoted O'Connor

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 95. Quoted O'Connor.

¹⁸⁴ Joseph Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 148. Quoted O'Connor, 20.

¹⁸⁵ Ratzinger, *New Song*, 124. Quoted O'Connor, 20.

¹⁸⁶ Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 147. Quoted O'Connor, 20.

¹⁸⁷ Above, page 56.

¹⁸⁸ Above, page 11.

The Vatican II approach is taken entirely from the point of view of texts and the currency is scholarly knowledge: non-verbal media are seen as having been incorporated as poor substitutes for the textual intelligibility that was lost when Latin came no longer to be understood, and once intelligibility was restored in vernacular versions there was no need for those non-verbal elements.¹⁸⁹ The result has been, Jeffery would assert, that classically-trained musicians, who had an intuitive sense of liturgy-as-performance but were unable to articulate it in Vatican II terms, found themselves ostracised as part of the problem. He suggests that the continuing debate about the language of the liturgy rests in the fact that attempts at renewal carry within them the unstated assumption of many intellectuals that culture, including liturgy, is primarily verbal and linguistic. This word-centred approach has provoked new and unforeseen difficulties that increasingly need addressing, and of which *Liturgiam authenticam* is a direct and regrettable result. We have seen a similar concern expressed in the Anglican Communion.¹⁹⁰

6 DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER PROPOSALS

The oldest terms in which the debate about church music has been conducted arises from the perceived dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, when it was believed that secular music's origins rendered it unsuitable for liturgical use because of its worldly (theatre, dance, debauchery) associations. Some of the critiques that we have examined have continued to speak in these terms, believing that the messages secular music carries would intrude on the liturgy. For Pope Benedict, pop, rock and secular 'classical' music are too culturally embedded to be worthy partners for the cult; Duchesneau laments the 'jazz and show' music that has become commonplace in the French church; Frank Burch Brown questions whether the 'tone of voice' of some music proposed for liturgical use is too close to ordering a pizza or cheering a touchdown; Barthel finds secular music requested for weddings speaks of love as understood on Broadway rather than as taught

¹⁸⁹ Peter Jeffery, 'A Chant Historian Reads *Liturgiam Authenticam*, 4 Human and Angelic Tongues', *Worship* Vol. 78 (2004), No. 4, 333f.

¹⁹⁰ Above, page 49.

by the gospel; and the Snowbird signatories fear that to adopt popular musical styles and idioms is to court the danger of embracing sentimentality, consumerism, individualism, introversion and passivity.

The same debate comes in another guise as the musical traditions of the church are contrasted with contemporary styles and genres, when the terms ‘classical’ and ‘popular’ may also be employed. So for Musica Sacra, the treasury of sacred music is held to be the norm, a model upon which any contemporary music designed to encourage fuller participation should be based. Snowbird similarly seeks the renewal of church music through re-appropriating the tradition, criticising the indiscriminate incorporation of an entertainment or therapeutic ethos into liturgical music. A solution for Funk is the mixing of musical ‘codes’ so that connections are made between these opposite ends of the spectrum, leading to the strengthening of the contemporary idiom, finding examples in Proulx and Haugen. Rimaud, similarly, writes texts for composers such as Akepsimas and Berthier in whose work the traditional sacred forms are evident.¹⁹¹

However, with the renewed emphasis on the need for worship to affirm and reflect, as it seeks to transform, the patterns of the world’s life, and the necessity for full participation on the part of the assembly, there is now wide acceptance that music of secular origin has a place in liturgy. Thus we have seen *Universa Laus* proposing the term ‘Christian ritual music’, implying that all musical styles and genres are potentially usable in liturgy.¹⁹² Such an approach immediately gives rise to matters of choice and evaluation. *Music in Catholic Worship* recognised the multi-dimensional nature of such evaluation and attempted to meet this in its proposal for a threefold judgement – musical, pastoral, and liturgical.¹⁹³ This was greeted with disquiet in some quarters who felt that the report in practice gave prominence to the latter two, and thereafter there developed a consensus that these should be one judgement with three components.

How is such a single judgement to be made? The survey which makes up the bulk of this

¹⁹¹ Above, pages 14 and 15.

¹⁹² Above, page 57.

¹⁹³ Above, page 60.

chapter reveals two general approaches, summed up by *Universa Laus* in their original report: firstly, as based around questions of aesthetics, which include matters of taste, style, beauty and quality and, second, around questions relating to the liturgical context, which are to do with holiness, prayerfulness, and liturgical function. In the former camp would be the Snowbird signatories, claiming that high quality music has the ability to make rituals more powerful, and enhance participation, whereas Witvliet believes it necessary to ground musical and aesthetic judgements in ‘something other than taste’, with the weight on ‘liturgical discernment’.¹⁹⁴

In practice, however, there is considerable overlap among those who are seriously addressing the issues and not just stating personal preferences. Funk, whose favoured criteria would relate to liturgical suitability (a stance characteristic of most Catholics), sees also the need for well-crafted music, since the opposite cannot endure the requirements of ritual repetition. ‘Music must obey the rules of music.’¹⁹⁵ The new report from the American Catholic Bishops sends us back to the tradition to learn wherein lies the quality of sacredness, which it suggests resides, at least in part, in ‘craftsmanship and artistic excellence’.¹⁹⁶ In turn, those whose starting point is with aesthetics acknowledge that what is ‘good’ may be differently perceived. Thus Frank Burch Brown speaks of ‘ecumenical taste’ and calls for ‘discernment’ which takes into account variations between different people’s perceptions of what carries meaning and quality.¹⁹⁷ This is not far from the second *Universa Laus* report which suggests that what makes music sacred is not something measurable objectively but the baptised singing in and with Christ. Beauty, it goes on, does not exist by itself but arises from place, rite or the singing assembly.¹⁹⁸

This survey has not only described a range of views but has also chronicled a debate in which there has been growth and development. Two main aspects to this might be identified, both still in process.

¹⁹⁴ Above, page 40

¹⁹⁵ Funk, ‘Secular Music in the Liturgy?’, 191.

¹⁹⁶ Above, page 65

¹⁹⁷ Above, page 39.

¹⁹⁸ Above, page 64.

1. With the developments of the 1950s and 1960s, as described in the section on the Liturgical Movement, strong positions were taken up on both sides of the argument, as then defined. Although there is clearly still much controversy, there is among those who are in a position to guide and influence the terms of the debate a realisation that a period of effective mutual listening – ‘discernment’ – must be entered upon. The terms of such a process are beginning to emerge in the writings and reports that have been surveyed but ways have still to be developed which will bring this within reach of local congregations.

2. The second area of growth has been in the search for theological foundations upon which to continue the discernment, one which will go behind and beyond the two approaches that have been identified, what *Universa Laus* designated as quality and value. As has already been noted, it has been more common to offer guidelines than develop cohesive theologies. Writers such as Hamoncourt, Wolterstorff, Witvliet, Saliers, Hone and Burch Brown have clearly felt that at this point the greatest need is to ‘throw a net round’ the diversity of views and approaches and to find some common ground from which to move forward. These, and other lists of guidelines, contribute a great deal to the discussion and would be of help in a project such as that being proposed in the final chapter of this thesis. However, since the time of the Turku Congress, as has already been noted, several writers have continued their work into developing more coherent theological resources for the continuing debate. This thesis sets out to contribute both to the process of discernment and the materials with whose help it might be conducted in local congregations.

SOME THEOLOGICAL PROPOSALS

1. INTRODUCTION

Running through the writings and reports reviewed in the previous chapter was a conviction that a theological basis for the evaluation of liturgical music needed to be developed. Several different approaches have been mooted and this chapter outlines some of these. However, the main purpose of the chapter is not so much to seek the one approach or group of approaches that can best be applied to the task of evaluation as to identify with their help possible ways in which the language of music itself and that of theology may be expressed in terms of each other. Can these two quite different modes of discourse communicate the same kind of information? Can information expressed in one medium be recognised and read by the other? Therefore, in these outlines the focus of the description will be on the border crossings between theology, liturgy and music that are suggested or enabled by the approaches in question. The shape of the chapter is as follows:

1. Although most of the proposals to be cited relate to music in liturgy, the chapter will begin by exploring work by Jeremy Begbie, particularly in his *Theology, Music and Time* (2000) which shows how connections may be made between music and theology, an enquiry directed towards a renewed understanding of theological propositions through the medium of music. Reference will also be made to a more recent work, *Resounding Truth* (2007), which addresses the music of society at large.
2. The approaches that will form the next section of the chapter seek in theology a basis for understanding the role of music in liturgy and criteria for the evaluation of particular compositions. Some of these accounts represent more developed work by writers referred to in the previous chapter; others are additional proposals which could have importance for this enquiry.
3. Work by Mark David Parsons in codifying current attempts to develop a theology for liturgical music is then reviewed, and the approaches outlined in the present

chapter submitted to the critical scheme that he has developed. His call for a more integrated approach is noted.

4. It will be proposed that this last be sought in the narrower field of ecclesiology, particularly liturgical ecclesiology, with reference to foundational work by Erik Routley from the 1950s to the 1980s and to the current writings of Gordon Lathrop.

2. JEREMY BEGBIE

2.1 *Theology, Music and Time*

In 1997, an important project was launched at Cambridge to explore theology through the arts. It was based on two premises: that theology can be understood as ‘Christian faith seeking wisdom’,¹ and that the arts are not merely decoration or entertainment or even self-expression but vehicles of discovery. The project enabled academics in different fields of theological work to meet and talk with musicians, poets, dramatists and sculptors. The first phase of the project culminated in September 2000 with an arts festival called ‘Sounding the Depths’, which featured four newly commissioned works: a dramatic piece of musical theatre, a play, a colossal permanent sculpture in Ely Cathedral, and an oratorio. During the conception and construction of these works of art, artists and theologians entered into dialogue in a spirit of prayer over an extended period. A volume of the same title, edited by Jeremy Begbie, recorded these deliberations.²

Begbie’s *Theology, Music and Time* may therefore be seen to have grown not purely from an academic seed-bed but from direct encounter between theology and music, mainly, in the case of the book, as mediated by musicology. In it, Begbie explores the thesis that ‘music can serve to enrich and advance theology, extending our wisdom about God, God’s relation to us and the world at large’.³ His chosen task is to approach doctrinal themes through music in the hope of interpreting, re-conceiving and revitalising the understanding and expression of these. Begbie seeks to restart a

¹ See, for example, Jeremy Begbie, ‘New Insights Through Art’; in *Chrysalis Seed Arts*, October 2007, an account of the Theology Through the Arts project, 1.
<http://www.cs.org.nz/files/docs/Begbie%20Jeremy%20Oct%2007.pdf>.

² Jeremy Begbie, ed., *Sounding the Depths: A Theology Through the Arts* (SCM Press, 2002).

³ Jeremy Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3.

dialogue between music and doctrine, noting that, whereas in previous centuries councils and church spokesmen had much to say about music in theological terms, in recent centuries such a discussion has been muted. In the twentieth century, while connections were made between theology and literature and the visual arts, there was no sustained treatment in respect of music. Arguments can be offered for maintaining this silence, one reason being ‘the opacity of the process of musical communication’, but this does not for him rule out the attempt he proposes.

Begbie derives his raw material not only from doctrine but from the heart of ‘the new musicology’, to use the term coined by Lawrence Kramer in 1990. This movement away from the stance that regarded musical meaning as ‘locked up in its own autonomous zone’ allowed Begbie to make connections between music and the many temporal processes which shape our life in the world, and, of course, between music and time itself.⁴ He offers four specific connections between the musical and the extra-musical: it is now commonplace in musicology to emphasise the social and cultural embeddedness of musical practices; music-making and hearing arise from an engagement with the distinctive configurations of the physical world we inhabit; musical practice is inescapably bodily; music has very strong connections with our emotional life.⁵ His argument draws on the work of many musicologists and philosophers, including Langer on presentational symbolism, Roger Scruton’s account of emotional response to musical sounds, Saussure’s semiotic approach, but he follows most closely the proposals of Victor Zuckerkandl, upon whom he draws extensively, who had written: ‘there is hardly a phenomenon that can tell us more about time and temporality than can music’.⁶

The route chosen is through the temporality of music, from which he derives conceptual tools for ‘exploring, clarifying and re-conceiving the dynamics of God’s world and his ways with the world’. Music can enable us not only to enrich our understanding of the character of time but also our theological wisdom about time – ‘time as intrinsic to God’s creation, and what it means to “live peaceably” with time

⁴ A more detailed examination of the shifts in the field of musicology which support Begbie’s approach is given in chapter 5.

⁵ Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 12-15.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 6. See below page 173 for further reference to the work of Zuckerkandl.

by being caught up in the redeemed temporality of Jesus Christ'.⁷ In the course of the exploration, Begbie shows how music can not only articulate, clarify and deepen some central doctrines but also 'correct' certain imperfectly grasped theological patterns of thought which 'have done more harm than good'.⁸

Western 'tonal' music, which is felt as directional, as driving towards rest and closure, participates in temporality through rhythm interacting with metre, a metre which is not just 'local' to a sequence of bars but which can overarch whole sections of music, whole compositions, and indeed beyond. How music relates to time is not in terms of a passage through time, where there is a beginning, a middle, and an end, not 'sliding in sequence down a time line'⁹ but in the interconnectedness of successive tones and metrical beats internally and dynamically related.¹⁰ Such an understanding challenges oversimplified conceptions of history and indeed of immortality, in which the past recedes and the future is yet to come. Just as in music tones die to give way to others and the present metre is still connected with itself in past and future, not only has the past not 'retreated down the time-line' but the future is already present.¹¹

Music thus helps us to address an age which is time-pressured, where time horizons have shortened to the point where the present is all there is, where there is discomfort with narratives.¹² The belief that to experience fully the enriching order of creation requires a distancing from the temporal world is called in question. Music demonstrates that there can be ordered change and that change need not imply chaos. It challenges the assumption that something which takes time to be what it is is of less value than something not subject to time; duration is not a mark of fallenness. Music releases us from the assumption that limited duration is of necessity problematic; indeed it can show that it is an expression of divine generosity. A limited duration can be beneficial; God has allowed us all the time we need.¹³

⁷ Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 271.

⁸ Ibid., 272.

⁹ Ibid., 44.

¹⁰ Ibid., 57.

¹¹ Ibid., 58-67.

¹² Ibid., 72-74.

¹³ Ibid., 85-96.

Begbie continues the exploration, noting, in relation to the doctrine of salvation, how music, while able to generate the expectation which corresponds to the 'eager longing' of creation (Romans 8:19ff), can engender the patience of waiting creatively within the 'texture' of tensions in the present.¹⁴ Further, referring back to the discussion of levels of musical waves when fulfilments serve to heighten rather than resolve, he suggests that music rescues us from seeing the eschatological as the point before which no fulfilment is possible, and re-inforces the true biblical model of the multi-levelled character of divine promise and fulfilment. The musical present is charged with the future, that toward which the present is directed. Again the mechanistic 'time-line' model (which is also challenged by contemporary culture) is countered, as in the music the end can be announced in the middle of the present, or we may hear a present whose future we have already experienced. Each partial fulfilment is a limited realisation of the end / the future / the Parousia, as the original announcement is amplified and re-interpreted, is adapted and hope strengthened. The Parousia can be seen not as an event in time but as related to the present and, as well as the future of being, coming to all times simultaneously in a single instant.¹⁵

It is at this point that Begbie enters a caution about the way theological discourse can be applied in the case of music, a matter close to the heart of the present study. While we may apply theological resonances in music in a way instructive for theology itself, and by implication for the way music is used by the church, 'this does not mean that we can instantly translate our findings into a project which outlaws some types of music and promotes others in order to guarantee a specific theological "effect" on the hearers. Musical communication depends on a complexity of intersecting variables; any intelligent enquiry into the effects of music would do well to remember this complexity'.¹⁶ At other times in his study, Begbie has sounded a similar warning about the hazards of making a doctrinal critique of music. Writing about Tavener's intention to provide music that offers a sonic approximation to eternity, for example, he reminds us that music does not translate into straightforward statements, capable of

¹⁴ Ibid., 104.

¹⁵ Jurgen Moltmann, quoted *idem.*, 122.

¹⁶ Ibid., 175.

evaluation and criticism. Can it be shown that a particular piece of music reflects such an intention or not? The doctrinal critique of music is a hazardous business.¹⁷

These warnings are surely justified and in proceeding to seek theological principles for application to music for worship we must take care not to place on the music a weight of detailed meaning that it cannot carry. Nevertheless Begbie is warm in his encouragement that others might take ‘theology through music’ into other fields of theology and other types of musical expression,¹⁸ just as in *Voicing Creation’s Praise* he hoped that his work would ‘open up paths along which others might usefully travel’.¹⁹ Begbie’s is an enquiry which looks at theology from a musical perspective. In the present study the perspective is reversed but it takes courage from the confident passages that have been opened up between these two very different modes of communication.

2.2 Resounding Truth

This recent work²⁰ also sets its sights wider than the sanctuary and seeks to discover ‘Christian wisdom’ about the music we encounter at large in the world. Recognising the power and importance of music in the life of society, the book not only brings theological insight to bear on music of all genres and idioms but acknowledges the ability of music both to form the Christian community for mission and to provide a bridge for the gospel into the wider world. The theological enquiry of the book has its starting point in the doctrine of creation, asking three questions: what kind of Creator creates? what kind of cosmos does the Creator create and relate to? and what kind of calling do Christians have in this cosmos? Doctrine in this reading is seen as jolting perspectives and shaking up the way people view things. It invites a different perception of the world and the making of connections between things perceived in the world, as well as what is perceived in the world and what perceived in Scripture. It asks, ‘Why not try thinking about music *this* way?’ In this approach, both theology and music are read on their own terms and enriching and helpful connections made. It will be seen that other writers have taken the doctrine of creation as their starting

¹⁷ Ibid., 145.

¹⁸ Ibid., 271.

¹⁹ Jeremy Begbie, *Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 258.

²⁰ Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (London: SPCK, 2007).

point (in terms of liturgical music), but it would be interesting at a later date to try to extend the application of the thorough treatment of the doctrines as set out in this book to liturgical music.

3. LITURGICAL MUSIC AS RESPONSE TO CREATION AND REDEMPTION

For a number of theologians concerned with music in worship, the doctrines of creation and redemption have also acted as starting point. We have already found Harnoncourt surveying the place of sound and music in the development of humankind as creature, leading to a position where singing in liturgy is seen as expressive of the transformative encounter with God.²¹ Another example is Thomas Troeger, for whom similarly it is the act of singing that ties humanity into the acts of creation and redemption, and the transformation that results.²² In this reading, music is not so much a metaphor or symbol but a physical expression of these doctrines. Like Begbie, who had lamented the lack of Christian intellectual energy devoted to music in recent times,²³ Troeger notes the lack of a rigorous approach to church music in the present day.

The turn towards individualistic piety, the objectification of reality that characterized the scientific revolution and the enlightenment, the rise of romanticism, and the breakdown of accepted authority through the modern era eroded the integration of Christian theology and classical thought. We now live with the results: the church no longer possesses a common conceptual framework for understanding the place of music in the life of faith, and musicians often feel the burden of the collapsed system of meanings, values, and understandings.²⁴

Troeger notes, however, that this is part of a larger fragmentation, citing as an example the way that, in preaching, classical rhetoric has given way to a proliferation of homiletical forms and styles. This is not necessarily to be decried, and indeed could lead to new creativity (as the destruction of the temple and exile led to a more expansive vision of God). Observing that the considerable activity in church music

²¹ Above, page 12.

²² Thomas Troeger, 'For God Risk Everything: Reconstructing a Theology of Church Music', *Reformed Liturgy and Music*, Vol.33 (1999), No.3, 3-7.

²³ Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth*, 14.

²⁴ Troeger, 'For God Risk Everything', 4.

‘has given rise to scant theological reflection as to its purpose’, he develops his proposal under three headings: creation, salvation and discipleship.

Singing requires us to use the materiality of who we are in praise of the One who has *created* and formed us. ‘We do not just think theological thoughts about creation, we actualize the doctrine as we fill our lungs with air and send it through the larynx and against the soft and hard structures of the mouth into the air.’²⁵ The act itself requires the use of body and brain, consonance with others doing the same, producing physical sound that gives shape to other sounds in the created world. Good singing requires fusion of all our faculties. Thus is obeyed the first and greatest commandment, to love God ‘with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength’ (Mark 12:33). ‘It takes the heart to focus our will and our emotion, it takes the understanding to shape a phrase and inflect the meaning, and it takes physical strength to support a column of air that will support the sound that supports the song that supports the praise of God.’²⁶ Troeger notes that while, also, we praise through attentively listening to others, the doctrine of creation actualised through song makes it clear that any liturgical practice that does not allow adequately for the singing of the whole people of God is a truncated expression of biblical faith.

Church song embodies the doctrine of *salvation*. We who sing are part of the sinfulness of the world, and this may be brought home to us in the act of making music. From the sense of inferiority that has been given to many who have been told or who have come to believe that they do not have the capacity to sing, through to the unavoidable truth that in singing together we make mistakes, fail in commitment, lose concentration, we are led to a lively awareness that we are in need of rescue. With this is the understanding that what we offer is not dependent on the adequacy of our efforts but the saving, gracious nature of the One who is the object of our praises. This conviction, held against self-knowledge, gives musical expression to the doctrine of salvation.

To participate in church song is to be given an experience of *discipleship*. There is a quality of commitment required of the church musician that is analogous to Christian

²⁵ Ibid., 5.

²⁶ Ibid.

discipleship. Musicians know the cost of what they do, in terms of time and energy; they also embark on a path of growth, in the development of skill; they allow themselves to be challenged by what they sing; they appreciate more sharply the need for acceptance and interaction with others, with all the difficulties and blessings that this brings.

Troeger discusses the implications of such a theological approach for the quality of church music. From doctrine and discipleship, as outlined, we may build a theological framework for understanding the theological and pastoral dynamics that lie within church song. They also suggest why it is inadequate to settle for the least challenging or most popular style of music simply because it is immediately accessible. If we refuse to water down the gospel, to seek the disciplined life, to grow into maturity, but offer music and lyrics that are too weak to endure over time, we will really be saying: Talk about discipleship but do not embody it in your song and your worship.

4. MUSIC AS INTEGRAL TO THE LITURGY

In the seminal volume, *The Study of Liturgy*, Joseph Gelineau,²⁷ whose work has been of great influence in Roman Catholic practice and reflection, observes that it is not until the modern period that there is any systematic attempt at theological reflection on the role of music in liturgy. Three out of ‘many different approaches’ that he chooses to pursue are those afforded by a Christian understanding of man, by the history of music in the liturgy, and by an analysis of ritual activity. In Begbie and Troeger, we have already noted authors who have appealed to the first of the three and it is to the two latter that we now turn. Roman Catholic authors in particular have taken as their starting point for theological reflection the liturgy itself, having in mind the affirmation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that music is ‘a necessary and integral part of the solemn liturgy’. For Irmgard Pahl at Turku, at least part of the answer about the nature of liturgical music is to be found by studying the liturgy itself and deriving from this the necessary characteristics of its music. In the previous chapter, the results of Pahl’s own reflections were listed, issuing in seven propositions.²⁸ As

²⁷ Joseph Gelineau, ‘Music and Singing in the Liturgy’; in Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright and Edward Yarnold SJ, eds., *The Study of Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 1978), 440-454. A second revised edition, with the addition of Paul Bradshaw as an editor, was published in 1992.

²⁸ Above, page 11.

Mary McGann has put it, music is integral to all that takes place in worship, affecting the whole continuum of the action and the manner in which the community makes meaning within liturgical events.²⁹

Developing this, Gelineau observes that singing, while placing the individual creature in right relation to the Creator, also serves the corporate nature of the liturgy, where bodily movements can be synchronized, voices fused together such that ‘only one voice is heard’, touching on the essential mystery of the church as *koinonia*. Indeed, Gelineau claims that to celebrate the liturgy without singing and music is to mutilate it. As a festal gathering, it ‘needs singing if the sign is to be really complete’. Instruments should be seen as an extension of the human voice and body, widening the capacity for song. He notes that a clear distinction between music and speech was not part of the cultural milieu in the times when Christian liturgy was developing.³⁰ At that time, rhythmic and melodic features were incorporated into certain types of speech and Scripture references suggest ‘an intense lyrical quality’ in liturgical assemblies. ‘When the Book of Revelation describes the many groups which sing Amen, Alleluia, Holy, and other hymns to God and to the Lamb, the author is using his own experience as a model for the practice of heaven.’³¹

Creating a spectrum which has word-based proclamation at one extremity and the *jubilus*, pure vocal music without words, at the other, Gelineau charts the intermediate stages where words and music are in different balance to each other: music such as psalmody where the onus is more on the words than the melody; chant where the music evolves organically from the words and neither is more important than the other; the hymn where the leading of the melody, the regularity of the rhythm, cadences, and repetition cause the musical elements to predominate; the acclamation, ‘the human cry, developed and stylized’ – the cry for help of an oppressed people (Maranatha, Hosanna), the prayer of intercession (Kyrie eleison), the heart-felt ratification of covenant and revelation (Amen), the joy of a people which is saved (Alleluia), high points in the assembly where the content of the words is of less

²⁹ Mary McGann, *Exploring Music as Worship and Theology: Research in Liturgical Practice* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 26.

³⁰ A more extensive exploration of the origins of music in liturgy is made in Edward Foley, ‘Foundations of Christian Music: The Music of Pre-Constantinian Christianity’, *Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study* 22-23 (Nottingham: Grove Books Ltd., 1992).

³¹ Jones, Wainright and Yarnold, *Study of Liturgy* (original edition), 444.

importance than the vocal and corporal activity itself.³²

The work of Gelineau and his associates greatly influenced the outcome of the Second Vatican Council as regards music and liturgy, and flowered into the report of the group *Universa Laus* which has already been discussed.³³ Since the Council, considerable development has taken place among Catholic scholars, not only in theoretical study of the relationship of music to liturgy but in the study and observation of liturgical practice. Mary McGann is one such, whose research based on one particular African-American liturgical community has contributed to the development of modes of analysis of liturgical musical practice and also to the discipline of liturgical studies itself. In approaching an analysis of her findings, McGann opts for those six theological dimensions of Christian worship considered by theologians to be perennial and enduring: that worship is theological-Trinitarian, pneumatological, sacramental, biblical, ecclesiological, and eschatological. She takes the insights of contemporary liturgical theologians as the springboard for her exploration.

Worship music as theological-Trinitarian. Worship is not about God but of God, it is a fresh experience of God's self-disclosure and self-communication. How this is experienced is uniquely mediated through the complex forms of human communication and action a community cultivates. Music, as one of the many 'languages' of ritual action, is able to evoke a sense of the presence of God, of Christ, of the Spirit. If the style of its performance media is a primary way by which a community 'accesses a God who wills to approach and be approached',³⁴ how are these described, understood, mediated, and experienced in a particular community's performance. What new images of God's action emerge? Behind McGann's proposals lies a study she had carried out in an African-American Roman Catholic congregation whose main musical idiom is that known as 'gospel', and she draws on that experience to illustrate each of her points. In this case, the music is described as pulsing, moving, engaging, full of power and energy. Drums are essential as catalysts for movement. Singing and accompaniment styles are rhythmic, even percussive.

³² Ibid., 452-3.

³³ Above, pages 56ff.

³⁴ Frank Burch Brown, quoted McGann, *Exploring Music*, 68.

Music is meant to be ‘felt and not only heard’, suggesting that members of the community perceive God’s action in worship to encompass body and spirit, mind and heart – indeed the whole person. God is thus known as a source of life, dynamism, movement, motion and emotion. Musical-liturgical style may also be significantly related to how Christian worship is experienced as Trinitarian. The concept of perichoresis (permeation without confusion) carries not only the truth of the mutuality of relationship between the three divine persons but also expresses the belief that the triune God is God-for-us. How does this relate to the images of God’s action that are mediated in the music of particular worshipping assemblies? In the situation she is describing, music performance is highly interactive and dynamically communal in character. Members say that they are enabled to be ‘re-centered in God’, to move into a new experience of God’s presence and faithfulness.

Worship music as pneumatological. In exploring this aspect, McGann suggests that understandings of the active role of the Holy Spirit have been underplayed in Western liturgical theology for centuries. Liturgy derives from the action and power of the Holy Spirit, and particular gatherings of the assembly are animated by the Spirit. Here indeed, ‘without the life-giving, memory-conferring, and priestly-prophetic power of the Holy Spirit, no true thanks and praise will arise’.³⁵ Questions to be asked are: How does community know, experience, and describe the Spirit’s action, and what role does music play? What biblical images are evoked by the performance aesthetics of a particular community? In her own research, she found among the assembly a strong expectation that the Spirit will act, and therefore some aspects of song performance were kept indeterminate, while language used to describe the experience of worship echoed the biblical account of Pentecost.

Worship music as sacramental. Among liturgical theologians, for this category, the image of the body of Christ is often used, the idea of Christ as both in the church as gathered and in the elements that are shared. What experience of Christ’s presence in the assembly is mediated in musical performance? Do new images of the body of Christ emerge? In her own case, she cites the singers’ own testimony, and their experience of communion within the whole assembly. This experience is particularly

³⁵ Don E. Saliers, quoted McGann, *Exploring Music*, 70.

associated with the extended period of song following the reception of the elements.

Worship music as biblical. While it would be most obvious here to examine the setting of biblical material or to gauge the scriptural quality of hymn texts, McGann continues to focus on the music itself. Here she draws on Lathrop and his suggestion that a profoundly biblical theme is the juxtaposition of old and new.³⁶ Received patterns are juxtaposed with new image-breaking circumstances in a particular community. This creates a set of generative associations, tensions, even conflicts within the worship event, thus releasing ‘the revelatory power of the tensions within the liturgical act’. McGann found that members of the congregation studied would see themselves as God’s messengers, would strive to touch the biblical message within themselves and communicate through their bodies. But there was also the wider cultural dimension. Where revelation begins for black people is in their own specific culture and ethos. Music is a primary bearer of that culture, and carries a memory shaped by oppression and exclusion. In actual musical performance, there is juxtaposed with the traditional Western forms of liturgy new image-breaking modes of expression formerly excluded from church practice – for example, the use of drums, the rhythmic idiom of the song, all releasing a ‘subversive memory’.

Worship music as ecclesiological. Worship events are the actualisation of the community’s identity as church, epiphanies of God’s dwelling in human community, ‘a living icon of persons’.³⁷ Again, the questions relate to how the way the music is made in any worshipping community brings the church into being once more. What ecclesial relationships are actualized through musical performance? McGann’s own study revealed a highly interdependent model of liturgy and church. The whole assembly was seen to be essential for performing their gospel style of music-making, a form of music highly reciprocal and interactive.

Worship music as eschatological. Worship is an act of realised eschatology. It situates a Christian community in relationship to the world, and expresses its expectations of how the promises of God will be fulfilled within this history and beyond. The community at worship opens itself to a future beginning now, in this time and place,

³⁶ Ibid., 73.

³⁷ Ibid., 75.

and to the role it might play in bringing God's promises for the world to fulfilment.³⁸ McGann asks: How is this evident in musical and liturgical action? Do new images of God's action in history, of God's justice, emerge in musical performance? Are there evident in the assembly expectations and longings for eschatological fulfilment? Is there an experience of persons being empowered to act in the larger social arena? McGann's field research detected a conviction about God's faithfulness in struggle, and a musically articulated vision that God will make a way through. Musical performance was also found to be a dynamic factor in the redemptive re-ordering of relationships which is one of the characteristics of the Kingdom of God. Elders and children, women and men, young adults, all were accepted in an order that did not flow from patterns of wider society but from valuing the gifts and visions of each member. This empowered people for the work of reordering relationships in the wider social arena, while in song there was affirmation that Jesus' resurrection defines what the ultimate outcome will be.

McGann's proposals, as well as offering a model to the field of liturgical studies, provides a strategy for exploring a theology of music consonant with understandings of the theological dimensions of Christian liturgy. They help also to bring liturgical theory and theology into greater dialogue with practice. As she has applied this to her own research, a more collaborative model has emerged, one that involves the 'researched' in the process of exploration and discovery. This she would see as appropriate because of her belief that the people of the church have greater understanding of worship than they have often been given credit for. Local assemblies have gained their liturgical competence not through study or office but through faithful practice. Music is central to how new intuitions of ecclesial identity are being mediated. If liturgy is encounter with God, and if that encounter is through Christ who brings fulfilment of God's loving act in creation, then transformation must occur, and that transformation is effected in part through the music that is offered by those assembled. This approach is one which is of particular interest to the present study, particularly as it uncovers theological material within liturgical performance rather than theoretically, and that it takes music as central to that performance.

³⁸ Ibid., 77.

McGann's approach is in contrast with that of Robin Leaver, whose proposals might provide an example of Lathrop's 'secondary liturgical theology'. Leaver, who was professor of sacred music at Westminster Choir School (Rider University, Princeton) bases his approach³⁹ on a theological treatment of worship by the American Methodist scholar Paul Hoon.⁴⁰ Leaver places emphasis on proclamation, with music's function being to proclaim the word of God to the people of God. Without this note of proclamation, worship becomes (in a nowadays non-politically correct quotation from Hoon!) 'flabby rather than holy, folksy rather than numinous, hortatory rather than adoring, feminine rather than masculine, and one is not surprised that it often appeals to infantile elements in human personality'.⁴¹ The life and work of Jesus Christ is the great theme not only for the theologians, the preachers and teachers, but also for the musicians of the church. Thus, for Leaver, Christology must be at the centre of a theology for church music. Challenging the view that music can mediate between humanity and God, he asserts that there is only one mediator, and that is Christ, and for church music to claim the centre of the sanctuary is to displace Christ. Gelineau is favourably quoted as asserting, in *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship*, that music's primary task is to be the handmaid of the words of the rite. This, however, is a liberating rather than a constricting function.⁴²

Leaver's assertion that worship and its music are not focused on the gathered congregation but on Christ, and that this gathered congregation is representative of, and a continuing dimension of, all previous generations is worth noting, as is his reminder that worship, and its music, represents a doxological anticipation of the future. These are insights that may be extrapolated and applied to musical judgements. On the matter of proclamation as starting point, Leaver first made these proposals in 1985 and since then has distinguished between the homiletic and the interpretive, matching liturgical music to each (anthem to the former, the ordinary of the mass to

³⁹ Robin A. Leaver, 'The Theological Character of Music in Worship', in Robin A. Leaver and James H. Litton, eds., *Duty and Delight: Routley Remembered* (Hope Publishing Company/Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1985).

⁴⁰ Paul W. Hoon, *The Integrity of Worship: Ecumenical and Pastoral Studies in Liturgical Theology* (Nashville, 1971).

⁴¹ Leaver, 'Theological Character', 53.

⁴² In Joseph Gelineau, *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1964).

the latter),⁴³ and, further, has added an exploration of liturgical music as anamnesis.⁴⁴ These additions certainly make for a more complete theological programme, but it may be felt that for a fully integrated approach tools need to be developed which enable it to move beyond the definition of the function of music in relation to texts and connect with music *qua* music, able to ask the question, Is this musical utterance equal to the demands being placed upon it?

There are overlaps between Leaver's observations and those of Jan Michael Joncas. He also finds theological underpinning for music in worship in its being a part of creation but as also sharing in the work of redemption,⁴⁵ but it is of interest here in that he carries further the idea of music serving proclamation. He offers a scheme which has its starting point in the traditional marks of the church – kerygma, didache, *koinonia*, and diakonia; and he goes on to identify types of music which respectively proclaim (kerygma), stimulate thinking and learning (didache), build fellowship (*koinonia*), and heal (diakonia). This use of music as an instrument to achieve particular ends is underlined in his assertion that music should not be seen as ontological but functional, a note that is often struck by Roman Catholic commentators who see the liturgy as a separate 'given' that has been handed down in a particular form and to which music may be 'added'. It is interesting that Leaver, in a later publication, seems to find limitations not just in this view but in his own earlier approach, when he expresses regret at how often church music is 'defined in terms of something else' – as preaching, as prayer etc., treating music as 'supplemental sound'.⁴⁶

Earlier, Robin Leaver has referred with approval to a warning by Gelineau that music's primary task is to be the handmaid of the words of the rite, and that this is to be seen as a liberating rather than a constricting function. This view is echoed in the

⁴³ Robin A. Leaver, 'Liturgical Music as Homiletic and Hermeneutic', in Robin A. Leaver and Joyce Ann Zimmerman, eds., *Liturgy and Music: Lifetime Learning* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 340ff.

⁴⁴ Robin A. Leaver, 'Liturgical Music as Anamnesis', in Leaver and Zimmerman, eds., *Liturgy and Music*, 395.

⁴⁵ Paul F. Bradshaw, ed., *The New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* (London: SCM Press, 2002), 326, article 'Music as Worship'.

⁴⁶ Robin A. Leaver, *Japan Society of Liturgical Musicology*, 2005, Foreword.

Lee Lecture⁴⁷ given in 1964 by Stewart Todd, later to be minister of St. Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen,⁴⁸ which took place against 'a growing dissatisfaction with a great deal that is sung and heard in our churches', arising from a 'tiresome sense of routine'. Todd sets out to tackle the 'attendant crop of deep and searching questions about the whole nature of the role of music in the service of the Church'.⁴⁹ Taking his starting point that Sunday worship commemorates the day Christ was raised from the dead, even when it must be sombre and sin-laden, the basic and characteristic song of the church is a song of praise and thanksgiving. 'A Christian of all people is most entitled to make music, to sing and play because he knows what the non-Christian cannot know – that the world through Christ is saved.'⁵⁰ The gathering by God on Sunday morning is something which does not take place anywhere else in our lives; the music which corresponds to this may not necessarily be a special kind of music to match this special kind of event, but will be capable of becoming special. In this role, Todd, echoing Gelineau, sees music as handmaid.

The music that will render the most appropriate service is the music which is 'transparent', which lets the light and beauty of God shine through, music which does not just sing itself, but permits of interpretation in ever new ways by the 'Choirmaster' under whom we do our best singing. Music will dedicate itself to making more eloquent and meaningful some at least of the words that are uttered in the course of worship. If this sounds too utilitarian a role for music, he comments, it should be said that it is not so much the dignity of the task that ennobles the servant as the dignity of the Lord the servant serves. In the service of the Word music has complete freedom to use all its techniques provided only that *they do serve*. The idea of music as being such as to make it possible for communication to be received from God rather than only conveying the community's praise will be important in any proposals for an integrated theology of church music, and is discussed in chapter 6.

⁴⁷ Given in memory of a former notable minister of Greyfriars' Kirk, Edinburgh, who had been the first to re-introduce organs into the worship of the Church of Scotland (1863) and who had compiled a service book for use in his congregation, unusual then as now.

⁴⁸ A. Stewart Todd, 'Music in the Service of the Church', *Church Service Society Annual*, May 1965, 57ff.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 59.

5. MUSIC AS SACRAMENTAL

Several writers have found in the central liturgical idea of sacrament a way of describing theologically the nature of liturgical music and the way it is experienced in performance. This is the controlling theme in a book which gathers together the addresses given in 1993 to commemorate the laying of the foundation stone of Durham Cathedral nine hundred years earlier.⁵¹ At the outset, David Brown and Ann Loades offer a more dynamic definition of sacraments than that which sees them as instantaneous divine actions taking place 'out of time and place'. Properly understood, they claim, a sacrament does no less than redefine who we are and initiate a process of movement towards our transformation. By the same action, space and time are given a new definition and can now help us advance on that process.⁵² The editors quote in support Beethoven's own assessment of the divine dimension in 'secular' music: 'Every real creation of art is independent, more powerful than the artist himself, and returns to the divine through its manifestation. It is one with man only in this, that it bears testimony to the mediation of the divine in him.'⁵³

Also in the introduction, mention is made of the Pythagorean discovery of the numerical ratios and how this provided not just an understanding of the phenomenon of music but gave humankind a place in creation and a pathway to the Creator. As Augustine wrote in what became the standard treatise on music for the Middle Ages, through music 'the mind is raised from the consideration of changeable numbers in inferior things to unchangeable numbers in unchangeable truth itself'. Here the editors refer to the stained glass window in the cathedral dedicated to Gregory Nazianzen which portrays him offering the music of the spheres to God, while underneath it is written, 'Thy attuning teacheth the choir of the worlds to adore thee in musical silence'.⁵⁴

In spite of the antiquity of this philosophy, some contemporary theologians have found its constructions helpful. One is Albert Blackwell who finds here the starting point for his 'work of theological interpretation in a musical mode', convinced that

⁵¹ David Brown and Ann Loades, eds., *The Sense of the Sacramental: Movement and Measure in Art and Music, Place and Time* (London: SPCK, 1995), 3.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Quoted idem, 11.

⁵⁴ Both quotations idem, 12.

‘appreciation of music can help us interpret theological traditions with heightened sensitivity to their perennial insights and contemporary meanings’ and seeing religion and music as ‘complementary resources for interpreting our lives’.⁵⁵ This endeavour has some similarities to that of Begbie, already referred to, but it also has implications for the understanding of music in the liturgy. Blackwell proposes that the still relatively unexplored relationship of the two ‘interdependent realms’ of religious experience and musical experience may be understood in terms of sacramentality. For support he cites George Steiner who writes that ‘music puts our being as men and women in touch with that which transcends the sayable, which outstrips the analysable’,⁵⁶ Simone Weil’s definition of beauty as ‘the real presence of God in matter’,⁵⁷ as well as several of the early Fathers.

In conducting his exploration, Blackwell uses two different sacramental traditions, the one springing from incarnational theology – in which God’s grace is sensed in the material world, the other Pythagorean – in which grace is perceived in our minds. In the former the evidence is before us, when (as Weil suggests) the beauty of the world is God’s own beauty; in the latter, it is hidden, the subject of contemplation. The former, suggests Blackwell, touches our reason with God’s logic, the latter touches our hearts with God’s love.⁵⁸ These two sacramental strands should not be kept separate, as has tended to happen in the history of Christian thought. Just as the Nicene Creed pairs the visible and invisible, seen and unseen, the two dimensions as they apply to music are distinguishable but not separable. Blackwell concludes: ‘I am convinced that a sacramental appreciation of music combining the mental powers of the Pythagorean tradition and the deep stirrings of the incarnational tradition can help us with two important theological lessons: that we need not scorn body though we highly value spirit, and that we need not spurn time though we strongly yearn for eternity’.⁵⁹

Blackwell’s exploration of the Pythagorean tradition leads him to propose that ‘theological inference’ from music leads, not to ostensible fact or to inflexible dogma,

⁵⁵ Albert L. Blackwell, *The Sacred in Music* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1999), 13-14.

⁵⁶ George Steiner, *Real Presences* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989, 1991 paperback), 218.

⁵⁷ Quoted Blackwell, *The Sacred in Music*, 30.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

but to arriving at ‘grounds for religious faith as reasonable, ... commitment and trust’.⁶⁰ Music, in his view, presents a substantial problem for those who argue that the Christian believer’s foundational commitments are contingent, that ‘knowledge’ is a completely historical and cultural phenomenon, that truth is made rather than found, since music is inexplicable without reference to abstract properties nor can it be limited to temporality. James Lancelot expresses a similar conviction when he remarks that the very existence of Tallis’s *O sacrum convivium* represents ‘sufficient proof for me of the existence of a loving Creator’.⁶¹ This stance is one that is found in Augustine’s *On Music*, in which his confidence in music’s ability to refer beyond pure contingency to the transcendent is based on his acceptance of the foundational realities of music in the Pythagorean ratios and the overtone series, which are given and enduring. Music can, through its abstract core of numbers, bring the soul to contemplate the eternal. Pythagorean contemplation involves a sense of trust in cosmic order, the world grounded in and permeated by rational pattern and principle.

In the language of Christian theology, contemplation of the given and enduring logic of music contributes to trust in the second person of the Trinity, God’s *logos*, the foundational logic of the world. ... Music thus serves as a path of human and divine meeting, a finite reality through which the divine is perceived to be disclosed and communicated. Pythagorean contemplation of music is in this sense a sacramental exercise.⁶²

Blackwell is concerned to show how music can accompany and clarify theological insights, particularly dwelling on the concepts of Covenant,⁶³ Fall and Redemption (the ‘Pythagorean Comma’),⁶⁴ and Reconciliation (equal temperance),⁶⁵ but he is also interested in the practicalities of choice in performance. For example, he contrasts music which enables the contemplation of *transcendence* with music that induces *trance*, and goes on to offer a critique of the genre of ‘renewal music’, written for Christian worship, which is ‘high on psychological energy but confined in spiritual compass’. In this regard, he distinguishes between intoxication and euphoria, and

⁶⁰ Ibid., 79.

⁶¹ Brown and Loades, eds., *A Sense of the Sacramental*, 182.

⁶² Blackwell, *The Sacred in Music*, 86.

⁶³ Ibid., 119ff.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 125ff.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 159ff, esp. 189-197.

affirms Jonathan Edwards' contrast between genuine and counterfeit religious experience.⁶⁶

A not dissimilar approach is taken by the literary critic and novelist George Steiner, to whom Blackwell occasionally refers, who holds that music not only expresses human emotions and ideas but also, whether in the context of ritual or not, speaks of God. In *Real Presences*, Steiner is concerned with the fate of the book, the nature of reading, and the changes in transmission of ideas under the postmodern philosophies of our time. The enquiry is heavily centred on the nature of art and by far the greater space is given to music. Indeed, 'the question as to whether anything meaningful can be said about the nature and sense of music lies at the heart of this essay'.⁶⁷

Steiner describes postmodernity as the 'break of the covenant between word and world which constitutes one of the very few genuine revolutions of the spirit in Western history' and which defines modernity itself. Until now, he says, we could speak of Logos, the saying of being. Now is 'after the Word' (epi-logue).⁶⁸ Today, it is journalism that represents the spirit of the age, the servant of momentary sensation, of false immediacy; the arts are banished to leisure time, excellence is domesticated.⁶⁹ Above all, while acknowledging some positive directions in the current prevailing deconstructionist theories of communication ('words refer to other words only - knowing this will bring freedom, as it approaches the condition of music')⁷⁰, Steiner laments the disruption of relations between author, text and reader, creating a 'vacant heart of consciousness', in that there is now no axiom of rational relations between consciousness and the world.⁷¹ Thus also is the aesthetic separated from the ethical.

However, if words can no longer serve to bring us to the heart of things, the arts remain able to do so. In them, we encounter the 'other'; in them there is inferred a 'necessary possibility' of real presence (Steiner is using the phrase in the same sense as it is used to describe the presence of Christ in the eucharist). Indeed, Steiner claims that there is language and art precisely because there is 'the other'. Cave paintings try to tempt this

⁶⁶ Ibid., 207.

⁶⁷ Steiner, *Real Presences*, 18.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 93.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 27.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 98.

⁷¹ Ibid., 100.

‘other’ towards domesticity; all representations are a rendezvous with strangeness. The continuum between both, the modulation from one to the other, these lie at the source of poetry and the arts. The effect of writing, painting, music is to provide ‘custodians and initiators into felt intimations of open horizons’. But also they make strangeness stranger, instruct us in the inviolate enigma of otherness; we are even strangers to ourselves, the alien within the intimacy. We are ‘monads haunted by communion’. The arts inform us of the ‘visitor’s visa’ in place and in time which defines our status as transients in a house of being whose foundations lie wholly outside our will and comprehension.⁷²

In this context, Steiner reserves a special place for music. No poem or other work of art, he claims, can make us at home with death – but music brings us close to achieving this. In music, the metaphor of the resurrection is given the edge of ‘felt conjecture’.⁷³ ‘I believe the modulation of music towards our apprehension and sufferance of death to be of the essence. Without the truths of music, what would be our deficit of spirit at the close of the day?’⁷⁴ For Steiner, to ask ‘what is music?’ might be one way of asking ‘what is man?’ – suggesting that it is because he can produce and be possessed by music that he recognises himself as bordering on ‘a peculiar and open otherness’.⁷⁵ We are close neighbours to the transcendent, and poetry, art and music are the medium.⁷⁶ Like the other arts, music insists that there are values and energies in the human person which transcend death – for example, music which conveys the finality of death as well as a certain refusal of the finality (the Adagio of Schubert’s Quintet in C is given as an example).⁷⁷ It is in and through music that we are most immediately in the presence of that energy which communicates what little we can grasp of the naked wonder of life. ‘I take music to be the naming of the naming of life.’⁷⁸

Don Saliers also draws on the concept of sacrament in seeking an understanding of how music can be theological, and how theology may be conceived as musical.⁷⁹ In so

⁷² Ibid., 137-140.

⁷³ Ibid., 141.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 63.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 215.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 226.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 217.

⁷⁹ Don E. Saliers, *Music and Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007).

doing, he makes a strong link between the sacral and the senses. How might theological discourse require music for its realization, and why do many forms of music evoke religious awareness that calls for theological interpretation? Central to the spiritual life are the senses, each with its particular task, like sight in worship involving icons, but working together to enable a heightened perception. Single senses can provide a gateway into a spiritual awareness that calls on more than one sense, as illustrated by the psalmist: ‘O taste and see that the Lord is good’ (Psalm 34:8). Nevertheless, for Christianity spiritual insight characteristically begins in sound, in hearing. Saliers then asks, what is it about ordered sound as music that constitutes an intrinsic dimension of ritual participation? What is behind the definition of music as the ‘language of the soul made audible’?⁸⁰

True, there is in the Christian tradition an ambivalence towards music (and other aesthetic experiences), a way of affirming that one has to continue ‘through’ the sense perception to being receptive to God. His interim conclusion is that ‘(m)usic confers upon human language addressed to God the appropriate silence and mystery required by prayer’.⁸¹ Saliers, reflecting on people’s responses to favourite songs, finds of equal importance the ability of music to recall ‘the tensions and releases, the intensities and rests, the dissonances and harmonies of life’. He concludes: ‘Music is intimately related to the narrative quality of human experience, presenting our temporality in symbolic form’,⁸² conferring in ritual contexts a special dignity on our human desires. If text and musical form are adequate to the deeper range of human emotions, the human soul is made available to the transfiguring grace of the divine life. Music is therefore not simply an ornament of something already understood, such as a text, but can cross over to what is not heard.

Music should be seen as sacramental regardless of whether it is ‘sacred’ or ‘secular’. There are spiritual dimensions to be discovered in all kinds of music. Yet some music simply lacks the qualities of sound and the evocative power to awaken matters of spirituality. In the increasingly contested marketplace of available music, how are we to listen and become attentive to what music can give to theological reflection? In

⁸⁰ Ibid., 2.

⁸¹ Ibid., 4.

⁸² Ibid., 7.

attempting to answer this, Saliers notes that music is beyond the score, and relies on the imagination of the performer. He suggests that the actual practice of music-making offers an image of how life may be lived. Further, we have to be more than consumers, when hearing is passive, and become active listeners. Hearing music as the bearer of theological import requires not only a 'musical ear' but also a sensibility for hearing music as revelatory. The deeper the mutuality of the musical patterns and qualities, the more complex are the capacities required for hearing. 'What makes music profoundly religious and/or theological is the reciprocity of sound and life through time.'⁸³ Certain musical experiences give us, he believes, the sense of the music transformed into the very melody and rhythm of how life is experienced. Certain musical forms and specific musical works will deepen our theological perception over time, provided we bring as much of life as possible to these works. The deep hearing of music could be likened to the seeing of religious icons. Seeing an icon requires also a trained mind and sensibility to 'read' the icon in such a way that the person is gazed upon by the image. This involves the 'eyes of the heart' being open to receiving a divine communication. 'Can music voice what God wants us to hear?'⁸⁴

6. MUSIC AND THE IMAGINATION

Saliers notes the importance of the imagination in taking the listener or performer beyond the score. Millar Patrick, among other things convener of the Advisory Committee on Artistic Questions of the Church of Scotland in the 1930s, speaks of the 'divining rod of the imagination', as much an essential instrument of thought as reason itself. 'If you are to teach the truth of Scripture you must maintain a constant play of the imagination over the symbolic language it uses.' Stained glass window, mural, mosaic, the colours and designs of pulpit falls or table frontals, tapestry, organ case, carving, these and other artefacts add to the hearing of the gospel and offer to lodge it more securely in the mind. These are not random additions. Care is taken that they belong together, and with the building, so that the whole is itself a 'harmonised canticle of praise'.⁸⁵

⁸³ Ibid., 67.

⁸⁴ This question was first put by Frank Burch Brown. Saliers, *ibid.*, 70.

⁸⁵ Millar Patrick, 'Pulpit and Communion Table', *Church Service Society Annual*, 1932-33, 8.

The Scottish theologian John Baillie once wrote: ‘I have long been of the opinion that the part played by the imagination in the soul’s dealings with God, though it has always been understood by those skilled in the practice of the Christian cure of souls, has never been given proper place in Christian theology, which has been too much ruled by intellectualist preconceptions’. This is quoted by John McIntyre in his own, later study,⁸⁶ noting how that remark has only now, after fifty years, been fully taken up. One of these who has done so is David Brown who, in his two volumes exploring the role of the imagination in accessing Christian truth,⁸⁷ highlights the way in which the imagination can give alternative access to truth.

Brown notes that modernist and postmodernist alike express suspicion of the imagination. The latter reacts against the prevalence and power of images and advocates the exposure of high art to the ordinary and the conventional, giving free reign to symbols from the unconscious to challenge ultimate standards of truth. Theologians collude in this, partly through traditional distrust of the image as harbouring the danger of idolatry and partly because of the inherent suggestion that here is an essentially human project, the artist taking over the creative role once assigned to God.⁸⁸ Brown refutes both reservations, seeing, with Kant, the imagination as being essential for bringing into intelligible relation to each other both mental concepts and perceptual data, mediating objectivity and subjectivity alike. On the other hand, Brown also appeals to Kant and to Plato to refute the objection of the modernist that the imagination can never take us as near the mind of God as reason. Indeed, the imagination has one undoubted advantage over reason or ordinary perception in its ability to think laterally, to allow combinations that are not themselves present or in nature of normative in rational thought. Growth in knowledge comes through the imagination with deepening understanding of the possible range of reference of images and stories, where symbols and metaphor

⁸⁶ John McIntyre, *Faith, Theology and Imagination* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1987), 1.

⁸⁷ David Brown, *Tradition and Imagination: Revelation and Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and *Discipleship and Imagination: Christian Tradition and Truth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁸⁸ Brown, *Discipleship and Imagination*, 349.

acquire unexpected new allusions, while stories are reordered into narratives indicative of a deeper truth.⁸⁹

John McIntyre, having taken John Baillie's call as spring board for his own study, finds several strands to be present in that remark, as a suggestion that our theological traditions have been over-conceptualised, as a comment on a lack of imaginative quality in the Christian life, and as an invitation to construct a theology which gives the same role to the imagination as it already has in day-to-day Christian praxis. McIntyre avoids the approach that sees the imagination and the reason as separate and distinct faculties of the mind. Either is the whole mind working in a certain way. He agrees with the view of Mary Warnock that the same imagination which we employ in poetry, painting, music, drama and the arts is also employed in our perception of the world and the people in it. In increasing our knowledge, it is a real knowledge – of dimensions of reality which are hidden from the unimaginative – and not 'only in the mind of the beholder'.

In this, and in his discussion of the communicative role of the imagination, when, as he says, artists create media through which to share their interpretation of their experience so that others may see with their eyes and hear with their ears, McIntyre brings the matter closer to liturgy. One of the imagination's abilities is to contemporise history, enabling the past to be re-lived and re-enacted, enabling the present-day disciple to regard him/herself as contemporary with Christ. Similarly, the imagination brings the future into the present, not ceasing to believe that it is the future, that the Kingdom in one sense is still future but in another is made real in baptism and the Christian life that flows from it. Then there is the 'conspatialising' function of imagination, making the absent present, so that people in other parts of the global village are present to us in their need and with their gifts.

Liturgical implications emerge also in his identification of the characteristics of images, worth sketching briefly here. Images have an *epistemological* role (God as strong rock, tower, and the extended images that are the parables). They are *mediative*, producing in our minds in a secondary way ideas and subjects of faith and

⁸⁹ Ibid., 350-353.

theology, but not themselves primary expressions of this. They *participate* in the reality which they symbolise, a definition made famous by Tillich. They may have a *hermeneutic* role, interpreting sections of Scripture or areas of theology. Their *constructive* role can organise and control wider areas of knowledge into handleable form, such as the idea of ‘covenant’ used by theologians to integrate Old Testament theology. They *universalise* experience or events, removing them from the particularity of their original occurrence and placing them at a point of public availability. They are *illuminative*, throwing light on areas which they themselves do not describe. They can be *regulative* and *prescriptive*, an image from one area acquiring an authority in another (such as revisiting theology from an existentialist perspective). An image can have a *normative* character, acting as a criterion for assessing theological statements. Images may be *methodic* and *argumental*, standing at the turning points of our arguments and determining which way to go next. They are *evocative*, and especially those which convey religious ideas and truths, including ‘the acted imagery of the entire liturgy’.⁹⁰ They may play a *sustentative* role, sustaining the flagging faith, the fading conviction. They may also be *recreative* in that they can bring back to life old emotions, renew a forgotten promise of forgiveness (say, through an old hymn).

Where issue might be taken is when McIntyre, in seeing the Holy Spirit (following Barth) as the ‘point of contact’ between humankind and God, seems to suggest an equation between the Spirit and the human imagination. Robert Pope, in making this criticism, prefers the view of Garrett Green that what is Christian about imagination is not the fact that we imagine but the content of our imagining. Otherwise, we would be able to trust the human imagination absolutely. What we imagine has still to be tested against the paradigms revealed in Scripture.⁹¹ When the imagination is found to include such scriptural paradigms, we may understand that the revelation of God is made known to the human mind. ‘This revelation enables human beings to be oriented towards the coming of the Kingdom of God, proleptically present and anticipated in the church’.⁹² Pope goes on to apply these findings to film. In our case, a discussion

⁹⁰ McIntyre, *Faith, Theology*, 174.

⁹¹ Robert Pope, *Salvation in Celluloid* (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 48.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 50. Pages 35-50 of this work contain a comprehensive survey as to the way imagination has been understood in the history of thought and how it has been apprehended by theology.

of the role of metaphor in liturgy provides further guidance as to the relevance of imagination in the context of liturgy.

The process by which music yields its meaning is illuminated by work on the nature of liturgical language. In pursuit of this, liturgiologist Mark Searle⁹³ draws on modern philosophy's re-evaluation of the act of knowing, and the way a new grasp of the nature of the symbol has altered our ideas about how we relate to reality and how truth is mediated. Against the background of (what he defines as) the elusiveness in our time of the holy and a trust in rationalism (and a corresponding distrust of the imagination), Searle suggests that the reforms of the Second Vatican Council erred in the direction of making rites more intelligible so that they were better for instruction and edification, but that the result was that there was less call on the imagination of the participants. Given that metaphor uses language proper to one area to refer to a different realm of experience, bringing two domains into relationship by using language from one as a lens for seeing the other, this requires our engagement, calling for acts of contemplation rather than analysis, an in-dwelling, an invitation to yield our ground and move over on to the ground of the image, to live inside it. Metaphors enable us to relate beneficially to the reality behind speech and rite. It is, however, essential to grasp the literal meaning of the 'grounded' part of the pair or else the metaphor falls flat. Metaphors can sometimes not catch on, or degenerate into cliché, which results in a loss of meaning in the liturgy. Many of the metaphors used in worship, Searle suggests, were eloquent when originally used but have now become detached from their original literal meaning. The most powerful metaphors are the ones which touch on areas of experience which clearly engage our own mystery.

We come closer to music when Searle speaks of the need, in participating in a liturgy, to submit not just to word but gesture, putting ourselves into what we are doing, 'trying on' the metaphor, bodying it forth. Instead of saying, 'we must organize the procession better, or sing and pray better' we should ask, how can the act of walking become a religious act, how should we process to communion so that it is experienced as something different from standing in line at a supermarket checkout? A rite is not a statement about what it contains but a coming to light of the mystery itself. Where this

⁹³ Mark Searle, 'Liturgy as Metaphor', *Worship*, Vol. 55 (1981), No.2 98ff.

analysis impinges on the evaluation of music for worship is in that the metaphor does not offer instant gratification of the contemporary craving for experience, but comes slowly to those who persevere and who give their eyes time to adjust to the light. The music we seek, therefore, is that which takes us beyond the content we recognise to an area within and beyond the music itself. Musical vocabulary and content which merely repeat what once stimulated the imagination but now have become tired should be carefully scrutinised. Liturgical music should not set out to offer instant gratification but have within it room for ‘in-dwelling’. However, the music offered should not be foreign to the experience of the user – which is not saying that it should be immediately recognisable or likeable.

7. AESTHETIC APPROACHES

In the earlier account of the sacramental qualities of music, the aesthetic concept of beauty was introduced as co-terminous with the recognition of the manifestation of God’s presence. The term ‘aesthetics’ was coined by Alexander Baumgarten in 1735,⁹⁴ from the Greek *aisthetikos* – ‘concerned with perception’. Baumgarten originally meant it to be the science of sensory perception in general, but himself came to understand it as having beauty as its proper object, ‘perfection of sensitive cognition’. For Simone Weil, the love of God is present only in three things: religious ceremonies, the beauty of the world, and our neighbour. For her, although mutilated, distorted and soiled, beauty remains rooted in the human heart. Indeed, ‘if it were made true and pure, it would sweep all secular life in a body to the feet of God; it would make the total incarnation of the faith possible’.⁹⁵ Again, ‘a Gregorian melody is as powerful a witness as the death of a martyr.’⁹⁶ In *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI sees beauty as a necessary characteristic of liturgy. ‘This is no mere asceticism, but the concrete way in which the truth of God’s love in Christ encounters us, attracts us and delights us, enabling us to emerge from ourselves and drawing us towards our true vocation, which is love’.⁹⁷ The attention paid to beauty by theologians is considerable. As examples, two theological treatments of aesthetics are

⁹⁴ David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, *Musicology: The Key Concepts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005) 5.

⁹⁵ Quoted Blackwell, *The Sacred in Music*, 47.

⁹⁶ Quoted *ibid.*, 30.

⁹⁷ www.vatican.va/holy.father/benedict_xvi/apost.exhortations/documents/hf_ben_xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis_en.html, paragraph 35.

offered here, one which comes from the tradition of the icon, the other from a Protestant theologian.

The Orthodox theologian **Paul Evdokimov** subtitles his book, *The Art of the Icon*, 'a theology of beauty'.⁹⁸ We are reminded that the Septuagint hails each stage of the creation, 'and God saw that it was *beautiful*', the word in Hebrew having this meaning as well as 'good'. While creation itself is beautiful, however, the truest form of this primal beauty is in the perfect beauty of the Kingdom of God. Even though faith is not in colours but in the heart (as Gregory Nazianzen reminds us), humankind is in the image of God and therefore thinks, contemplates, imagines, and creates beauty. God robes himself in beauty and makes it the meeting place of our encounter with him. Evdokimov quotes Dostoevsky: 'The Holy Spirit is the direct seizure, grasping of Beauty'.⁹⁹ Thus it is not objects that are beautiful but 'God's presence among humankind'.

Evdokimov's theology recalls Hellenic ideas in its proposal that each thing possesses its own *logos*, its interior word. It is the intimate interpenetration of the thing and its *logos* that constitutes beauty. When form becomes the place of theophany there is found the beauty of Christ. No art can fully make this visible, but the icon can suggest it.¹⁰⁰ The artist neither reproduces nor copies but reveals the restored fullness of being in an object, a buried and hidden truth, thus opening the way toward the mystery of being itself. Aesthetic experience is the most immediate of all experiences, even more the case with music which is free of the constraints of space and unfolds entirely in time. The beautiful is present in the harmony of all its elements and brings us face to face with a truth that cannot be demonstrated or proved, except by contemplating it. The artist lends us his eyes so we can see a fragment in which the whole is nonetheless present. 'Like a living person, the world turns toward us, speaks to us, sings to us, shows us its secret colours, and fills us with an overwhelming joy; our solitude is thus broken.'¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Paul Evdokimov, *The Art of the Icon: A Theology of Beauty* (Redondo Beach, California: Oakwood Publications, 1990).

⁹⁹ Ibid., 2-3.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 13.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 20-21.

A purely aesthetical vision, however, does not fully comprehend beauty. Beauty is not found in nature itself but rather in the epiphany of the Transcendent. This epiphany transforms nature into a cosmic place of its radiance, a 'burning bush'. Thus a strictly aesthetical contemplation of Christ is not sufficient and requires a religious act of faith, as well as active participation.¹⁰² It is true that we approach the object of beauty through the senses but these have to become transfigured and restored to their normal condition, that which was lost in the Fall. This begins with the liturgy, which elevates matter to its real dignity and destiny – matter which is understood to be a function of the Spirit and a vehicle of the spiritual. The concept of light is predominant in Evdokimov's exegesis of the icon, with light and beauty intimately interrelated. 'God's beauty, like his light, is neither material nor sensible nor intellectual but is communicated in itself or through the forms of this world, and we can contemplate it with the opened eyes of our transfigured bodies.'¹⁰³

This is no passive appreciation, however. It is possible to say also, 'Beauty will save the world' (Dostoevsky). From every icon flows healing power, from Christ the Great Healer. He calls this an 'iconographic vision of the world', a world stamped 'with the sign of another dimension and age',¹⁰⁴ a time when 'the Christian faith shatters the world and makes history overflow its boundaries'.¹⁰⁵ This eschatological vision is founded and rooted in the present. 'Earthly culture is the icon of the Kingdom of Heaven'. The nations do not enter the Kingdom with empty hands. Everything that brings the human spirit closer to truth will enter into the Kingdom. 'Even music, the purest and the most mysterious element of culture, at its highest perfection faints and fades away leaving us face to face with the Absolute.'¹⁰⁶ In Mozart's setting of the Mass, we hear Christ's voice, and our elevation acquires the liturgical value of his presence. ... Culture is the search for the "one thing that is necessary", and this "one necessary thing" pushes it beyond its own immanent limits.'¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Ibid., 24.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 28-29.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 42-43.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 69.

¹⁰⁶ One is reminded of John Donne's prayer which contains the line, 'No sound nor silence but one equal music'.

¹⁰⁷ Evdokimov, *The Art of the Icon*, 70-71.

Edward Farley, from the Protestant tradition, confesses that his own theological enquiries have ignored the aesthetic dimension of his life,¹⁰⁸ an omission shared by much of theology and which in his book, *Faith and Beauty*, he aims to make good. It is a book about aesthetics but not in the usual sense of being a ‘philosophical account of the arts that exposes and clarifies the canons of art criticism’, nor indeed is it a volume of theological aesthetics, a category which usually describes the place of the arts in the worship and life of the community of faith. Here, he means the ‘dimension of human experience, an engagement with and participation in what is intrinsically attractive – in other words, with what is beautiful’.

Farley immediately identifies a problem, namely that ‘the postmodern *episteme* and institutions effect a low sensibility to beauty’,¹⁰⁹ tracing this back to the loss of attention paid to this motif as the Industrial Revolution took hold.¹¹⁰ Farley helpfully distinguishes between two facets of the postmodern ‘orientation’, the one which sets out to redeem and ‘detoxify’ society from certain modes of thinking that were seen as oppressive, and the one which, as an ‘identifiable movement in culture’, is indifferent to societal transformation. While the former retains some continuity with the modern and pre-modern, the latter has rejected ‘deep symbols’ – prevailing cultural values and identities such as those of gender and ethnicity which are seen to have been the ‘bearers of moral consciousness’.¹¹¹ In reality, the modern and the postmodern still manage to exist in parallel. Beauty, therefore, may be said still to survive in ‘nostalgic, antiquarian and traditionalist strands of culture. But in society’s most powerful institutions, dominant discourses and cultural “tones”, beauty seems to be very much the beast’.¹¹² Of course, as Farley points out, the marginalisation of beauty is not only found in postmodernism but anywhere in history where oppressive structures prevailed (causing the protests of the Romantics). However, it is with postmodernism’s marketing culture with which we have to deal and which sets the ‘agendas that deliver society’s humanizing and artistic values: family, religion, education, and the “high arts”’,¹¹³ for, inevitably, whoever we are, we are pressed towards certain sensibilities and emptied of others. While beauty may not have

¹⁰⁸ Edward Farley, *Faith and Beauty: a Theological Aesthetic* (Ashgate, 2001), vii.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 5.

completely disappeared from language, it is not a self-evident and important value by which postmoderns understand, experience or interpret their world. Beauty as 'deep value' has little function in society's principal institutions because it depends on being part of a 'master narrative'. 'To say that the tone of postmodern life is determined largely by consumer-related activities which themselves are incompatible with beauty may be another way of describing the loss of a master narrative.'¹¹⁴

Support for this analysis is found in John Milbank,¹¹⁵ who finds in modernity no mediation of the invisible in the visible. In consequence there is no beauty. Instead, however, there is what he calls the 'sublime', an experience at the margins of the ineffable and overwhelming. Before modernity, the sublime was an aspect of beauty itself but now ineffability (with Kant) is purely subjective. Milbank sees a task of theology as to reinscribe the sense of the beautiful, opening a mediation between the visible and the invisible, enabling a reciprocity between the two.

Farley goes on to examine the suppression and marginalisation of beauty in the Christian tradition, noting that while beauty was always a part of the cultus through the poetry of language (Scriptures, liturgies, devotional writing), of architecture, sculpture, icons, and music, it remained marginal to its pieties, hermeneutics, and moral and doctrinal theologies. The suppression of beauty in the Christian movement severely impoverishes faith and piety in four principal ways: the discrediting of world-related satisfactions by bodily asceticism, alienation from nature, legalist modes of life that reduce piety to conformity, and literalisms that eliminate sensibility to nuance, metaphor and mystery.¹¹⁶ This suspicion of beauty is continued in contemporary Protestant writing where (except for Barth) theologies of beauty are highly qualified and negative in tone. For such writers beauty is a phenomenon of the fullness of time, postponed until God's full, eschatological revelation.¹¹⁷ By contrast, Catholic writing, giving more place to Hellenistic culture and its appropriation in patristic writings, has been more positive.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 6.

¹¹⁵ John Milbank, 'Beauty in the Soul', in John Milbank, Graham Ward and Edith Wyschogrod, *Theological Perspectives on God and Beauty* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003).

¹¹⁶ Farley, *Faith and Beauty*, 117-118.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 71.

However, Farley offers an approach of his own, eschewing the route through finite beauty's analogical dependence on divine beauty as well as that which would find beauty within certain doctrines (creation, Spirit, sacrament). Rather, he goes back further, to 'what all doctrinal motifs presuppose – the fact of redemption itself'. 'Theology's route to beauty should be determined initially by the way in which beauty appears in the life of faith.'¹¹⁸ Redemption means the journey to the restoration in humankind of *imago Dei*, in which was found primordial beauty. In this remaking of the image of God, the human being is drawn out of the 'self-preoccupied immanence that cripples his capacity to engage a genuine other' into an 'ethical self-transcendence' which can empathetically transcend itself towards others. This ethical self-transcendence is contrasted with the philosophical anthropologist's 'formal self-transcendence' in which human beings are drawn beyond external and internal determinations into meaning, language, truth, subjectivity, creativity, self-making and futurity.¹¹⁹ Beauty's most explicit manifestation is the 'redemptively transformed existence', the stage beyond the two self-transcendences, marked by conversion, 'a "founding" in God that undermines the anxious need for idols and their security'.¹²⁰

Farley sums up:

This "founding" basic event of redemptive remaking carries with it a twofold beauty. First, being self-transcendently and compassionately disposed to the other and its need is an instance of what is most primordially beautiful. Second, the uniting of formal self-transcendence ... with ethical self-transcendence is an instance of beauty as being – a proportion, harmony and unity in difference that shapes how the human being exists in the world.

Farley's treatment of beauty is not complete until he tackles the suspicions common in Christian writing and practice that, first, beauty falls on the trivial, shallow side of human experience, dealing with what satisfies and fulfils, thus suppressing pathos and pain, and, second, that beauty falls on the hedonistic side of experience and inevitably corrupts the rigorous, discipline-oriented tasks of ethical and practical life. In response to the first, Farley understands beauty as embracing chaos – the tragic element of all finite things – and the pathos that dogs human life.¹²¹ 'Beauty ever hovers on the edge of the ugly because the ugly suggests what contrasts to it. Furthermore, the ugly is

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 83.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 86.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 93.

¹²¹ Ibid., 101-102.

never mere chaos. If it were, it would have no determinacy at all.’¹²² As to the second, seeing pleasures solely on the level of enjoyment does not accord with the understanding of redemption as transforming idolatrous desires and releasing them into new freedoms. In this is found joy. ‘Drawn to the strange, self-transcending beauty of the other and oriented to its need and welfare, the human being experiences joy.’ The approach is not, ‘something I need has been given to me’, but ‘this beautiful, vulnerable other is coming to be as itself’.¹²³

It is only at this point that the author approaches the matter of the arts in Christian life, his subject having been beauty in the life of faith, not religion and the arts. However, the continuation of his thesis into this area is helpful when faced with Evdokimov’s dismissal¹²⁴ of Western art as having lost its sacramental relationship with the divine. Farley asks, if beauty is an intrinsic aspect of the life of faith, in what way might the life of faith intersect with the arts? Clearly, one response is that if faith disposes the human being towards beauty, it will also be engaged by the beauty in works of art. There is, however, a further answer. As the divine image, in the fallen state of humankind, takes on a distorted relation to beauty, so the arts themselves and their way of functioning in society and in the lives of individuals can be shaped by Philistinism and aestheticism. As redemptive transformation opens human orientation to beauty’s pathetic aspect, the inclination to suppress or manipulate beauty, or reduce it to the merely pretty, is avoided. Ethical self-transcendence has made it possible to apprehend ‘the beautiful, vulnerable “face” of finite entities in all their mystery, peril and promise’; artists have also ‘negotiated’ this face as they display ‘the world’s enchantments, surprises, unpredictabilities, complexities and mysteries’ so that the resulting work of art engages the ethically self-transcendent interpreter. What makes Christian art distinctive is that in every artistic thematisation (Jesus, Mary, the world, a biblical incident) the primordial beauty of the benevolent Creator finds some expression. It therefore searches for linguistic, musical and architectural ways of expressing the narrative themes of redemption.¹²⁵

¹²² Ibid., 112.

¹²³ Ibid., 106.

¹²⁴ Evdokimov, *The Art of the Icon*, 73.

¹²⁵ Farley, *Faith and Beauty*, 113.

Farley's work is echoed in an earlier study by Jeremy Begbie who also finds limitations in Protestant theology's account of beauty. His examination of Dutch Neo-Calvinist theologians such as Kuyper and Rookmaaker reveals an exaggerated stress on beauty as the 'qualifying kernel of art'.¹²⁶ This he sees as due to a too legalistic understanding of humankind and culture coupled with a lack of Christological focus. Begbie argues for a concept of beauty that reflects more closely the dynamic of God's renewal of creation in Christ. On the third day, the destruction and distortion which was the result of the precarious freedom allowed by a God whose love for creation entailed him honouring its integrity as something distinct from himself¹²⁷ are transfigured and redirected. 'In Christ, all that is ugly and subversive in the cosmos has been purified, beautified and fulfilled.' Here is yielded a richer and deeper concept of beauty, not as static and timeless but as a dynamic quality. He quotes Barth:

God's beauty embraces death as well as life, fear as well as joy, what we might call the ugly as well as what we might call the beautiful. It reveals itself and wills to be known on the road from one to the other, in the turning from the self-humiliation of God for the benefit of man to the exaltation of man by God and to God.¹²⁸

The goal of this transformation is re-creation, summoned by the Spirit to a new future, rather than as 'a return to Eden'.¹²⁹ Tied to a theology in which God's power rather than his love was pre-eminent, and in which the idea of obedience dominated what it was to be human, the Dutch Neo-Calvinists were not able to make the leap from God's creativity to that of humankind. At its highest, human creativity will be a corporate participation in the vicarious humanity of Christ through the Spirit.¹³⁰

We may identify five factors that could be applied in further consideration of music for liturgy.

1. If beauty is not to be sought as a quality in itself but discovered as a characteristic of the process of redemption, music for worship should not be written with beauty as

¹²⁶ Begbie, *Voicing Creation's Praise*, 167, 256.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹²⁸ Quoted *idem*, 224.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 257.

its first goal. Routley challenges those who aim for beauty in its own right.¹³¹ In the Old Testament, the word is never used except with moral connotations, and it does not exist in the New Testament at all. To cultivate beauty is to run the risk of achieving only pretentiousness, a concept which implies that ‘behind the façade there is an insufficient backing of truth and honour’ – a combination of large and impressive size with cheap materials and a contempt for craftsmanship. To attempt to *make* something beautiful will probably lead to disfigurement. Routley quotes St. Thomas Aquinas’ analysis of the concept of beauty, with its three component parts: integrity, proportion, and clarity. What the good composer seeks to make is not something beautiful but ‘something new’.

2. As Begbie points out, redemption is not in terms only of the individual but is found in the corporate, an inevitable expression of the nature of God himself as ‘being in communion’.¹³² In speaking of ‘corporate participation’, Begbie has introduced into the argument a concept of particular interest to this study. For him, the inner logic of the Gospel suggests that self-fulfilment is discovered only in relationship. In the humanity of Christ, God has released our humanity from its crippling self-concern, making possible a new corporate humanity, bound together by the same self-forgetful love which binds Father and Son. In such relatedness-in-love, we discover our true humanity. God’s ultimate purpose for humanity is to call together a community, whose life will reflect his own ‘being as communion’, as Father, Son and Spirit.¹³³ Part of our quest will be to identify and promote music which points to and enables this ‘relatedness-in-love’, both in itself and in its execution.

3. In both Farley and Begbie, beauty is to be lodged in redemption and the life of faith. Does this move, at one level, our judgement away from music itself to the Christian disciple? If it is true that as one grows in the faith, one is more and more open to recognising and embracing beauty, then if we reject the ‘classical’ music of the church part of the reason may be that we are not yet equal to it. What solutions and strategies are implied by this? Is this where ‘Philistinism’ is located, not just in a lack of experience or education in music but in the grasp of the Christian faith (even though many who might take this stance seem firmer in the faith than others). How

¹³¹ Erik Routley, *Church Music and Theology* (SCM Press, 1959), 29ff.

¹³² Begbie, *Voicing Creation's Praise*, 180.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 180. The phrase is that of John Zizioulas.

indeed might the way we write and perform music today contribute from its side to growth in faith. And when Farley speaks of the need for Christian art to search for ways of expressing the narrative themes of redemption, what music do we seek to take its place alongside the linguistic and architectural media?

4. In defining beauty we talk not of something objective which can be isolated and analysed but of the quality of engagement of those who write, make or select music (for there is artistry also in the latter). Beauty may be said, therefore, to do with people and their gifts. Reference has been made to the need to incorporate into the journey to redemption the realities of the human condition. If God's beauty (in Barth's words) embraces 'death as well as life, fear as well as joy',¹³⁴ this is a journey the artist must also take. Beauty is really when people reach deep and offer the most, it is the struggle as they put their own resources to the test in their search for God. Beauty is honesty, it is true prayer. The artist reaching for the heart of the Gospel creates a new thing, not an object of abstract beauty so much as an encounter in which artist and viewer/listener reach ever further in mind and spirit. As Saliers remarks, beauty is the heart at full stretch.¹³⁵

8. A CRITIQUE OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES

The literature examined in this chapter has offered a variety of approach to the evaluation of music in Christian worship. Mark David Parsons¹³⁶ offers a useful overview and critique of current research, one that will assist this study in taking further steps towards the application of theological criteria. Parsons, examining recent literature, sees little consistency in the study of Christian music theology. While there is universal acceptance of song as a normative part of worship, there is no cohesive, systematic explanation of its theological significance. Instead are found a variety of theological approaches, which often seem unrelated to each other, and with disparate priorities and values. Part of the reason for this is the manifold nature of song, which is not a monolithic form but a composite form, whose aspects consist of text, tone and context.

¹³⁴ See footnote 127.

¹³⁵ Don E. Saliers, 'Sounding the Symbols of Faith: Exploring the Nonverbal Languages of Christian Worship'; in Charlotte Kroeker, ed., *Music in Christian Worship* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2005), 20.

¹³⁶ Mark David Parsons, 'Text, Tone, and Context: A Methodological Prolegomenon for a Theology of Liturgical Song', *Worship* Vol. 79 (2005), No.1, 54ff.

It is necessary, therefore, to look methodologically at the relationship between these three aspects. Parsons identifies three competing models. The first gives priority to the *text*, in which music's value is seen as enhancing the liturgical text. He calls this the *logocentric-conformist model*. The second – the *symbolic-assimilative model* – gives priority to the *tonal* properties of music, song being a form of deep symbolic expression that goes beyond the text, and enhances sacramental dimensions of worship. The third places emphasis on *context*, with song given a functional value in worship, supporting the rite, and enhancing participation in liturgy. This he calls the *performative-convergent model*. Parsons sees his examination as revealing theological entailments for further study that otherwise might not be recognized or subject to critique. It may be that research since this work was done has moved beyond the categories Parsons proposes – for example, that of Mary McGann – but his analysis remains useful in respect of many of the approaches referred to earlier in the chapter.

1 *The logocentric-conformist model*

Here tone is seen as of necessity conforming to text, subservient to the words. Music being semantically less precise (it is assumed), and thus a secondary mode of expression, its theological significance must reside outside music itself, inhering within the propositional content of texts. Two principles observed as occurring throughout major church music handbooks are that music not associated with text is neutral or even negative, and that music which obscures or destroys the text is to be avoided. Parsons finds this model to be based on a traditional view of communication where discursive language conveys, as through a conduit, propositions or messages. In this one-way system, the receiver's response is secondary. This view sees worship as such a communicative event, which music assists by providing a more effective channel or enabling a more appropriate response. Associated with this position is the view that musical expression is not integral to worship.

Parsons sees this model as prevalent in Reformed Protestantism, where the purpose of worship is to proclaim the Word and the primary role of the people is to respond. The worshipper is first and foremost a listener; and, through the act of listening, God becomes present and a relationship with God becomes possible. Music can increase the impact of the message, but it can also obscure or overcome the text. As an

example of this approach, Parsons cites the work of Erik Routley, which we shall later examine.¹³⁷ A similar view was found in the Lee Lecture of 1964 where A. Stewart Todd criticised some styles and compositions offered for worship as ‘too musical’.¹³⁸

2 The symbolic-assimilative model

This approach expands communication beyond the limits of verbal language to include symbolism, where music may bear sacred meaning as sheer moulded sound. Correlated with other symbols in liturgy, music expresses and shapes emotions that constitute Christian life, has potential to establish Christian identity and enable Christian transformation. Music itself is a form of prayer. Parsons observes that behind this is a more symbolic notion of language, where transmission is not one-way but an interaction among subjects, co-participation in shared symbol systems that project common experiences and structure shared beliefs, conveying little information yet intrinsically satisfying. Music is the ‘tonal analogue of emotive life’. Great hymns are not formulations but sounds that awaken truth about God, disclosing who God is. Music itself is of theological significance in its role as the morphology of the central affections of the Christian faith. Secondly, text becomes secondary to music, as associated verbal material is transformed into expressive musical elements. Thirdly, music is integral to worship. Parsons cites Foley’s ‘hierarchy’, that text is subordinate to music, music is subsumed into the liturgy, and it is this that commands the attention of the congregation. Music shares in the larger creative event of the liturgy; the duty of the composer is to fit music into the liturgical form so that music enhances liturgy. He suggests as those who work with this model Albert Blackwell, Don Saliers and Jeremy Begbie.

3 The performative-convergent model focuses on the function of music rather than its meaning. Words and music do not conform to each other but converge in a common function in specific performative context. In this model, music’s significance is not immediate, inhering in song itself, but consists in the larger ritual processes, the concern being as to how it serves both texts and concomitant actions. This has been the central view within recent liturgical theology and is clearly present in

¹³⁷ Below, pages 117ff.

¹³⁸ Todd, ‘Music in the Service of the Church’, 62.

Sacrosanctum Concilium. The primary image is liturgy as ritual process. God is made present and community is formed in and through liturgical actions that comprise the process. Behind this is another, more performative (Austin's speech-act theory is cited), understanding of linguistic communication,. Here language does not just convey but accomplishes. This continues into ritual; ritual utterances convey little or no information but create and allow participation in a situation. Of course, a composition can perform more than one function and be distinctively different in different contexts. Parsons notes that the main proponents of this model are Roman Catholic, citing Joseph Gelineau among others. The approaches of Irmgard Pahl and Philipp Harnoncourt, outlined in the previous chapter, could be seen to conform to this model.

'Taken individually', Parsons concludes, 'none of the current models can account for song's inherent multivalence, and so they provide limited conceptions of the role of music in worship and theology.'¹³⁹ Further, the three models resist harmonisation, and any attempts to conflate them are unsatisfactory. He believes there will be continuing ambiguity concerning music until theology finds a way to reconcile these approaches. This will require the construction of new integral models that consider liturgical song as a mutuality of text, tone, and context. 'Only an integral model can provide a broad, unified methodology for systematic theological reflections on music.' As an example of such an integral model, Parsons cites the work of Willem Marie Speelman. This semiotics-based approach is examined in chapter 5.¹⁴⁰

9. APPROACHES THROUGH ECCLESIOLOGY

It might have been expected that a section which surveys a further theological approach would belong with sections 2-7 (above) but its positioning here as a bridge to the next chapter is deliberate. The various approaches outlined above treat music either as work of art or in terms of its nature and use in liturgy. Yet the ecumenical dialogue that is in the background of this study has begun farther back, in a search for renewed – and shared – understanding about the nature and purpose of the church. From this point the study begins to have a different focus, namely on biblical theology and in particular in

¹³⁹ Parsons. 'Text, tone'. 68.

¹⁴⁰ Below, pages 176ff.

what the study of Scripture yields in respect of what it means to be called into the community of the church. This is an appropriate direction for a study which has Reformed roots, in that a feature of the Protestant Reformed landscape has been the affirmation of the importance of the Word of God as that which calls the church into being and against which it is tested and renewed. All aspects of its life come under this scrutiny, including its worship.

An early figure to bring biblical theology to bear on church music was Erik Routley,¹⁴¹ who in the first of two volumes (1959) expressed the conviction that ‘there is work to be done by those who can bring to the study of church music a sense of theology’.¹⁴² The task as he sees it is to understand what is the connection between ‘church’ in the expression ‘church music’ and Christ, who is the Head of the church, a connection so close as to be expressible in the phrase, ‘the body of Christ’. With T.F.Torrance, he finds the church to be ‘sacramentally correlative to the life and passion of Jesus Christ’. How is church music to conform to this, what has music to do with the suffering and victory of Christ? Here Routley derives some principles for church musicians and composers, to which we shall later return. ‘Good doctrine’ teaches us of the intimate relation between the church and Christ, through his Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection, and is waiting for daily expression in all forms of church behaviour, of which music is one form. Further, the criticism of church music in practice should proceed from the ground of doctrine, should avoid facile legalism, and should be constructive enough to encourage the good, before being repressive enough to ensure the avoidance of error.¹⁴³

Towards the end of his life, Routley in a second volume on this theme urges even more forcefully the partnership between theologians and musicians.¹⁴⁴ He notes regretfully that those who seek to ‘raise standards’ ‘have yet to find a terminology which conforms so clearly with the gospel that it decisively refutes the philistines and the slothful’.¹⁴⁵ The quality in church music which seems to the author to be most conspicuously

¹⁴¹ This study that this thesis reports was really born in the writings of and personal encounters with Erik Routley. His influence on many is expressed through the memorial tribute: Robin A. Leaver and James H. Litton, eds. *Duty and Delight*. See footnote 39.

¹⁴² Routley, *Church Music and Theology*. See footnote 130.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁴⁴ Erik Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith* (Collins Liturgical Publications, 1980).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

lacking at present is modesty. 'The best church musicians have always been the best listeners. ... The great church musician listens to the conversation already going on before joining in it'. He concludes: 'It is, I trust, no pietist platitude to claim that our music and our music making should aim at being conformable to a gospel which tells of a crucified and risen Redeemer, and which lays on us all the duty and the delight of losing our lives that we may save them.'¹⁴⁶

Given the current influence on writers from all traditions of the Catholic approach to the evaluation of music through the liturgy, Lutheran Gordon Lathrop's development of the sub discipline of liturgical ecclesiology may offer a way of bringing together judgements directly based on biblical teaching about the church and what is revealed about the church through liturgy. In *Holy People*,¹⁴⁷ Lathrop offers a study of the gathered assembly of worshippers in terms of what its nature and actions say about God, using as building blocks work in the area of liturgical theology which began to be developed in the 1960s and associated with the names of Alexander Schmemmann and Aidan Kavanagh.¹⁴⁸ From the former, Lathrop adopts the three-way division by which *primary liturgical theology* is the experience of God in worship, *secondary liturgical theology* is reflection upon this, finding words to capture and assess this experience, and *pastoral liturgical theology* is the application of these reflections to the continuing reform of worship so that it may help make the liturgical experience of the church one of the life-giving sources of the knowledge of God.¹⁴⁹ Just as liturgical theology relates to the encounter of God in liturgy, in developing a liturgical ecclesiology Lathrop seeks a means of interpreting what worship says of the church. In so claiming, he notes that earliest references to liturgy were to make theological points rather than to describe, for the purpose of replication, how things were done in a particular place.

Further clarifying the scope of his exploration, the author makes it clear that his interest in liturgy, while defining relationships within the church as a whole, also relates to the interface between church and world, modelling reconciliation. The

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology*. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).

¹⁴⁸ Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1975); Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1984).

¹⁴⁹ Lathrop, *Holy People*, 7.

church as assembled is radically different from the many current patterns in society at large, challenging these and challenging more sharply the modern understanding that religion is a private concern, a position characterised by the postmodern availability of spiritualities practised individually and in individually exercised media.

Whereas some discussion in ecumenical theology today comes to grief over diverse worship practices, Lathrop focuses on the deeper patterns – word, meal, text, preaching etc. – which are held in common in spite of differing expressions. This he calls the *ordo*, the outline shape and characteristic actions that lie beneath many local variations. The unity between churches is expressed not just theoretically in the deeper patterns underlying the diversity but in the gifts that churches give to each other, and his list of examples of traditions and practices and mutual admonishment contains ‘songs, hymns, and other music as a mode for all the gatherings of the assembly’.¹⁵⁰ It is within this line of enquiry that Lathrop develops a critique which is of particular interest to this study in its attempt to find the right balance between the musical traditions of the church, where the passage of time has ensured not just quality but appropriateness and effectiveness, and contemporary, culture-bound, compositions and settings. He proposes a model by which local cultural expressions can relate to the practice of the universal church, both in its current manifestations and its traditions.

While at the same time the central things must be locally celebrated, ‘we do indeed break *koinonia* when untransformed local customs or particular, time-bound customs, come to take required central place, pushing aside the primacy of those things which, in the power of the Spirit, gather us into Christ and so before the face of God’.¹⁵¹ Lathrop uses the distinction between ‘local’ and ‘more-than-local’ which, while giving high place to the culture- and time-bound, shows its necessary relationship with the things that are central, but in so doing he also shows how this might be so. Taking the example of images, music and the remembrance of the saints, he proposes:

The locally powerful image is, in the iconostasis or the arrangement of images, both welcomed and disciplined to the central purposes of the

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 58.

¹⁵¹ Gordon Lathrop, ‘*Koinonia* and the Shape of the Liturgy’, paper given at the fifteenth congress of Societas Liturgica, Dublin 1995, *Studia Liturgica*, Vol. 26 (1996), No. 1, 78. (Also in *Holy People*, 129-130).

ordo. The memory of the locally powerful hero is juxtaposed and subordinated to the sacramental memory of Christ. The locally powerful music is turned to Christian purpose, often by being juxtaposed to at least one other style of music, of wider provenance, always by bringing its power to *serve* (as must happen with any *power* in Christian use) an assembly gathered around the central things. When images, saints or music – or, indeed, other features of local power: sexual identity, national aspirations, clan or group spirit – are not so disciplined, the health of the local assembly is seriously impaired and *koinonia* with other assemblies is made difficult or impossible.¹⁵²

This distinction between the local and the more-than-local is one which may be helpful in considering further what qualities should be inherent in music for Christian worship.

The approach of Lathrop and his predecessors has recently been subjected to criticism. Lathrop's dependence on there being an *ordo*, a worship shape that is lodged in the very forming of the church, has been questioned by Michael B. Aune, who asks whether such a format ever existed.¹⁵³ Latest research has suggested that great variety of belief and practice prevailed in the earliest church.¹⁵⁴ Some have further questioned Lathrop's reliance on the assembly, fearing that this might 'trip the balance' of divine initiative and human response'.¹⁵⁵ One (but not the only) danger in the concept is that it is but a short step to an emphasis on human action as the primary dynamic of worship. Nathan Mitchell puts it: 'Liturgy is not something beautiful we do for God, but something beautiful *God* does for us and among us.'¹⁵⁶ A further objection suggests that, rather than liturgy being 'primary theology', worship is conditioned by the 'secondary theology' that people bring with them, while the liturgy itself has been shaped by 'secondary' theological reflection so that it might give expression to certain doctrinal convictions.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, Lathrop proposes a rich scheme which rings true with many aspects of the experience of the worshipping church and, even if it were to be further refined, is of assistance to the present study. Part therefore of this continuing enquiry will be to ask whether ecclesiology, in

¹⁵² Ibid., 79-80.

¹⁵³ Michael B. Aune, 'Liturgy and Theology: Rethinking the Relationship', *Worship* Vol. 81 (2007), No. 1, 53.

¹⁵⁴ See, for example, Paul Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, Alcuin Club Collections 80 (London: SPCK, 2004), passim.

¹⁵⁵ Aune, 'Liturgy and Theology', 61. In this article, Aune summarises this critique of Lathrop's proposals.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted *ibid.*, 64.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

particular liturgical ecclesiology, might yield the kind of integrated approach that Parsons calls for.

10. CONCLUSION

In approaching the theology of music, the theology of music in worship and/or liturgy, and indeed current ecclesiology, we need to recognise that ecumenically (and not in all denominations) the centrality of the eucharist is a comparatively new phenomenon in the Christian West. Although the mass has been the principal liturgical act in the Roman Catholic Church since the sixteenth century (and even earlier), it has been completely redefined and re-presented in the last half century. In other Western traditions, the dominance of the eucharist (except perhaps in 'high' Anglican churches) has proceeded more gradually, but only become the norm in the same period: before then services centred on the hearing and expounding of Scripture dominated. With that change comes a radically new ecclesiology of assembly that Lathrop has explored (and to which Routley was far less exposed). There is thus a very important recent history to take into account in considering liturgical worship that is predominantly eucharistic, music within that liturgical worship, and the theologies of liturgy, music in general (and art music in particular), and liturgical music.

Every writer is conditioned by culture, context, experience and knowledge. In this review of thinking and writing about the theology of music and the theology of music in the liturgy there is the general culture and context of the West and the Western church – and specifically at this time in history; but there is also the specific cultural standpoint – contextual, aesthetic and theological (and denominational) – of each writer. While this demonstrates engagement with theology and music within a number of denominations, it is not necessarily ecumenical, as distinct approaches of individual writers have demonstrated. Moreover, the ways in which each writer engages with the subject are distinctive. Certain writers engage with music as a medium through which God's being is revealed: Begbie, making use of critical musicology, and Blackwell, making greater use of the philosophy of music. Notwithstanding Begbie's own musical catholicity and eclecticism, he, Blackwell, Loades, Brown, Evdokimov, Farley, and – of course – Steiner, are concerned principally with the art-work, the self-contained musical expression.

In his teaching materials, John Harper has argued that music may be used as a way of looking at liturgy as a whole, for he offers the definition of music as ‘the shaping of sound and silence within time and space’ – thereby including the whole liturgical action (to which might be added gesture and movement as part of the wider sensory experience of liturgy).¹⁵⁸ Inevitably those who write about music in worship are placing music within the wider context of worship, and worship shared by the whole assembly. There are two fundamental differences from art music here: a musical item cannot be regarded as self-contained and self-sufficient (the context of the liturgy is dominant); it is no longer a question of performer and listener, but of the impact on and engagement of the whole assembly (though that does not of necessity require active participation in the making of the music).

It is on the nature and use of music in liturgy that Joncas, Gelineau, McGann, Leaver and Routley write (inter alia), and they are each influenced by and reflect the culture and tradition of their own denomination.¹⁵⁹ These writers are overwhelmingly concerned with music which has text, and therefore with vocal music. This is in marked contrast to the writers on (and makers of) art music, whose models (and output) are not predominantly texted. (There is clearly a reconciliation to be effected between music as song and music as abstract sound.) There is another distinction that is significant: whereas those writing about music in general tend to emphasise God the Creator, those writing about liturgical music (and this is notable in Troeger, Routley and Leaver) emphasise the Christological – God the Redeemer and Saviour. Only the Orthodox Evdokimov makes significant reference to the action of God as spirit; yet, it is through the fellowship (*koinonia*) of the Spirit that the assembly which is church is enabled.

Joncas explores *koinonia* as one manifestation of music in the expression of church, setting it alongside kerygma, didache and diakonia. Alongside Lathrop (and others), McGann also identifies the ecclesiological as one of six dimensions of Christian

¹⁵⁸ Introductory module WSM 1012, *An Introduction to Music in Worship*, RSCM/Bangor University, 11, and Postgraduate Studies in Sacred Music, module WMP 4043, Unit 4.

¹⁵⁹ In the case of McGann, who is writing about a culture and tradition that is ‘external’ to her normative experience, one may question whether that culture and tradition does not shape, if not distort, her argument.

worship (and in the African-American context of which she was writing, the term worship is probably more appropriate). The value of the ecclesiological approach is to raise music above the level of mere functionality, as not just servant of the liturgy but of the text of the liturgy or of the people of the liturgy. It brings to music the manifestation of the work of the Spirit which underpins and literally inspires liturgical assembly and worship. It allows music to be God-centred through the engagement of the whole assembly. It requires music to be neither self-contained nor dependent, text nor untexted, art-work or crafted-work; it allows music to belong to a diversity of aesthetics, cultures and contexts (and theologies), and indeed to allow their admixture and interaction. It is therefore not only the basis of a far more comprehensive means of understanding music in worship and in liturgy, but as a key to ecumenism.

Central to the very being of the church is its nature to praise and worship the Creator (doxology). Further, it both models and enables a quality of shared life which points to the Kingdom of God, the ultimate goal of creation. Music is both a prime language for this praise as well as symbol and expression of the reconciled community that anticipates the Kingdom. The more its music takes on the character of the church, the more equal will it become to this task and role.

4

THE IMAGE OF *KOINONIA* IN CURRENT ECUMENICAL DISCUSSION

1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis proposes criteria for the operation of music in worship which are based in ecclesiology, the theological field with the church as its focus, in that worship (with music) is constitutive of the church,¹ and a central and defining activity of the church. More particularly, appeal will be made to the New Testament image of *koinonia*, being the lens currently used by churches in dialogue and multilateral discussion, and found to be productive in bringing into focus an understanding of the church that resonates both with Scripture and with the traditions represented by its mainstream expressions.

While the image (with its Latin equivalent *communio*), usually given the translation into English of ‘communion’, has been appealed to by writers throughout the history of the church, it is only relatively recently that there has been, in the words of Nicholas Sagovsky, such a ‘striking ecumenical convergence’ in its use.² Employed in the New Testament, patristic and Reformation writings in relation to the church, *koinonia* has been reclaimed by the ecumenical movement as a key motif in understanding the church and, from its richness of meaning, used to assess the degree of communion already achieved. Sagovsky dates the modern interest back to the Second Vatican Council, and few subsequent reports resulting from formal dialogues between branches of the church ignore the concept, while most draw upon it to a greater or lesser degree.

At the same time there has been the work of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC) for which this concept has acted as a focus. The working document for the Seventh Assembly at Canberra in 1991 was entitled *The*

¹ Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, para. 15.
www.vatican.va/holy.father/benedict_xvi/apost.exhortations/documents/hf_ben_xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis_en.html

² Nicholas Sagovsky, *Ecumenism, Christian Origins and the Practice of Communion*, (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4.

Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling.³ Koinonia was also the theme for the fifth Faith and Order world conference which took place at Santiago de Compostela in 1993, for which the paper, *Towards Koinonia in Faith, Life and Witness*,⁴ was prepared. Out of these have come the 'common statements', *The Nature and Purpose of the Church* (1998)⁵ and *The Nature and Mission of the Church* (2004),⁶ as well as a parallel exploration of the theme in a liturgical context, beginning with a gathering at Ditchingham in England (1994).⁷

Parallel to these dialogues and consultations has been the work of individual scholars such as John Reumann and John Zizioulas, whose *Being as Communion* has been influential.⁸ Sagovsky himself has made a considerable contribution to the discussion, not least through his study of the concept of *koinonia* in secular Hellenistic usage and in the work of the Latin fathers. He also offers a valuable critique of the use of the term from the point of view of one who participates in the contemporary Faith and Order discussion, noting the danger, if used carelessly or too generally, of obscuring ecumenical divergence or even promoting the opposite to true communion.

Finally, in addition to the sources outlined above, the term has been used within denominations to provide a context for the further study of issues which threaten to be divisive. In the Anglican Communion, for example, the Eames Commission, set up to examine the threat to unity perceived as posed by the ordination of women to the priesthood, appealed to the concept both in discussing the handling of disagreement and in addressing the question as to where disagreement ends and impaired communion begins.⁹

³ Gros, J., Meyer, H., Rusch, W.G., eds., *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*, Faith and Order Paper 187 (Geneva: WCC, 2000), 937ff.

⁴ Thomas F. Best and Günther Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, Faith and Order Paper 166, Official Report of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994), 23-24.

⁵ *The Nature and Purpose of the Church: a Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*, Faith and Order Paper 181 (Geneva: WCC, 1998).

⁶ *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, Faith and Order paper 198 (Geneva: WCC, 2005).

⁷ T. F. Best and D. Heller, eds., *So We Believe, So We Pray: Towards Koinonia in Worship*, Faith and Order paper 171 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1995).

⁸ John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997).

⁹ Sagovsky, *Ecumenism*, 22ff.

It will be the aim of this chapter to explore the dimensions of this rich image as revealed in these dialogues, gatherings, and writings, with the intention of deriving insights and principles which may be further explored in the context of the composition, choice, performance and structures of the music of the Christian church. To this end, as well as setting out the main narrative, it will be helpful to follow the discussion into some of the byways, in the hope of harvesting insights that may have musical application.

2. THE EMERGENCE OF THE IMAGE

In the paper he gave at the Santiago conference,¹⁰ John Zizioulas outlined the developments which had led to the emergence of the concept of *koinonia* as a key notion in the theological language of the Faith and Order movement in the WCC. Although this was a theme that was deeply rooted in all Christian traditions, its emergence in the present day was prompted by what he defined as a major shift in ecclesiology between the earliest Faith and Order world conference at Lausanne in 1927 and those of more recent times. At the earlier conferences, the focus was on Christology, with a strong emphasis on the church as the body of Christ. At the New Delhi Assembly in 1961, however, the basis of the WCC was changed to include reference to the Holy Trinity, and by the time of the Faith and Order world conference at Montreal in 1963 it was being stressed that an understanding of the church should not derive only from Christology but from the Trinitarian understanding of God. This 'climate' was conducive to the revisiting of the concept of communion, first at the Second Vatican Council and then in a convergence of Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox theology.

Since questions of difference and disagreement are part of the discussion about church music, it may be helpful to note the role of the chosen image in ecumenical convergence.

¹⁰ Metropolitan John of Pergamon, 'The Church as Communion', in Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the*

1. First, it not only stands as a description of the church in its concrete form but simultaneously expresses that which is at the heart of the being of the church, the communion that it has with its Head, both in its essence and in the act of eucharist in which this is bedded. Thus the second round of conversations of the Anglican and Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC II) used the concept as the foundation of a report, *Church as Communion* (Dublin 1990)¹¹, whose purpose is stated as ‘to give substance to the affirmation that Anglicans and Roman Catholics are already in a real though as yet imperfect communion and to enable us to recognize the degree of communion that exists both within and between us’.¹² Within such a perspective, it was hoped that outstanding difficulties that remained would be more clearly understood and more likely to be resolved. These differences (the ordination of women, certain moral issues, questions of authority are cited), arising out of centuries of separation, were not only theological but the result of inheriting different cultural traditions. To agree on an understanding of the church as communion allows an examination of such differences, since the attention is directed further into the common history of the two Churches, to ‘the life God wills to share with all people’.¹³

2. The second advantage of using this concept is that, as Sagovsky notes, it comes with a consensus about method: ‘that we must build on the communion Christians already experience by virtue of shared participation in Christ, a shared participation that can be made explicit by “going behind disagreements” or finding from the tradition reconciling language in which both parties can recognise their own faith’.¹⁴

3. The third advantage is referred to in the Final Report (1977) of the dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the (Roman Catholic) Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, *The Presence of Christ in Church and World*.¹⁵ As is suggested by the title, focus is on the central place of Christ in the

Way to Fuller Koinonia, 103-111.

¹¹ *Growth in Agreement II*, 328ff.

¹² *Ibid.*, 329.

¹³ *Ibid.* This was a theme also in the Porvoo Common Statement of 1992 (Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches), as well as in several other dialogues: see Sagovsky, *Ecumenism*, 26ff.

¹⁴ Sagovsky, *Ecumenism*, 4.

¹⁵ Reprinted in H. Meyer and L. Vischer, *Growth in Agreement: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level* (Paulist Press/WCC 1984), 433ff.

sacrament, around which, with the multiplicity of gifts granted by the Spirit, the Church ‘lives as a *koinonia* of those who need and help each other’.¹⁶ As the report develops, the concept of *koinonia* is seen as being helpful in moving beyond an approach which has ‘encumbered’ the dialogue between the confessions, based as it has been on rigid alternatives such as realism/symbolism and substance/form.¹⁷

4. Finally, an advantage of the concept of *koinonia* in the search for greater unity is that it is not a new model to which churches should try and conform but a term which offers biblical and theological foundation for different models.¹⁸ The basis offered is not static but describes a ‘dynamic reality moving towards fulfilment’ in that it encompasses both the visible gathering of God’s people and the source of its life.¹⁹ The flexibility thus offered allows different traditions to feel for ways in which the things they have in common may be expressed, and to acknowledge that what they seek may be found in terms and patterns that they severally may be able to acknowledge. This is assisted by the fact that there is present in the term an urgency that comes from the concept finding part of its reality and power in the promised Kingdom of God, a reality which radically challenges the other reality of the fractured community which is the church, fatally obscuring God’s invitation to communion for all humankind.

Given that it is hoped that this concept may assist in the further understanding of the role of music in the church and enable assessment as to the health of current practice, it will be necessary to examine the concept in more detail. Thus, a closer reading of some of the key reports and papers is now made.

3. DIALOGUES AND CONSULTATIONS

3.1 The ARCIC contribution

Conversations between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church

¹⁶ Ibid., 447, para.54.

¹⁷ Ibid., 450, para.71.

¹⁸ See John Reumann in Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, 63.

¹⁹ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Communion II Report, *Church as Communion*, in *Growth in Agreement II*, 329.

began in 1967, and in 1970 the Anglican and Roman Catholic International Commission became established. In the Commission's *Final Report* of 1981,²⁰ the concept of *koinonia* is named as 'fundamental'. It was a concept which 'opened the way to the understanding of the mystery of the Church', underlying as it did the various New Testament concepts of the church, at the heart of *koinonia* being union with God in Christ through the Spirit. The report draws attention to the double meaning attached to the concept in the New Testament, signifying a relation between persons resulting from their participation in one and the same reality.

The statements that follow, on the eucharist, on *episcopate* and on primacy, are developed within this context. The eucharist is seen as building up and nurturing God's people in the *koinonia* of his body. In discussing ministry and ordination, *episcopate* is seen as serving *koinonia*, its prime responsibility to enable all the people to use the gifts of the Spirit they have received for the enrichment of the church's common life. Primacy is the necessary link between all those exercising *episcopate*. The church as *koinonia* requires visible expression as the 'sacrament' (both sign and instrument) of God's saving work. It is a sign that God's purpose in Christ is being realised in the world by grace, and as it proclaims the truth of the Gospel and witnesses to it in its life it is an instrument for the accomplishment of this purpose. 'The community thus announces what it is called to become.'²¹

In *Church as Communion* (Dublin 1990) also,²² the concept of *koinonia* is given substantial treatment. The report surveys the concept of communion and related ideas as they unfold in the Old and New Testaments. God creates human beings and invites them to live in communion with him and with one another as stewards of creation. Disobedience leads to their expulsion, distorting their relationship with creation and with each other. God reaffirms his covenant with his people, and remains faithful despite their apostasy, promising a new covenant, afterwards fulfilled in the sending of

²⁰ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Final Report* (London: Catholic Truth Society/ SPCK, 1981).

²¹ *Growth in Agreement*, 65-66, *Final Report*, Introduction paras. 6 and 7.

²² *Growth in Agreement II*, 328ff.

his Son.²³ The report follows the course of this theme in the New Testament before beginning an examination of the word *koinonia* in some detail, noting the way it ties together a number of basic concepts such as unity, life together, sharing and partaking. In its verbal form, it means ‘to share’, ‘to participate’, ‘to have part in’, ‘to have something in common’, ‘to act together’. This is nowhere more clearly expressed than in the description of the church as the body of Christ, when, as St. Paul frequently teaches, believers are ‘in Christ’ and Christ is in the believer through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a description which is integrally linked with the presence of Christ in the eucharist.²⁴

The report goes on to discuss the church as itself a mystery or sacrament. Christ became the sign, instrument and first-fruit of God’s purpose for creation, effecting a transformation in which alienation is overcome by communion, both between human beings and between them and God. As God’s servant, the church is to enter into the struggle in order to end divisions created by human sin. Through the word proclaimed, the sacraments celebrated, and pastoral oversight given, the life of the gospel is manifested in the life of the members of the church, a sign and instrument of salvation, in spite of human sinfulness and Christian division. This life in communion continues as a living tradition, without which the faithful transmission of the gospel would be impossible. Such a life rests both in the Holy Spirit bringing to remembrance all that Christ said and accomplished, in the constant confession and celebration of the apostolic faith, as well as in the insights, emphases and perspectives of faithful members. To this end, new expressions of the faith are developed. The report challenges the two Churches, locally and globally, to search for further steps by which concrete expression can be given to the communion which they already share.²⁵

3.2 Faith and Order discussion

The starting point for the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Canberra in 1991 is set out at the beginning of the study document prepared for that

²³ Ibid., 330, paras. 6-8.

²⁴ Ibid., 331, paras.12-14.

²⁵ Ibid., 343, para.58.

occasion:

The purpose of God according to holy scripture is to gather the whole of creation under the lordship of Christ Jesus in whom, by the power of the Holy Spirit, all are brought into communion with God (Ephesians 1). The Church is the foretaste of this communion with God and with one another.²⁶

This was to be a key concept throughout the Assembly, which took as its theme, 'Come, Holy Spirit – Renew the Whole Creation'. The Moderator, Heinz Joachim Held, warned against theology which was purely theoretical. 'Common theologising develops out of common experiences ... Community, communion, *koinonia* ... seems to be ... the decisive reality of life on which everything is meant to converge and which should be served by all our thoughts and plans.' For him, the Faith and Order statement prepared for the Assembly gave an apt description of where the churches stood in the quest for unity: 'between the unity that is a gift and the unity that is lost, between a renewed experience of communion and a communion which is still to be recognized'.²⁷

Two years later, the concept of *koinonia* was the subject of the fifth world conference on Faith and Order which was held in Santiago de Compostela (1993). Opening the conference, moderator Mary Tanner outlined what gave this image particular strength:

Koinonia draws our attention away from our divisions, directing us to that giving and receiving life and love which flow between the persons of the Holy Trinity. This mysterious life of divine communion is one in which the personal and relational are prior; in which multiplicity is perfectly held together so that there is no separation, while at the same time the very unity is enriched by the multiplicity, so that it never degenerates into arid uniformity. It is a communion at the heart of which is a cross and it is a communion which is dynamic, always sending and being sent, stretching out to embrace and enfold within its own life.²⁸

What Tanner is asking for is a 're-visioning' of the goal of visible unity. The search for this communion does not begin *simpliciter* by studying models of community untrammelled by structure. Such discoveries must be related to that truth discovered through going back together to scripture and tradition. However, 'if it is not possible to form doctrine from perpetual newness, it is equally impossible to form (it) .. by simply restating old categories without explication'. We seek an ecumenical method

²⁶ 'The Unity of the Church as *Koinonia*: Gift and Calling', in *Growth in Agreement II*, 937, para. 1.1.

²⁷ Ibid., 139.

²⁸ Ibid., 24, para.18.

which lives more in the ‘in between’. If we are thus to ‘live the tradition’ and at the same time to be constantly open to new ways of understanding and living the faith in today’s world, we ‘need a more inclusive community for reflection and interpretation, open to every culture and ecclesial tradition. We need to ask who is missing from our circle – and whom do we silence *within* our circle?’²⁹

The conference at Santiago was not just significant in itself but for the steps taken to carry the study of *koinonia* forward. In particular, two initiatives were taken. One was the resolution to work towards a common statement which churches would own as expressing an understanding of the church from which they could proceed towards greater unity. This issued in the Faith and Order document, *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*,³⁰ which was commended for study in the churches. The responses given led to a second statement, *The Nature and Mission of the Church*.³¹

3.3 Common statements

The Nature and Purpose of the Church

It is in the third chapter that this document focuses most sharply on the concept of *koinonia*. Created in God’s image, man and woman long for communion with God and with one another and with creation as its stewards (para. 49). God’s purpose is distorted by sin but God persists in faithfulness (50). Through identification with the death and resurrection of Christ, Christians enter into *koinonia* with God and one another (53). United in Christ, Christians belong to a new community. *Koinonia* is with Christ crucified and so also is a sharing in the struggles of humankind (55). Visible and tangible signs of the new life are: sharing the faith, the bread, prayer with and for one another and the world, serving, participating in each other’s joys and sorrows, giving material aid, proclaiming and witnessing, working for justice (56). Communion is for the whole of creation (57). Divisions affect mission (which may be defined as seeking the *koinonia* of all), and the restoration of unity is an urgent task (58). The communion is with all joined with Christ in the communion of saints (59). The gift of communion is often only partially realized, and the new life entails repentance, forgiveness,

²⁹ Ibid., 28.

³⁰ See footnote 5, above.

³¹ See footnote 6, above.

restoration (60).

The Nature and Mission of the Church

The revised text presented to the Kuala Lumpur meeting of the Faith and Order Commission in 2004 incorporates further reflection as a result of responses to the original document and takes account of developments in the discussion surrounding *koinonia* subsequent to the publication of the original. Some of these additional emphases are relevant to the present study. One may detect, for example, an acknowledgement of the significance of regional variation in structure and practice, giving this equal status with universal practice and seeking the balance between the two. There is a recognition, too, that ecumenism is not about doctrine alone but about the spiritual experience of different churches often expressed in particular language and worship forms. While the material about the various images of the church remain, there is greater acknowledgement of the interplay of other kinds of material relating to the church as portrayed in the New Testament, coupled with a fuller statement of the place of Scripture, and indeed of preaching, in arriving at greater insight about the nature and mission of the church. Related to this is a recognition of the relationship of *koinonia* to the idea of covenant in the Hebrew Scriptures, coupled with a greater affirmation of the positive role of the Jewish people.

The idea that diversity is not accidental but an aspect of the catholicity of the church is given further emphasis; unity can only be possible through the proper co-ordination of diverse gifts. Much material has been repositioned, sometimes giving it greater prominence or point, such as the material about the church as a royal priesthood, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, and the insistence that no one exercises that priesthood apart from the unique priesthood of Christ nor in isolation from the other members of the body. The treatment of *koinonia* as prominent amongst a succession of concepts of the church instead of in a separate section perhaps reflects an awareness that too much can be pinned on one idea. In the section on eucharist, there is explicit reference to the epiclesis, and an underlining of the connection between the Lord's Supper and the nature of the church. There is an additional section on authority, and an increase in emphasis on the wider world/creation context.

3.4 The Ditchingham Consultation

A second initiative was taken by the Santiago conference, one which is of particular interest to the present study, namely the pursuit of these themes through reflecting on the liturgical practice of the churches. This was focused in a Faith and Order consultation held at Ditchingham, Norwich, in August 1994, which sought to bring together the developments in the past decades (a) in the study and practice of Christian worship and (b) in ecumenical reflection on the nature and life of the Christian church and its calling to unity. In making its report, the consultation contended that progress towards greater unity in the churches could be given more momentum when each consciously sought in its worship and the worship of others signposts towards a greater sharing. Thus the first section ends:

It does not yet appear what our *koinonia* in Christ may be. But we know that as we faithfully gather around word and sacrament, signs of the living Christ and the power of the Spirit, as we faithfully see their connections to all of life, and as we share the sufferings of a Church which longs for unity and a world which longs for justice, we participate in an icon of that future which God's great love and mercy is bringing toward all the world. We pray for that future and we already begin to receive it and to become part of it. And, bearing witness to an aching and needy world, we sing praises to the One whose mercy is everlasting and whose faithfulness endures to all generations (I.9).³²

As Gordon Lathrop has pointed out, *koinonia* within and between churches is, at root, a liturgical phenomenon because what we mean by church is, first of all, a liturgical assembly. Mutual recognition might well be arrived at by the conventional instruments of unity, doctrinal agreement or the recognition of ministries, but we should remember that doctrine is first of all what we confess and enact in baptism, creed is a baptismal symbol, theology is first found in preaching and communal action of the eucharist, canon is first of all an authoritative list of books for reading in assembly, and bishops are first of all local liturgical presiders. Earliest uses of *koinonia*, both Pauline and Lukan, are to do with the Christian assembly.³³

Churches need to learn from each other what particular practices each has treasured –

³² Paragraph references are to the Report, published in Best and Heller, *So We Believe, So We Pray*.

³³ Gordon W Lathrop, 'Koinonia and the Shape of the Liturgy', *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.26 (1996),

singing, silence, sacramental formation, solidarity with the poor, etc. (I.7). Examples of current interchange of practice are the common lectionaries, the wider use of icons, liturgical scholarship which leads the churches back to common sources, common texts for ecumenical use or for shared pastoral situations, and liturgies for the healing of memories where social division has had a religious cause (III.28-32). This learning can take place particularly well locally, where inculturation enriches the various elements (I.8) and where a closer cultural resemblance may grow up between denominations than at higher levels.

In worship, words and non-verbal forms interact, whereas the Faith and Order programme has tended to focus on the written word. For worship to enrich the process, there would be a need to become more sensitive to visual settings and non-verbal forms of communication (V.55-56). Nevertheless, there are dangers in this approach, particularly that it could be seized upon as a successful 'new' approach where an earlier one had seemed to become unproductive – that is, an approach through the spiritual dimension as opposed to the intellectual. For example, Constance J. Tarasar warns³⁴ against creating a dichotomy between an objective and analytical approach and a more subjective and mystical one. She offers an interpretation of the Ditchingham proposals as an attempt to go beyond the documents and focus attention on the whole, to place the words in the fuller context of life in the church – prayer, worship, fellowship, healing, repentance, thanksgiving, etc. The intention is to look at non-discursive ways in which faith is expressed, 'an attempt to unite "word" and "spirit" into one whole, rather than divide them or even to see them as "two sides" of the same coin'.³⁵ Such a warning is supported by Nicholas Sagovsky, whose concern is that study of *koinonia* could take place behind or above the physical. He contends that there can be no *koinonia* without sharing in symbols and it is not possible to exclude the place of the physical in communion. The very physical giving and receiving of gifts is a paradigm of *koinonia* and offers a corrective to any 'spiritualising' of the term.³⁶

No.1, 69-70.

³⁴ Constance J. Tarasar, 'Worship, Spirituality and Biblical Reflection: Their Significance for the Churches' Search for *Koinonia*', *Ecumenical Review*, Vol. 45, No. 1, 218-225.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 219.

³⁶ Sagovsky, *Ecumenism*, 10-12.

3.5 *Koinonia* and other biblical images

The understanding that in *koinonia* there is not offered a single model for the form the church must take enables an appeal to the richness of the many other images that have accumulated around the experience of being and reflecting on the nature of the church by biblical writers. A number of images were used to capture what they experienced, images which, taken together, contain enough of the truth of the matter to engage mind and heart with the mystery that is the church. For this reason, the reports and study documents already referred to have been at pains to show that the concept of *koinonia* must be taken along with others. Indeed, the image in question emerges from amongst what earlier reports saw as stronger concepts.

However, before long *koinonia* has taken pride of place, yet not in isolation. The *Final Report* of the Anglican and Roman Catholic International Commission (1981) speaks of the people of God, body of Christ and temple of the Holy Spirit, and adds the concepts of bride of Christ, Temple, New Jerusalem, royal priesthood, household of God, and holy nation. Nevertheless, the concept of *koinonia* is seen as ‘fundamental ... the term that most aptly expresses the mystery underlying the various New Testament concepts of the Church’, its strength lying in its ability to emphasise the relationship between the church’s members as well as their relationship with Christ.³⁷ Here is shared life in Christ, making Christians one with each other. The 1990 (Dublin) report of the same body, *Church as Communion*, adds to this rich roll call the concepts of flock and vine.³⁸ The Porvoo Common Statement (1992) brackets *koinonia* with the concepts of people of God, body of Christ, and pilgrim people.³⁹ *The Nature and Purpose of the Church* expounds *koinonia* in the context of three major biblical concepts referred to above (people of God, body of Christ, temple of the Holy Spirit), the same three concepts used earlier in *Church and Justification* (1994), the result of dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches, which also appeals to *koinonia* as a central concept.⁴⁰

The way that *Nature and Purpose* relates *koinonia* to the other images, as ‘expressing

³⁷ *Growth in Agreement*, 65, para.4.

³⁸ *Growth in Agreement II*, 332.

³⁹ Quoted Sagovsky, *Ecumenism*, 26.

the reality to which they refer',⁴¹ echoes earlier reports, such as *Church as Communion* in which the reality to which the other concepts point is seen as 'communion, a shared life in Christ which no one concept exhaustively describes'.⁴² Similarly, in 1991 the Church of England and the Evangelical Churches in Germany accepted the Meissen Common Statement and Declaration, which drew on an understanding of the church as *koinonia*, where the concept is seen as one which gathers up and focuses other concepts. 'Underlying many of the New Testament descriptions of the Church ... is the reality of *koinonia* – a communion – which is a sharing in the life of the Holy Trinity and therein with our fellow-members of the Church. The Church is the community (*koinonia*) of those reconciled with God and with one another.'⁴³

3.6 The origin and later meaning of *koinonia*

Although the noun *koinonia* and its cognates appear 36 times in the New Testament, it does not, like so many other terms and themes, have a direct Old Testament counterpart. However, in the dominant cultural context in which the Christian church began to take shape, the term was in use to refer to patterns of relationship in public life, whether state or domestic, and including religion.⁴⁴ Such patterns could include common meals and might have an acknowledged ethical dimension. Emerging groupings in the young church would therefore encounter *koinonia* not just as concept but as physical reality.⁴⁵ Sagovsky offers a credible conjecture as to how the Christian community might have been formed, with gospel narratives functioning at two levels – bearing witness to the history of Jesus and the disciples, and acting as model for the continuing history of Jesus and his later disciples.⁴⁶ The likelihood of theology being formed in this way out of materials that were to hand in the culture (rather than from the pages of Scripture or the mouth of Jesus, who is not recorded as using the word) is strengthened when the similarity is noted between the Pauline concept of the body of Christ and the interdependent nature of the Greek *polis*, in which, according to Plato, if someone is hurt the whole community (*koinonia*) shares the pain. Similarly for

⁴⁰ *Growth in Agreement II*, 485ff.

⁴¹ *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*, para. 51.

⁴² *Growth in Agreement II*, 332, para.13.

⁴³ Quoted in Sagovsky, *Ecumenism*, 24ff.

⁴⁴ Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, 38-9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 40-41.

⁴⁶ Sagovsky, *Ecumenism*, 116-145.

Aristotle humankind lives in the *polis* as *koinonia*, a community which aims at the highest good. However, the Aristotelian state must not have too much unity; it must be diverse. (In the current debate, Sagovsky notes, these two Hellenistic positions, the Platonic and the Aristotelian, are reflected.)⁴⁷ The Hellenistic version also has the supernatural dimension, the ideal ‘forms’ which were the pattern for earthly relationships.⁴⁸ Even the *anamnesis* of the eucharist has a Hellenistic parallel in Plato’s use of the term to denote participation in and experience of the ideal forms. Thus, as the church began to understand itself, these concepts, not least the image of *koinonia*, were taken up and shaped round their developing experience of living the gospel.

The question arises, by the time the image of *koinonia* was enshrined in the writings of Paul and others, what was it taken to mean? The scholarly consensus is that *koinonia* is not to be taken as a term equivalent to *ecclesia* but refers to the particular quality of common life to which believers were called.⁴⁹ The earliest groups were Jewish, but the book of Acts shows how the Holy Spirit was understood to generate new experiences and understandings of *koinonia* (Pentecost, Saul, Peter and Cornelius). Those who belonged to the community of Jesus had found a new way to belong to the covenant people of God, ‘a new creation’ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Throughout the Corinthian correspondence the theme of the need for unity arises repeatedly, and *koinonia* frequently is appealed to. Central to the strategy is teaching about the body of Christ, one body, sharing bread and wine – for Paul a complex tissue of participation holding together the Corinthian community. Love gives ‘flesh and blood’ to the notion of *koinonia*. Another dimension of *koinonia* is suffering and comfort, i.e. shared experience as *koinonia*. Participation in giving to the poor is also *koinonia*.⁵⁰

Reumann affirms that if *koinonia* is not an interim step on the way to the Christian church, nor a name for church itself, ‘it is an early and important aspect of the church and its unity, in faith, witness and life, including baptism and the Lord’s supper. Believers share in the results of Christ’s death (1 Corinthians 10:16) as they all share in

⁴⁷ Ibid., 70-72.

⁴⁸ Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, 40-41.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 51-53.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 124ff.

one bread and one body, because they are “in Christ” by baptism.”⁵¹ If no specific structures can be derived from the study of the term and its cognates, the term can nevertheless bear the weight of the search for a fresh understanding of the church for today. We should be careful not to make *koinonia* a cipher into which everyone pours the meaning that each wants, as has often happened, making the term mean ‘grace’, covenant, fellowship in the sense of warm friendly ties with a group or association, a deficient form of sacramental ecclesiology, communion without an ethical dimension etc.⁵²

Reumann’s warning has recently been given new point through work by Norbert Baumert,⁵³ who, following study of both Classical and New Testament Greek usages, challenges prevalent assumptions about the meaning of *koinonia*. For him, the term and its cognates refer to participation/partnership between people but not their mutual participation in the object held in common (beyond that of their commonality to the partners). *Koinonein* and *metechein* (share in) are not to be taken as synonymous. These views have struck a blow at the reliance of communion ecclesiology on the image, and responses have not been slow to come. Andrew Lincoln points out that the New Testament has many other ways of speaking about Christian participation in Christ and further argues that it is difficult to understand certain Pauline passages which rely on the term without this dimension. 1 Corinthians 10:16ff, for example, seems to include an element of participation in something held in common linked to physical eating and drinking. Other usages which seem to suggest more than simply human sharing include 1 John 1:3 where fellowship between Christians is bracketed with fellowship with God and Christ, and Philippians 3:10 which speaks of sharing in the sufferings of Christ.⁵⁴ Paul Ridderbos records the shift among theologians from the emphasis on the body as organic entity to the later focus on the church as the ‘real, personal’ body of Christ. In the earlier understanding, amongst both Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars, the term denoted the mystical union between Christ and the

⁵¹ Ibid., 62, para.49.

⁵² Ibid., 61-64.

⁵³ N. Baumert, ‘Koinonein und Metechein – synonym?’ (SBB 51; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bebelwerk, 2003).

⁵⁴ Andrew T. Lincoln, ‘Communion: Some Pauline Foundations’, *Ecclesiology* Vol.5, No.2, 2009, 135-160.

church, by which Christ extended his existence into the church either through the eucharist on the one hand or the giving of the Spirit on the other. Here, ‘body of Christ’ was a figurative, metaphorical term which described the special nature of the body, the church. More recent scholars – again, Protestant and Catholic offering their own versions – criticised this interpretation as introducing a body/soul dichotomy which was foreign to Paul. The body of Christ was now seen not so much as a mystical union as objectively caught up into, comprehended by, Christ in his dying and rising. Its special nature, on the Protestant side, derived from Christ uniting it in him, a ‘redemptive-historical body’, and on the Catholic side from the unity resulting from its sharing in the eucharist.⁵⁵

The template for the community of the church, therefore, is not found in any of the many models of human association but in the body of Christ himself. The term ‘member’ describes not the nature of the relationship between individuals in the church but that between the church and Christ. The reference is therefore not to a particular kind of community but to the source of that community’s life. This renders it radically different from human communities while yet sharing in the outward appearance of the bodies into which men and women gather. *Koinonia* in this context, therefore, goes beyond the human members who make up that community and acknowledges the presence of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit as both within and beyond, renewing, nurturing and calling the community to become a sacrament of God’s reconciling purpose.

4. FIVE DIMENSIONS OF *KOINONIA*

From the foregoing, five characteristics or dimensions within the image can be discerned.

4.1 A eucharistic community

The dimension of *koinonia* as eucharistic community holds together two meanings, one the act of Holy Communion instituted by Jesus Christ, the other the body of persons who make up the church. The term ‘communion ecclesiology’ which expresses this

⁵⁵ H Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (London: SPCK, 1977), 363-368

connection found its starting point in the theology of the French Jesuit, Henri de Lubac (1896-1991), whose early work came to fruition in the fresh understandings of the church propagated at the Second Vatican Council. Paul McPartlan traces developments between the thinking of de Lubac and of Zizioulas:⁵⁶ for de Lubac, Christ becomes corporate by his eucharistic indwelling of individual Christians while, for Zizioulas, Christ is constitutionally corporate, as the living centre of the eucharistic church itself. It is Zizioulas' idea of the 'corporate personality' of Christ that has prevailed. Key biblical passages relating to this dimension are 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 11:17ff where Paul is not so much addressing liturgical practice as urging unity among Corinthian Christians in the face of divisiveness between or within their house churches. It is suggested he was using local catechetical material about the meaning of the bread and the cup, in a straightforward form in the second passage and reversed and placed in the form of a rhetorical question in the first, with the effect that the local group is shown to be locked into the eucharistic event. 'Paul thus moves from Christology, soteriology, and "sacrament" to *ecclesiology*'.⁵⁷

This dual meaning is clearly expressed in the conversations between the Anglican and Orthodox Communion, in whose Moscow Statement of 1976 the Eucharist is said to 'actualize' the church. 'The Church is not only built up by the Eucharist, but is also a condition for it ... The Church celebrating the Eucharist becomes fully itself; that is *koinonia*, fellowship – communion.'⁵⁸ Emphasis on the eucharist is not only found in churches where its importance is affirmed through frequency of celebration but in churches where the high value placed upon it has traditionally been expressed in the rarity of its occurrence combined with elaborate preparation. In the Reformed–Roman Catholic dialogue, *The Presence of Christ in Church and World*, in a substantial section, it is acknowledged that 'the concept of *koinonia* stresses not only fellowship with the exalted Lord Jesus Christ, but beyond this and precisely because of this also the fellowship of all who partake of the meal and are called together into the community of the Lord'.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993).

⁵⁷ Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, 43, para.15.

⁵⁸ *Growth in Agreement*, 45.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 450.

These understandings of the relationship of the eucharist to the physical community of the church will be helpful in distinguishing authentic from inauthentic in contemporary church communities, affirming the beyond-in-the-midst which makes these gatherings distinctively different from any other human grouping. The earlier translation of ‘fellowship’, a word often used today to describe local church communities, is not sufficiently strong to capture all that is encapsulated in these writings and conversations. Reumann himself observes, tellingly, that ‘a network or “society” of friends does not do justice to the full *koinonia* content in Paul’s letters’.⁶⁰ For any practice to be fully consonant with this image, it must point to a dimension of community that goes beyond the human members who make up that community and both give and acknowledge the presence of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit as both within and beyond, renewing, nurturing and calling the community to become a sacrament of God’s reconciling purpose.

4.2 A relational community

One of the most telling derivations from the image of *koinonia* – and one of the most effective tools for unlocking centuries-old positions that divide the church – is that of relationality. Although it is difficult to find specific chapter and verse to establish this dimension, it is implicit in the nature of the relationship of the members of the church/body of Christ to each other and to their Lord. However, the recent re-emphasis on the Trinity,⁶¹ and its interpretation as a community of persons,⁶² has brought an additional vividness to the image. This was given clear expression in the Roman Catholic-Orthodox report, *The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity* (1982), which offered a concise statement of eucharistic ecclesiology in which the church is described as ‘the sacrament of the Trinitarian *koinonia*’, its ‘mystery’ the mystery of the divine life.⁶³ The Santiago discussion paper speaks of human beings as ‘relational, “*koinonia*-shaped” beings’. ‘Communion between God and humanity is a fundamental theme of Holy Scripture. By

⁶⁰ Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, 51.

⁶¹ Above, page 126.

⁶² Instead of the more abstract ‘beings’, a development credited to the fourth century Cappadocian Fathers (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzen). See Sagovsky, *Ecumenism*, 167.

creating human beings in God's image, God has created them to live in communion with him, in communion with each other...'.⁶⁴

The prime exponent of this facet of the image is John Zizioulas, who has written: 'The being of God is a relational being: without the concept of communion it would not be possible to speak of the being of God'.⁶⁵ In his paper to the Santiago conference he explores how the idea of God as community of persons in mutual relationship requires that the church is characterised by relationality, a concept to be applied to all dimensions of the life of the church: its structure and ministry, its understanding of authority, its faith, and its approach to mission.⁶⁶ For example, authority resides not in an office *per se* but in the event of communion created by the Spirit. Even a council is not authoritative as an institution; reception is required. Mission is not a sermon addressed to the world. 'If communion is made a key idea in ecclesiology, mission is better understood and served not by placing the gospel over against the world, but by inculturating it in it.'⁶⁷ Rather than 'throw the Bible or the dogmas of the Church into the face of the world', we should seek to feel and understand what every human being longs for deep in his/her being, and then see how the gospel may address that longing. This applies also to doctrine. 'Doctrine, too, passes through the body of the Church, because the dogmas of the Church are not logical propositions to be tested and approved by the minds of the individual believers but doxological statements to be part of the worship and the life of the communities. The creed is not there for theologians to study, but for communities to sing.'⁶⁸

Where this dimension of *koinonia* has been particularly effective in ecumenical dialogue is when it is applied to certain strongly held traditions with the question, What is the relational quality in this? For example, where hierarchical patterns have hindered rapprochement between branches of the church, the relational pattern of the *communio*

⁶³ Sagovsky, *Ecumenism*, 37ff.

⁶⁴ 'Towards *Koinonia* in Faith, Life and Witness', in Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, 271-2.

⁶⁵ Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17.

⁶⁶ Zizioulas, 'The Church as Communion', in Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, 103-111.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

has enabled going behind outer expressions to the realities which lie behind. These may then be found to be capable of different expressions. For there to be *koinonia*, Zizioulas affirms, Tradition is needed; when this is conditioned by *koinonia* it is no longer a formal transmission of teaching but a re-received reality. The true criterion of Tradition is found in the revelation of what the world will be like in the Kingdom. Apostolic succession also must pass through the community of the church, being a succession of communities not individuals.⁶⁹ However, there can be no full communion without communion in the eucharist, which is the recapitulation of the entire economy of salvation in which past, present and future are united, and in which communion with the Holy Trinity and with the rest of the churches as well as with creation takes place. He sees the church as engaged in a process that is leading *towards* full communion.⁷⁰

4.3 A community growing into maturity in Christ

Whether in Paul's opening greetings⁷¹ or in the full flow of his teaching and exhortation, a frequent call to the new Christian bodies is to grow to maturity in Christ, who in these passages is often described as the head of the body⁷² (a different and parallel metaphor to the church seen as body of Christ).⁷³ There are close connections with baptism, seen not so much as arrival in the body of Christ as the beginning of a process ('washed ... sanctified ... justified'),⁷⁴ being transformed from one degree of glory to another.⁷⁵ For the Orthodox Churches, this process of *theosis* – sanctification, transformation, growth – has a more central place than in other denominations to the extent that it is bound up with ecumenical convergence. As Constance Tarasar explains, for the Orthodox the ecumenical endeavour is not so much eucharistic intercommunion but communion in *truth*, the truth that comes from maturity in Christ. Thus, 'the search for *koinonia* is the search for life itself', for to be in communion is to be 'in life', the life of God. Tarasar reminds us that *koinonia* is not only a composite entity, a conglomerate, but a calling together and gathering of individual disciples, brought into Christ by baptism and set on the path of growth into Christ who is the

⁶⁹ Ibid., 109.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 110.

⁷¹ Such as 1 Corinthians 1:7, Ephesians 1:15ff, Philippians 1:6,9.

⁷² For example: Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 2:19.

⁷³ Ridderbos, *Paul*, 381.

⁷⁴ 1 Corinthians 6:11.

⁷⁵ 2 Corinthians 3:18.

head, a path towards maturity in Christ.⁷⁶

Although direct references to the Christian obligation to embark on growth to maturity are few, the implications of this are constantly to be found. Typically Paul at the beginning of a letter, in expressing his gratitude for the growing faith of a church will wish more for them, the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that they will understand even more the hope to which they have been called (e.g. Ephesians 1:15ff). A work has been started that is to be brought to completion, as love grows richer in knowledge and insight (Philippians 1:6,9). To share in the sufferings of Christ means also to share in the hope this engenders (1 Corinthians 1:7). The study paper for the Santiago conference outlines what 'communion with Christ and with one another' entails: a sense of justice and compassion; a sharing in one another's joys, sorrows and sufferings (2 Corinthians 1:6-7; Heb.10:33). It also entails a looking forward towards sharing in a glory that will come (Rom.8:17), when all things will be brought to ultimate unity (1 Corinthians 15:27f; Ephesians 1:10; Col.1:19-20), a glory already anticipated in the celebration of the liturgy where we are constantly united to the life, death and resurrection of Christ.⁷⁷

Several of the passages about maturity contain or are associated with teaching about the gifts given to the church, such as Ephesians 4 where the promise of gifts to be given 'for building up the body of Christ' leads directly into an exhortation to 'grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ'.⁷⁸ The process of growth to maturity in Christ will involve both a growing together in the body of Christ and an inner spiritual growth, since, while the gifts of necessity are lodged in individuals, they are explicitly given for exercising in the context of the *koinonia* and for its benefit. Gifts are given to the community and to those who participate in it and, as these are shared, new faith, new insight, new strength and, ultimately, deeper reserves of love⁷⁹ grow in the church. If the essence of the church is communion in Christ, renewed and nurtured by each succeeding act of Holy Communion, what gives this expression are the gifts given to God's people through which communion is brought into being in

⁷⁶ Tarasar, 'Worship, Spirituality', 218-225.

⁷⁷ Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, 274.

⁷⁸ Ephesians 4:9-16.

‘real time’ and through which the promise of God is conveyed to the world – gifts which are to be developed and not buried.⁸⁰ Indeed, ‘this divine-human *koinonia* is a gift of God, not the result of a gathering of like-minded people’.⁸¹

4.4 A diaconal community

Deacon and diaconate are common words in the contemporary church. In Anglicanism, it is a stage on the way to the priesthood while in many other denominations it may denote a ministry through which the service of the church to the world is expressed. In ecumenical documents, and increasingly in the understanding of the church at large, diakonia is seen as something much broader – that quality that enables *koinonia* to be a sign of and starting point for the Kingdom. What is meant by service has undergone some change in recent decades. For most of this century, the scholarly consensus on the meaning of diakonia has been that it indicates humble service of the human other, undertaken to meet the neighbour’s needs, in which the servant adopts a lowly position, the root meaning understood to be ‘service at table’. An important contribution to understanding the full purport of diakonia has been the work of the Australian scholar John N. Collins who believes that this has greatly narrowed the term’s true range of meaning. Collins shows that the word commonly occurs in the contexts of trade, agency, and the bearing of messages. Connotations of meniality or humiliation are by no means always present, and indeed there are other terms available where such connotations are stronger. One particularly notable use in the secular literature of the time is for an emissary or go-between. The root meaning can perhaps be stated as a commission to carry out a function on behalf of another. In this reading, service is more than ‘good deeds’ but a wrestling with attitudes and structures which prevent reconciliation and harm humanity.⁸² The Santiago discussion paper puts it that ‘(t)he Church as *koinonia* is called to share not only in the suffering of its own community but in the suffering of all; by advocacy and care for the poor, needy and marginalized; by joining in all efforts for justice and peace within human societies; by exercising and promoting responsible stewardship of creation and by keeping alive

⁷⁹ Ephesians 4:16.

⁸⁰ Matthew 25:14ff.

⁸¹ Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, 273.

⁸² John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-Interpreting the Ancient Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 84.

hope in the heart of humanity’.⁸³ The common statement, *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, continues the theme and notes that this is not one among other activities but ‘belongs to the very being of the Church’.⁸⁴

Before the designation diakonia belongs to any function within the church, therefore, it refers to the church itself. The picture of the church as servant has been clearly and eloquently articulated by Karl Barth in *Church Dogmatics*:

The community of Jesus Christ, as the body of which He is the Head, exists as it serves Him. And its members, Christians, as members of this His body, exist as – united by the service which they render to their Lord – they serve one another. The first and decisive determination of all Church law has its basis in the fact that the Lord himself, who rules the community as the Head of His body, “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister”. (Mk. 10:45) ... He is the Lord as He is first the servant of God and all others. The two things cannot be separated or reversed. It is not the case that He rules, and at the same time serves, or serves and at the same time rules. It is as He serves that He rules. It is as the humiliated Son of God that He is the exalted Son of Man. Thus the obedience of His community responding to His rule can only be service, and the law which obtains in it, in accordance with the basic law which consists in the Lordship of Jesus Christ established within it, can only be the law of service. The community attains its true order as His body when its action is service.⁸⁵

This dimension of *koinonia*, being of the essence of the *koinonia*, is expressed not only in the church’s interface with the world; the diaconal is also doxological, part of the central activity and constitutive act of the church. ‘Christians engage together in service to the world, *glorifying and praising God* [my italics] and seeking that full *koinonia*, where the life which God desires for all people and the whole creation will find fulfilment’.⁸⁶ There is therefore a sense in which the church’s music, and its musicians, have a diaconal role.

4.5 A diverse community

One of the most important outcomes of the decades of dialogue and multilateral discussions has been the valuing of difference as a positive quality across the church instead of a difficulty to be resolved. This more positive view of the many practices and

⁸³ Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, 275.

⁸⁴ *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, para. 106.

⁸⁵ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956-69), Vol.IV/2, 690.

⁸⁶ *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, para. 112.

beliefs within the one church, arising from the insight that diversity as much as unity is a gift from God, has helped towards removing the threat perceived in difference and has led to a greater curiosity about, and an ability to learn from, the distinctiveness of the other. Paul had told the house church(es) at Corinth, ‘you are the body of Christ and individually members of it’⁸⁷ but there was also the matter of how these ‘members’ related to each other. Our natural perspective on a group within which there are differences – enriching or damaging – is to find a way of pulling these together into one. When, however, Paul writes that ‘all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ’,⁸⁸ his focus is not on the difference but the unity. The thrust of his argument, as J. A. T. Robinson notes, is not that they ‘must be united among themselves’ but precisely that there must be more than one member if there is to be a body at all. If you have one, there must also be many. The unity of the glorified Christ is axiomatic; it is never a conclusion from diversity. In such passages, the notion of unity is always the main part of the sentence, while the idea of multiplicity comes in a subordinate phrase or clause, bearing the sense of ‘in spite of’. The diversity is one that derives from the pre-existing nature of the unity as organic – it is not a diversity which has to discover or to be made into a unity.⁸⁹ Reumann makes a similar point when discussing the meaning of the benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:13 which promises ‘the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit’. The image is not of a body in which each has a role which must not be trespassed upon by others, a body which is closed against all comers to preserve its identity, but one characterized by a dynamic which flows between its members and which is kept from settling into a rigid shape by the continual renewal brought to bear through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁰ For Mary Tanner this meant a church that will never be turned in on itself but always be prepared to risk moving outwards, expecting to find God in the world. ‘It will be a Church always sending out in order to welcome and embrace within the inclusive community of the Church’.⁹¹

This welcome approach to unity inevitably must be accompanied by the question as to what point diversity continues to be creative and after which it becomes destructive,

⁸⁷ 1 Corinthians 12:27; also Ephesians 5:30, Colossians 2:19.

⁸⁸ 1 Corinthians 12:12.

⁸⁹ John A.T. Robinson, *The Body: a Study in Pauline Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1972), 96.

⁹⁰ Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, 47.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 25, para.24.

when, as noted in the study document for the WCC Assembly at Canberra in 1991, it makes impossible the common confession of Christ as God and Saviour.⁹² Zizioulas, taking up the matter of the limits of diversity, discusses the balance that must be kept between the one and the many, noting it as a function of episcopate to ensure that ‘all diversity ... must somehow pass through a ministry of unity’.⁹³ One of the most constructive ways of approaching this issue in recent dialogue has been, not so much to measure doctrinal statements against each other – this far is creative, this far too much – but to contrast the ‘local’ with the ‘universal’, acknowledging that much of the diversity which has become part of the texture of church life derives from localised developments, historically and culturally, and to ask what is the correct balance between the two. The ‘limits of diversity’ has been a theme running through many reports, often with the acknowledgement that the issues the churches are addressing within their own communities are the self-same issues that desperately require to be solved in the world. There is thus an urgency to the task that prevents the luxury of endless theological discussion without resolution.

5. *KOINONIA* – A SUMMARY

It will have become clear in the foregoing that there is considerable overlap between the characteristics outlined. All contain the germ of the others, which is not surprising given the essential nature of the image. In seeking to bring these dimensions into relationship with comparable dimensions of music in chapter 6, certain characteristics, although developed under one head, will be found to relate equally well to another. The artificiality of the approach is perhaps justified in its providing a wider palette for the exploration.

The 1981 *Final Report* of the first round of ARCIC talks includes a fine statement of the nature of the *koinonia*. Much quoted, it is quoted again here because of the way it brings together different discoveries and insights that have resulted from these conversations, and because it is able to speak also for many other conversations and

⁹² ‘The Unity of the Church as *Koinonia*: Gift and Calling’, in *Growth in Agreement II*, 937ff.

⁹³ Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, 106-107.

studies. The statement runs:⁹⁴

The *koinonia* is grounded in the word of God preached, believed and obeyed. Through this word the saving work of God is proclaimed. In the fullness of time this salvation was realized in the person of Jesus, the Word of God incarnate. Jesus prepared his followers to receive through the Holy Spirit the fruit of his death and resurrection, the culmination of his life of obedience, and to become the heralds of salvation. In the New Testament it is clear that the community is established by a baptism inseparable from faith and conversion, that its mission is to proclaim the Gospel of God, and that its common life is sustained by the eucharist. This remains the pattern for the Christian Church. The Church is the community of those reconciled with God and with each other because it is the community of those who believe in Jesus Christ and are justified through God's grace. It is also the reconciling community, because it has been called to bring to all mankind, through the preaching of the Gospel, God's gracious offer of redemption.

6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has given a narrative account of *koinonia* within the ecumenical discourse of the churches over the past 30 years or so, as well as exploring the dimensions of *koinonia*. In doing so it has drawn out the risks of oversimplification of our understanding of *koinonia* in relation to the people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The analysis of the biblical roots and uses of the term *koinonia* served also to caution us from detaching our discussion of the present church from its biblical roots and historical tradition.

The discussion has of necessity been primarily theological, although there have been pointers towards aspects of *koinonia* that may be significant in the central purpose of this thesis to investigate better means of choosing and using music in worship. While it is necessary at this stage to turn away from theology to consider what we can draw from some of the branches of musicology (a discipline that has – like liturgical study – burgeoned and diversified in the past 50 years or so), the detailed discussion of *koinonia* will be central to chapter 6, The Evaluation of Liturgical Music. In that chapter there will be an opportunity to consider in detail our understanding and evaluation of liturgical music within an ecclesiological framework, specifically in relation to the five dimensions of *koinonia* as aspiration, growth and expression of a

⁹⁴ *Growth in Agreement*, 66, para.8.

community as church which is eucharistic, relational, growing into maturity in Christ, diaconal and diverse.

Already, from the discussion of *koinonia* in this chapter, we can infer that the understanding of church as communion of and in God makes it difficult to regard music simply as a functional tool to ‘build community’ as a primarily human-centred intention within worship. If we are to build community within worship, it is in relation not just to ourselves but to and with God.

The consideration of the diverse and relational can help us to identify these facets within music – most obviously where different voices and/or instruments combine to express a single musical coherence by bringing together the diverse into relationship, especially in music that has harmony and/or polyphony. The theological underpinning that an understanding of *koinonia* can offer challenges us when we feel divided by aesthetics, taste, style or culture; rather it demands that we consider how from the global to the local we can reconcile difference and celebrate musical diversity.

It is pertinent to note the importance of Orthodox contributions to this debate, notably those of John Zizioulas, and their introduction of the dimensions of mystery and the importance of the experience of the Holy Spirit in worship. Music, by its ‘otherness’ both as individual and collective utterance, can more readily allow us to explore the mystery and the Spirit, for it moves in its own time, it allows space to explore ‘down’ and experience (while speech is predominantly linear in its mode of communication, rational and argued).

Finally, the consideration of *koinonia* invites us to take account of our relational place within the continuity ‘as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever throughout the ages of ages’, and to consider how our music relates to this continuity. The nature of music in performance is always in the moment which relates to what has just gone and what is just to come, a microcosm of the eternal of the divine. Furthermore, in music we are able to voice or sound in the now the music of our ancestors (and it is only in the now of performance that music can exist – whether live

or recorded), thereby generating an immediacy for the historical which reflects the duality of Christ born into human history and discernible in the now.

The theme of this chapter has, of course, emphasised *koinonia* and the ecumenical. That has raised the discussion to the global, and in the present time such a discussion is shared by a Christian church officially in schism for almost a millennium. What has been demonstrated by the narrative of the discussions between the churches is not that the consideration of *koinonia* has provided a convenient means of brushing differences under the carpet, but that it has provided a far bigger framework within which to re-discover the true nature of the church universal, a communion across the ages, a fellowship of divine and mortal, temporal and eternal. This, however, has been a mature discussion among professional theologians. It does not of itself enable those at the grass roots who have less theological insight (including some ordained ministers, let alone most church musicians and the whole worshipping community) to engage with the same maturity with the issues at local or more-than-local levels.

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5

RESOURCES FROM MUSICOLOGY

1. A GENERAL SURVEY

1.1 Introduction

Writings and reports examined in chapter two emphasised the need to develop a theological underpinning for the evaluation of church music, given the unique nature and tasks of music when employed in an ecclesial context. Thus, in chapter three we surveyed some approaches that had been proposed, and in the next chapter laid out a further possibility, one based on a particular current ecclesiological enquiry. It might be considered that by so doing, both components – church and music – had been covered and that one might go on now to apply the findings. However, this would leave the enquiry incomplete, given that there are many musical questions remaining which cannot be answered simply by observation and require the application of musicological tools.

There has been encouragement from commentators on church music to pursue this. They have not only asked, ‘How best may music be applied in a liturgical context?’, but ‘What is the nature of music that allows it to carry religious content and function effectively in ritual contexts?’ Thus Philipp Harnoncourt approaches his discussion of the liturgical-theological basis for music in worship by first considering the propensity of human beings to vocalise, what this enables in terms of interaction with other human beings, whether music originates outside or within human beings, and what is the nature of sound.¹ Edward Foley, in his ‘pre-theological investigation’ conducted before discussing the function of music in ritual, ends by signalling the need for further work on, among other things, whether different forms of music have different effects on the liturgy and the people who enact it.² At the Turku Congress, Irmgard Pahl, embarking on a discussion of

¹ Philip Harnoncourt, ‘The Anthropological and Liturgical-Theological Foundations of Music in Worship’, paper given at the 1997 Congress of Societas Liturgica in Turku, *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No. 1, 14ff.

² Edward Foley, *Music in Ritual: A Pre-Theological Investigation*, American Essays in Liturgy 1 (Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1984), 24.

the liturgical context for music, underlines the importance of being clear about how music works on people, about the levels within them to which it speaks, about how they react to the language of music, how they express themselves in music, and what it is possible for them to express.³ Robin Leaver regrets how often church music is ‘defined in terms of something else’ – as preaching, as prayer etc., treating music as ‘supplemental sound’, and calls for more work in the area of ‘liturgical musicology’, this to be the starting point for understanding why and how music can be effective in worship.⁴

This chapter seeks processes and insights from within the discipline of musicology which may be taken together with the theological findings already recounted so that questions of evaluation may be addressed with their combined weight. However, musicology is a burgeoning field, and many lines of enquiry have only been taken up relatively recently and are still in process of being established. Just as the thesis has been selective within the theological sub-discipline of ecclesiology, confining its interest to the churches’ interaction round one particular New Testament image, here too one must be selective, identifying enquiries and developments parallel to the situation in the church out of which this study has grown. Such an eclectic approach is in line with that of others who have written theologically about music. Albert Blackwell’s investigation from the perspective of religious studies⁵ draws on the speculative traditions of ancient Greece, particularly on the proposals of Pythagoras.⁶ Jeremy Begbie, in various volumes, takes cognisance of several different musicological approaches – for example, that of Victor Zuckerkandl in *Theology, Music and Time*,⁷ and a wide range of practitioners of the ‘new musicology’ in *Resounding Truth*.⁸ In these writers, the insights of musicology have served to stimulate theological thinking rather than illuminate church music practice. In this study, they are applied more directly to the latter. In this chapter, particular application will be made to three sub-disciplines of musicology, and these will be outlined, with the reasons for interest in them, below.

³ Irmgard Pahl, ‘Music and Liturgical Celebration: Presidential Address’, *Studia Liturgica* Vol. 28 (1998), No. 1, 2.

⁴ Robin Leaver, *Japan Society of Liturgical Musicology*, 2005, Foreword.

⁵ Albert L. Blackwell, *The Sacred in Music* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1999).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁷ Jeremy S. Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁸ Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (London: SPCK, 2008).

1.2 The new musicology

There is much in the ‘loose amalgam’⁹ of ideas grouped under the heading ‘new musicology’, which emerged over the second half of the twentieth century, that resonates with current projects in the church and its musical practice. The fragmentation that is part of a postmodern reading of contemporary society is mirrored in the ‘fresh expressions’ of church affiliation which exist alongside the old, and in the proliferation of musical styles and genres deemed to rank equal with traditional sounds and settings. Postmodernism’s ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’,¹⁰ which has questioned earlier, more formal processes of musical analysis, is mirrored in a distrust of what has been laid down by hierarchies, both clerical and musical (including the recognition of established composers), as being suitable repertoire for Christian worship. The ‘flattening of the cultural field’, which in music generally has blurred distinctions between ‘high’ art and popular culture,¹¹ obtains also in the church where claims are made for the popular and the easily accessible equal to the work of composers who write with the rigour inherited from predecessors whose compositions have stood the test of time. The expansion of the musicological task beyond the art music of social elites to embrace popular and vernacular music, the oral as well as the written, and the music of other cultures, offers flexibility to describe and evaluate liturgical music as it makes use of vernacular styles, echoes the genres characteristic of its cultural milieu, and in its tendencies towards orality. As new discourses have introduced to musicology a range of intersecting concerns, so gender, feminist, and other culturally-related studies have helped expose in the church and the texts of its worship some of the same exclusiveness and intolerance that divides human society. Musicology’s own borrowings from the methods and the language of other disciplines holds out the hope that it might be able to contribute to the necessary building of bridges between the liturgical and the musical.

⁹ David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, *Musicology: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2005), 122.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

Along with this has been the shift from music as a product to music as a process involving composer, performer and ‘consumer’.¹² Until questioned in the 1980s, for long the musicological task had focused on the musical work, seen as autonomous, approached with a certainty of knowledge about what would be found, and the results described in quasi-scientific language. This ‘positivistic’ approach saw music as having an internal structure which would be established through the analysis of its basic elements, which would also demonstrate the work’s relationship to the norm, the greater the similarity the more the value. Together with this went a belief in the organic coherence of a work, its units mirroring and contributing to the unity of the whole, a whole which echoed the ideal that art and life strove towards perfection through growth and transformation. It was such ‘discourses’ which were being challenged by the decade in question, seen as masking questions of power and control. The new emphasis was on the aesthetic experience and took full account of the performance and the reception of the work. With interpretation in the hands of the receiver, it was possible to conceive of multiple readings of a single work. Thus Canadian musicologist Jean-Jacques Nattiez saw the process of reception as routed through a ‘web of interpretants’.¹³ The work of art (the ‘symbolic form’) was not an intermediary transferring meaning intended by author to audience. Instead, the author, through a ‘poietic process’, provides a ‘trace’ from which the receiver, following an ‘esthetic process’, reconstructs the message. As Nattiez saw it, ‘an object of any kind takes on meaning for an individual apprehending that object, as soon as that individual places the object in relation to areas of his lived experience – that is, in relation to a collection of other objects that belong to his or her experience of the world’.¹⁴

These influences began to be felt in critical writing about liturgical music of the same period, particularly in the work of the group, *Universa Laus*. Its proposal that two sets of criteria for the evaluation of music in Christian ritual existed – one controlled by such terms as ‘dignity’, ‘beauty’, ‘good taste’, ‘art’, the other approached through the holiness of the action to which the music was wedded and assessed in terms such as ‘prayerful’

¹² *Grove Music Online*, ‘Hermeneutics: 5. Musical Hermeneutics: 20th Century’.

¹³ J. J. Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Towards a Semiology of Music*, Eng. trans. C. Abbate (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9

and ‘sacred’ – captured the same shift in focus away from the works themselves and the discourses that dictated the reception of them, to the effect on the receiver. The group’s 1988 report¹⁵ played down aesthetic norms in favour of ‘values’ compatible with the rites. There is here an implied criticism of an approach which ascribes autonomy to the work, which sees it as ‘having its effect’ regardless of how it is perceived, noting that it is often assumed that if music is ‘not beautiful’ it is therefore incapable of promoting the conditions for prayer. The report notes how musicians would usually favour the first set of criteria (even if defined by their absence) while the group itself clearly prefers the latter, evidenced in its proposal for the creation of ‘working space’ in which musicians can pay attention to the reactions of ‘believers gathered together’ so that together they can find the way forward.¹⁶

The Universa Laus group, based in the Catholic Church but ecumenical in composition, was working in the aftermath of Vatican II, although its earlier work had contributed to the findings of the Council. New discourses, including how liturgy is to be understood, and the new focus on the ‘assembly’, had set church music some new tasks. The shift of attention from the music itself to the receivers, and from the liturgical action to the actors, has issued in the now common criteria in Roman Catholic circles for music appropriate to the liturgy – although equally applicable to other branches of the church – that it be musically good, liturgically appropriate, and pastorally sound. At first controversial, this definition has undergone refinement, and thus has attracted wider support, through the insistence that these are not separate categories but a composite single category. It could be concluded that the contribution of musicology is to the ‘musically good’ segment, but the composite nature of the judgement emphasises that each dimension has a musical, and potentially a musicological, component. The question posed to musicology is how to develop criteria which are sufficiently flexible for such a purpose, but also sufficiently verifiable and acceptable across the board within a body which understands itself as composed of diversity within unity. What is sought from musicology is an approach to music which asks and answers questions not just about its suitability for use in liturgy

¹⁵ Duchesneau, C and Veuthey, M, *Musique et Liturgie*, translated by Paul Inwood as *Music and Liturgy: The Universa Laus Document and Commentary* (Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1992).

¹⁶ Ibid., ‘Points of Reference’, Section 9, and ‘Commentary’, 101 ff.

and its worthiness for this partnership, but which also acknowledges that both these questions require to be put and answered in terms of those without whom the music would not be made or heard. Is the principal criterion to be, as *Universa Laus* could be taken to mean, whether the receivers experience particular music as holy or is it possible to engage with the music itself and identify whether or not it would tend to produce the experience of holiness, as well as asking whether or not it would enrich or impoverish liturgy and its participants?

1.3 Meaning and value

To gauge whether particular music and particular liturgical actions or texts are a good match for each other as realised in the experience of performer and participant, it is necessary to be able to ‘read’ the import of the music. To understand how music relates to religious texts or to liturgical action or to the makers and listeners is to ask what it is in the content of music that reciprocates or resonates with what texts convey or with the meaning or the significance of a ritual act. Such an enquiry must assume that the ‘meaning’ in the music is musical meaning – that is, not conveying the same information as the text or act but corresponding to it in a way that brings these to further, or fuller, expression. As Susanne Langer has shown, music is a language (and a precise language) whose ‘fundamental purpose ... is to give expression to musical ideas, emotions and moods and to arouse corresponding musical reactions in others’.¹⁷ It is meaning, however, that is not locked into musical terms. Kerman had attacked musicologists who took a positivistic approach which yielded facts about music but failed to approach it as an aesthetic experience. Interpretation must go ‘beyond and behind the sonic surface’, otherwise it is mere translation.¹⁸

Meaning is described as one of the defining questions of musical aesthetics.¹⁹ The question which must follow is, How far is meaning inherent in the music and how far learned or culturally conditioned? Foley, in his ‘pre-theological investigation’ prior to

¹⁷ Susanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art*, 3rd edition (Harvard University Press, 1942, 1977), 222.

¹⁸ Beard and Gloag, *Musicology*, 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 106.

discussing the relationship of music to ritual, which involved a consideration of the nature of meaning in music, found that some believe such responses are conditioned by learning, summarised in the words of Robert Lundin, that ‘affective reactions to music, like other musical reactions, are learned behaviours acquired throughout an individual’s life history of interaction with the stimuli’. In this view, music is incapable of any fixed meanings, and therefore music may only precariously be understood as a language.²⁰ Others wish to leave room for the possibility that there are certain acts of musical perception ‘which might be less dependent, or indeed might not be dependent at all, upon the learning process’.²¹

The psychologist John Sloboda, who during his doctoral studies undertook pioneering research in the area of the associations between music and emotion, in addressing the nature of music’s language, sees a balance between the cultural environment and the inherent effect of the music, remarking that ‘within a given musical culture, and among individuals who have had comparable prior musical experience, there may be some automatic and subconscious mental processes which are indeed determined primarily by the nature of the particular piece of music being heard’.²² The affective response may be global – the overall characteristics of a piece (he instances smooth and quiet music which tends to evoke moods of repose or resignation,²³ or fast and jagged music which tends to evoke agitated moods), or it may be local – the moment to moment changes as the music unfolds (for example, sadness reaches a peak of intensity at a particular moment). Two people listening to the same piece may not always experience the same emotion but data suggests that, if these moment-specific emotions are felt at all, then they are felt at the same points in the music by all listeners. He offers as an example the suspension or *appoggiatura* as indicative of pathos, a response which has something to do with repeated harmonic tension and relaxation. Even when certain procedures have become trite or have become, through overuse, cliché, and the effect is too blatant and therefore resisted,

²⁰ Edward Foley, *Music in Ritual*, 11.

²¹ John Booth Davies, quoted Foley, *Music in Ritual*, 5.

²² John Sloboda, ‘Music and Worship: A Psychologist’s Perspective’, in Jeff Astley, Timothy Hone and Mark Savage, eds., *Creative Chords: Studies in Music, Theology and Christian Formation* (Gracewing, 2000), 121.

²³ The ‘smooth classics’ of the Classic FM radio station would serve as an example.

people may still be affected at times by such music (or, Sloboda suggests, ‘the crude manipulative drama of soap operas’) that they find shallow and sentimental.

The interpretive and critical modes of analysis being applied by such as Kramer and Adorno had their origins in late nineteenth century traditions of ‘hermeneutic’ analysis – the discovery of meaning in a text by means of an approach that is empathetic rather than empirically verifiable. Hermeneutics offered a methodology for use in the historical and social sciences (it is, for example, a branch of biblical criticism), and was particularly applicable where a text appears to have had no meaning, or an opaque meaning, or where there could be other meanings than those immediately accessible.²⁴ Kramer maintained that meanings do inhere in music, definite enough to support critical interpretations comparable in depth, exactness, and density of connection to interpretations of literary texts. However, you have to work for these since music resists fully disclosing itself.

The means to articulate this secretive meaning in music is through hermeneutic windows, entry points from the surface world of the music into a world of hidden meaning, at moments of surplus and deficit (just as the narratologist looks for discontinuities in discourse, prising them open to reveal different voices at work). Three types of window are suggested: textual inclusions i.e. titles, on-score annotations; citational inclusions i.e. musical quotes or allusions or links to visual images; and structural tropes, where ‘expressive acts’ come into play.²⁵ It is not difficult to think of ‘hermeneutic windows’ in relation to liturgical music, such as the import of the ritual event to which a musical setting is conjoined, the location in which the music is made, the texts set, memories of a musical item’s earlier use, and so on.²⁶ Kramer’s assertions that meaning in music is accessible but that it is not readable directly would be supported by critical theorist Theodor Adorno, who approaches the question of resonance between a musical work and

²⁴ *Grove Online*, ‘Musicology’ II,2 (iii).

²⁵ *Grove Online*, ‘Hermeneutics: 5. Musical Hermeneutics: 20th Century’.

²⁶ A seminar series, ‘The Future of Hermeneutics’, has been launched through the Music Department of the University of Sussex, intended to respond to ‘a conspicuous lack of a meta-theoretical or methodological discussion about musical hermeneutics’. It may be followed at www.sussex.ac.uk/music/1-4-5-1.html.

the world of other meanings it inhabits by speaking of 'traces' in the music which do not imitate other movements or meanings but 'fit together under their own law'.²⁷

Earlier, it was intimated that, in pursuing criteria for evaluation, a selective approach only would be made to the wide ranging tasks and interests of musicology and its sub-disciplines, and an appeal would be made to areas of enquiry that seemed to 'share the same water' as the issues identified in the study. Three in particular suggest themselves: the sub-discipline of ethnomusicology with its interest in, and insights into, the relationship of music to the community of music-makers; those sub-disciplines which enable the cultural and sociological analysis of the different genres of music now found in the church's repertoire; and finally semiotics, for the ability of this field to approach the meaning within particular music without clouding from extraneous narratives and discourses. These are now explored in turn.

2. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

Funk had noted Foley's observation that *Universa Laus*'s focus on the function of music in liturgy and its preferred term 'Christian ritual music' paralleled the developing interest in ritual studies and the emergence of ethnomusicology.²⁸ Some recent work in the area of ethnomusicology may also allow us to go into more detail about the reconstruction of meaning.²⁹ First employed in 1950,³⁰ the term ethnomusicology does not simply define an area of study but also enshrines a particular approach to the study of music. The cultural anthropologist Alan Merriam believed

that music sound is the result of human behavioural processes that are shaped by the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the people who comprise a particular culture. Music sound cannot be produced except by people for other people, and although we can separate the two aspects [the sound aspect and the cultural aspect] conceptually, one is not really complete without the other. Human behaviour produces music, but the process is one of continuity; the

²⁷ Beard and Gloag, *Musicology*, 22.

²⁸ Virgil C. Funk, 'Secular Music in the Liturgy? Are There Any Rules?', *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No.2, 181.

²⁹ This was evidenced in the conference 'Music and Meaning' sponsored by ethnomusicologists in the Open University in November 1998.

³⁰ By Jaap Kunst - see Joseph Kerman, *Ethnomusicology* (London: Collins Fontana, 1985), 157.

behaviour is shaped to produce music sound, and thus the study of one flows into the other.³¹

Ethnomusicologist Martin Clayton, drawing from his study of Indian rāga, agrees that the musical event cannot be described solely in terms of emotional or aesthetic response to a 'given'. What precedes analysis is the experience of the perceiving subject. Music is an abstraction from 'musicking'.³² In seeking to understand the process through which we comprehend the continuous flow of musical sound as a segmented flow of musical elements, Clayton follows James Gibson in preferring the way animals relate to physical reality and applying this to music – not the processing of information (in the way described by musical psychology) but the scanning of the available information for the possibilities it affords. Through 'affordances' meaning is discovered. We do not passively decode meaning so much as actively scan sound energy for patterns of which we can make sense. This 'ecological view' has pragmatic applications. Through music, we co-ordinate action with others. Music offers us a profound sense of connectedness to other people, spirits, Gods, ancestors. For this, a trained understanding is not necessary.

His answer, therefore, to the question as to wherein lies meaning in music is that all music is necessarily meaningful insofar as it offers to the perceiving subject possibilities for action and imagination, and that meaning is wholly dependent neither on semiosis nor on the apprehension of formal or structural relationships. Whatever people can make sense of in music IS its meaning. This by no means rules out other interpretations, nor dismisses a semiotic reading of meaning. Indeed, this could be one of music's 'affordances', with an essential role in fixing meaning, of the appropriate limiting of the imagination (you do not dance in the aisle during a symphony). What he is suggesting is that most theories of meaning underestimate the constructive role of real and socially-situated listeners. There is need to redress a balance in favour of a 'phonocentric' perspective, to develop semiotic theories in this context, recognising the role of the latter in fixing meaning, in a necessary limiting of the imagination.

³¹ Quoted Kerman, *Ethnomusicology*, 164.

³² Martin Clayton, 'Introduction: Towards a Theory of Musical Meaning (in India and Elsewhere)', *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, Vol.10, No.1 (2001), 7-8.

To start at a basic level, ethnomusicologist Timothy Rice notes that the concept ‘meaning’ has in fact several uses and not just one.³³ It can be indicative of a) what is signified or understood, b) of significance or value, c) of intention or purpose, or – added by Rice himself – d) offer an answer to the question, How am I to make sense of this, to interpret this? No one of these definitions is to be chosen over another; each will serve in different contexts. Indeed, in developing his analysis, Rice abandons the concept itself, and, to show that these are not distinct but flow in and out of each other, substitutes pairs of contrasting terms where in each case the former is one aspect of the latter: signification/ significance, reference/importance, semantics/value.

Having thus widened the approach to meaning in music, Rice further notes different culturally-specific approaches to how music is heard or used. For example, among the Navajo Indians music’s sole function is seen to be as a healing agent. These perspectives for experiencing music he calls metaphors and he suggests that no one of these should be selected to the exclusion of the others.³⁴ The *music-is-art metaphor* suggests that the nature of music first and foremost is about its making and the results of its making. What becomes important is how it is crafted, its beauty. Again, where music is seen as *social behaviour*, it ‘performs’ social structures or social relations, enacting past or present societal structures, modelling alternatives to existing structures, helping to imagine the future. Third, *music-as-commodity* enables musicians to exchange performances and resulting products for money. Fourth, *music-as-emotional-expression* understands music not as referencing feelings so much as expressing them directly, either manifesting inner emotions on the surface or as itself generative of emotions. Rice draws on his own research in Bulgarian music, noting the movement of some folk music from being village music to becoming part of the Communist Party’s ideological agenda. In this example, music moves between multiple metaphors, none of them dominant. Rice concludes that questions about music and its meaning should be asked with these kinds of metaphoric shifts in mind.

³³ Timothy Rice, ‘Reflections on Music and Meaning: Metaphor, Signification and Control in the Belgian Case’, *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, Vol.10, No.1 (2001), 22.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

In approaching questions about how music acquires significance, what types of musical significance there are, and why music has multiple and changing references, Rice suggests these are best answered not through sign but *process*,³⁵ citing four such.

1. We may ascribe meaning to a musical event by recognising its similarity to other musical forms (‘*intertextuality*’), as in the case of an instrumental version of a song.
2. We may perceive a resemblance between a musical structure or performance and something non-musical (‘*iconicity*’): a religious belief, a political ideology, a kinship structure, a social practice. (Two examples are given: Javanese gamelian music’s correspondence with the culture’s complicated calendar system, and the overlapping structure of the music of a group in Papua New Guinea which relates to the soundscape of the forest in the which the group dwells.)
3. We may note an *association* between certain music and other things or ideas, such as folk music performed against a backdrop of flags or images of persons.
4. Finally, meaning may arise from the *contrast* between two musics, when new forms are developed which reference new social formations or cultural understandings. (A new kind of Bulgarian wedding music is instanced which features improvisation, virtuosity, and loudness, which the author suggests can be interpreted as icons of freedom, individuality, and lack of control, following the collapse of the Communist system.)

In considering the relevance of these observations to liturgical music, we might note that music can therefore bear several meanings at once, consisting as it does of elements that occur simultaneously (for example, ancient history and the modern world may appear in the same musical event). Further, each of the four processes (above) can contribute its meaning to the musical sign. Again, each new performance has new potential for meanings (like pre- and post-war music in Bulgaria). Further, the sign’s form can change when new features are added (a diatonic scale within the compass of a 6th may be expanded in reach and in character).

Attention is also drawn by more than one ethnomusicologist to the issue of power as it is built into the more standard approaches. Those who assign meaning can also deny alternative meanings so that what seems different may be discarded. If, on the other hand, we say meaning is assigned by anyone who hears/plays/writes, the element of control is

³⁵ Ibid., 30-32.

removed. Rice himself shows in relation to his Bulgarian studies how, with its propensity for carrying multiple meanings, music is both ripe with possibilities for ideological modelling and control, yet is always in the end able to wriggle free.

3. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SOCIOMUSICOLOGY

For many in all branches of the church today, the dominant issue is what place, if any, popular secular music should have in worship. Should the church, in the interests of fuller participation (as it might be argued), admit the music with which most people feel most familiar, both because of accessibility of idiom or its effective marketing? Related to this is the relatively recent acknowledgement that every act of worship has a cultural context and that this is (indeed, should be) reflected in some measure in how that worship is conducted. If the style and idiom of worship has been dominated in the past by one, European, culture, now the many other world cultures within which the Christian faith is professed should be encouraged and enabled to celebrate, give thanks and express penitence in modes that draw on the sounds, symbols and practices which have come most fully to encapsulate these experiences communally in the local culture. Whether popular/secular or culturally-specific, neither genre can escape evaluation, partly because there is the well- and the poorly-crafted, the enslaving and the freeing, the true and the misleading whatever the origin, but partly also because the liturgy is universal and common to all and expresses a unity beyond specific cultures. Thus it makes its own demands over and above the culture, whether it is an ethnic culture or particular expressions within Western culture. Again, there is need to ask whether there may be, in any examples of cultural expression, that which precludes its use in the liturgy, whether different types of music require different aesthetic approaches, or whether there can be a common approach to evaluation across the whole generic range.

In her presidential address to the Turku congress, Ingrid Pahl spoke for many when she asked, What of youth music culture? To what extent can, pastorally considered, incorporation of this make good liturgical sense? The testing of worship songs for their liturgical suitability, for example, is an ever-new task, but do we have useable criteria for

this?³⁶ The drive to incorporate music in popular idioms comes from many directions, from the standpoint that asks, ‘Why does the Church continue to use a music style foreign to 98% of the population?’³⁷ to the ‘blended collections’ in which denominations seek to keep the church united by enabling different styles to be found, and sung, alongside each other.

Secular/popular idioms and cultural genres have here been cited together. There are both similarities and differences. There is similarity in that both are seen to relate to a specific cultural setting, and thus to raise particular questions. There is difference in that the cultural is seen as ‘natural’ while the popular is perceived as driven by marketing forces and therefore in a sense artificial. These perceptions are tested as the discussion progresses. There is also a difficulty with the designation ‘popular’ itself in that it can mean widely different things. It may seem to be the particular expression of the youth culture and indeed to refer to a particular class of people. For example, punk rock was seen to reflect the realities known to working-class young people. However, other popular music, such as that of David Bowie and glam-rock exponents of the 1970s, was seen to offer and represent a retreat from class as reality into music as fantasy.³⁸ In church music terms, the term ‘popular’ is usually more broadly applied, and can sometimes refer to a genre which no longer has immediate links with existing popular styles, which may even have more in common with the ‘easy-listening’ styles or the music-hall stage. However, whether popular or of ethnic origin, there are issues raised in common which make it useful to bracket them together, at least for some of the way.

One of the discourses people bring to popular music is that this is representative of one section of society, and this can bring identity problems to many church members who feel that they (and by extension their church) do not belong with that group. This does not at all suggest that people do not want others to hear the gospel, but it may represent a modern version of the widespread Victorian approach to mission when (certainly) Scottish city churches founded ‘missions’, which then turned into separate congregations,

³⁶ Pahl, ‘Music and Liturgical Celebration’, 3.

³⁷ See above, page 16.

³⁸ Beard and Gloag, *Musicology*, 35.

in the poorer districts (even quite near by); it was not expected that those who went to the mission would come to, or be comfortable in, the parent church. A corollary of this is that people who share the same background inevitably prefer the same kind of music. This is contested by sociologists and other observers. We have noted Mannion's attack³⁹ on the 'either .. or' nature of the position which sees classical styles of music as accessible only to a small minority, arguing that the debate has become confused by a false juxtaposition of pairs of alternatives. His belief was that much of the seemingly profound discussion about 'traditional' and 'contemporary' music, 'performance' versus 'assembly' music, 'classical' versus 'folk' music would be revealed by adequate musicological analysis as profoundly unscholarly and isolationist. This prediction turns out to be accurate.

Indeed, far from there being a necessary relationship between a particular idiom and a particular cultural context, musicologist Richard Middleton shows the coherence of popular musical styles to be only apparent, and in fact the 'product of cultural work'. 'Particularly in complex, internally differentiated societies, musical styles are assemblages of elements from a variety of sources, each with a variety of histories and connotations, and these assemblages can, in appropriate circumstances, be prised open and the elements rearticulated in different contexts.'⁴⁰ Graham Vulliamy argues that distinctions between 'serious' and 'popular' music made on the basis of a 'mass culture' critique confuse 'questions of quality in music with questions of genre'. Some, he points out, have argued that high culture is distinguished from popular culture by its being created by a cultural elite operating within some aesthetic tradition and monitored by critical standards independent of the consumer, while the latter is produced solely for commercial reasons for manipulated and exploited consumers, and automatically seen as of inferior quality. Further, popular culture is seen as homogeneous while high culture is subdivided into many categories. Such analyses ignore alternative musical criteria, not least those of the African-American tradition, which lies behind much popular music.⁴¹

³⁹ Above, page 67.

⁴⁰ Richard Middleton, 'On Articulating the Popular', in Derek B. Scott, ed., *Music, Culture and Society: A Reader* (Oxford, 2000), 137f.

⁴¹ Graham Vulliamy, 'On Music and the Idea of Mass Culture, in Scott, ed., *Music, Culture and Society*, 152f.

Theodor Adorno further breaks the assumed 'inevitable' link between any particular music and its most usual cultural setting, suggesting that in a given case it may not necessarily express what the culture wishes it to express. He suggests⁴² that music possesses a 'truth content' that may differ from the ideological role music plays; in other words, the music can contain messages that the 'user' prefers to avoid. Scott agrees: music's social function may 'diverge from the social meaning it embodies'.⁴³ Adorno also questions the tenability of the upper stratum's view of themselves as idealistic and the lower stratum's self understanding as realistic. The 'hedonistic music below stairs' is not any more realistic than that preferred above.⁴⁴ There is yet another consideration that must be brought to bear when matching the popular idiom to the liturgy and that is articulated, again, by Adorno who sees popular music as reflecting constraints of the industrialised standards of capitalism, with the musical characteristics of 'standardisation' and 'pseudo-individualism' satisfying the false needs of the masses. He suggests that the standardisation of song hits 'keeps the customers in line by doing their listening for them, as it were. Pseudo-individualism, for its part, keeps them in line by making them forget that what they listen to is already listened to for them, "predigested"'.⁴⁵ In terms of cultural music, we may bear in mind the implications of Rice's observations about how the dominant political force in Bulgaria 'took over' popular styles for its own purposes.

Enough has been said to suggest that both the popular/secular and the cultural, when they are proposed for use in the context of worship, should be open to analysis over and above arguments from context. However, even when particular music of a popular kind or cultural origin is clearly suitable for liturgical use, there remains another dimension to be negotiated, namely the question as to 'who decides'. That is, to whom is such a piece of music 'clearly suitable', even when analysis indicates acceptance. Lucy Green⁴⁶ argues that lack of musical experience of a particular style makes people deaf to its virtues. Not everyone is able to 'hear' and to judge the potential in a style different from the one 'natural' to them. Cultural anthropologist Allan Moore also notes that musical

⁴² Theodor Adorno, 'On Classes and Strata', in Scott, ed., *Music, Culture and Society*, 115-116.

⁴³ Ibid., 118f.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Beard and Gloag, *Musicology*, 90.

⁴⁶ Scott, ed., *Music, Culture and Society*, 149.

competence is not usually a blanket competence but is gained in terms of a style.⁴⁷ While it is not necessary to be trained in it and have a cognitive competence in it to be able to explain or evaluate a style, competence in one style does not ensure competence in another – although it is true that competence in one style may make it easier to acquire competence in another. This sounds a warning to those who would make assumptions about other styles from the standpoint of their own, since, as Moore also notes, we tend to believe our own ‘native’ style is the natural one.

4. FORMS OF ANALYSIS, AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF SEMIOTICS

4.1 Forms of analysis

In codifying the different approaches to musical analysis that have been employed over the centuries, Dalhaus listed three main areas: speculative traditions, regulative traditions, and analytic traditions.⁴⁸ It would seem hardly necessary to mention those grouped under the head of *speculative traditions* with their origins in ancient Greece philosophy and their underlying purpose to enable conjecture (‘speculation’) about a reality which cannot be known. It might have been sufficient to record its influence on church music critics of the first millennium were it not for two considerations. One is the substantial work of Augustine as he offers five criteria for critique, including the natural judgement of the listener – namely, allowing the hearer to appreciate the symmetry of the work and to be able to detect when the symmetry or balance is only approximate or counterfeit. Erik Routley identifies in Book 6 of Augustine’s *De Musica* some principles which are helpful for developing a contemporary critique for church music.⁴⁹ First, the author does not go as far as condemn lesser examples of art, writing, as he does, not for experts, and out of the Christian belief that we are concerned with the struggle for goodness rather than preoccupied with the judgement of evil. Second, Augustine sees pride as the cause of the violation of symmetry, when music is allowed to speak too much of the human condition. Third, music has to be the bearer of the Logos, the expression of eternal and immutable things, rather than consist merely of the words of human beings.

⁴⁷ Allan F. Moore, ‘On the Pop-Classical Split’, in Scott, ed., *Music, Culture and Society*, 161f.

⁴⁸ *Grove Online*, ‘Musicology, II. Disciplines of Musicology, 2 (ii). Theoretical and Analytical Method’

⁴⁹ Erik Routley, *The Church and Music* (London: Duckworth, 1950, rev. 1967), 64.

A further reason for recording this aspect of analytic discipline is that one notable contemporary critic has based his work partly on its analysis of the nature of music. Albert Blackwell finds helpful ‘the basic Pythagorean conviction that number and proportion, manifest in the science of music, are at the foundation of reality, and that contemplation of music serves as a portal into sacramental experience of divine harmony and glory’.⁵⁰ Quoting Augustine’s words, ‘with a restored delight in reason’s numbers, our whole life is turned to God’, he derives one of his two models of sacramentality from Pythagoras,⁵¹ finding in Pythagorean contemplation ‘a basic trust that the world is grounded in and permeated by rational pattern and principle’. He suggests that contemplation of the logic of music contributes to trust in the second person of the Trinity, God’s logos, the foundational logic of the world. ‘Music thus serves as a path of human and divine meeting, a finite reality through which the divine is perceived to be disclosed and communicated.’⁵²

Regulative traditions sought to systematise and classify with the aim of promoting good practice, and these kept pace with developments in composition. By the nineteenth century, in church music criticism as in other fields, the focus was on chromatic and modulatory practices,⁵³ applied by commentators to counter the more florid and openly emotional writing of the operatic stage that had infiltrated Christian worship. This was illustrated when in 1895 the Scottish Church Society (formed in 1892)⁵⁴ held its second conference, at which three of the papers offered a critique of music and how it was employed in worship at the time. Anathematised was a theatrical and sensational style of musical writing (‘pretty music’) which threatened to replace older, clearer melody,

⁵⁰ Blackwell, *The Sacred in Music*, 51.

⁵¹ The other model is an incarnational one, which sees the grace of God expressed through the material world. Blackwell sees the Pythagorean as showing God’s logic, the incarnational God’s love.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 86.

⁵³ *Grove Online*, ‘Musicology, II. Disciplines of Musicology, 2 (ii). Theoretical and Analytical Method’.

⁵⁴ Duncan Forrester and Douglas Murray, *Studies in the History of Worship in Scotland* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1984, second edition 1996), 87f. The Society was founded three years previously for those who found the Church Service Society too broadly based; this Society still represents the ‘high church party’ in the Church of Scotland.

tending to obscure or distort the meaning of the words set.⁵⁵ What might be meant by 'pretty music' is elaborated in a lecture delivered in London to the Church Music Society in 1913, when H. Walford Davies⁵⁶ offers some principles for the provision of church music, in contradistinction to theatre or concert music. Good art, like the good life, is both free and orderly. Sensation, emotion, and reason must be kept in balance, and this balance, in the case of church music, serves its purpose of bringing the known and the seen into subjection to the unknown and the unseen. It also avoids the danger of music becoming its own end, mere performance, display divorced from purpose. Davies then applies these guidelines to matters of melody (it should be melodious rather than 'tuney'), harmony ('no chords with aggressive charm to be used for their own sake'), rhythm ('energy controlled not energy spent'). W. H. Hadow further offers⁵⁷ an analysis of 'good' and 'bad' hymn tunes, the former being those in which the emotional content is appropriate to its place and occasion, the melody well drawn, the rhythm stately and dignified, and the harmonic inner parts interesting, whereas the weak tune is one that is dull, 'luscious', with an ill drawn melody.

These regulative principles found expression later when in 1922 the Church of England set up the first⁵⁸ of three Archbishops' Commissions on church music (the others followed in 1951 and 1988 respectively). The first report addressed 'widely spread dissatisfaction with the present state of things' and in the course of its twelve sections proposed reforms 'for the welfare of the Church and improvement of its standard of worship'. Four tests are proposed. *Rhythm* should be full of life but seemly, manifesting 'joyous reticence'. Iterated patterns of long and short notes should be avoided; church rhythms 'should move forward towards their goal, as it were on pilgrimage'. In respect of

⁵⁵ Perhaps another explanation should be borne in mind, related to an early fear in the church that to become too engaged with the melody is to prejudice one's hearing of the meaning of the text. It was for this reason that Athanasius, as recalled by Augustine in the tenth book of the *Confessions*, had required singers 'to use so slight an inflection of the voice that it was more like speaking than singing'. Quoted in Charles Garside Jr., 'The Origins of Calvin's Theology of Music: 1536-1543', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol.69, Part 4 (1979).

⁵⁶ H. Walford Davis, 'Music in Christian Worship', lecture delivered to the Church Music Society, 19th February, 1913, *Church Music Society Occasional Papers No.4*, Church Music Society, no date.

⁵⁷ W. H. Hadow, 'Hymn Tunes', *Church Music Occasional Papers No. 5*, Church Music Society, no date.

⁵⁸ Published jointly by the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, n.d. Page numbers refer to an edition printed by J.B.Nichols and Sons of Westminster.

melody, ‘steep, disjunct, irresponsible, lavish ups and downs’ are unfitting. As to *harmony*, chords have a distinct character; the common chords, for example, have strength and grace, while the ‘discords’ of the seventh, particularly the diminished seventh, ‘are sometimes sweet, sometimes mildly sensational in their appeal to the ear, and may easily be overdone’. A closely knit, logical *structure* is necessary for a church tune, while ‘tawdry tunes of loose build’ are destined to ‘fall into happy neglect’. Further, church music should be neither powerfully dramatic nor do no more than touch the surface; in stirring religious feeling it should reach beyond, to the will, eschewing emotionalism, the result of which, particularly in mission contexts, is ‘hearty services’ without lasting outcome.⁵⁹

A quarter of a century later, the Church of England set out to bring this report up to date but, instead of this, published in 1951 a new document, with a revised edition in 1957.⁶⁰ It laid down that what makes music ‘good’ in terms of worship is rhythm that has life and movement without levity, and dignity without heaviness. The melody of all the parts, not of the treble only, should be shapely in outline, and neither angular nor dull. In general, it should be diatonic, with chromatic intervals used only sparingly. The harmony should for the most part be simple, avoiding excessive use of discords ‘which introduce a note of vulgarity or triviality, and which pall with repetition’.⁶¹

In the foregoing, some of the features of traditional analysis, now revisited by critical musicology, may be seen: the focus on a work’s internal structure, the search for internal coherence, the division of a work into smaller constituent elements considered in isolation as well as in relation to each other, and the application of narratives and discourses which influence what the analyst should be looking for. There was also a strong emphasis on the value of a work, and the belief that in itself the work had the power to create the responses on the part of the listener or participant which were the

⁵⁹ Ibid., 6-9.

⁶⁰ *Music in Worship*, The Archbishops’ Committee on Church Music (London: Church Information Board, 1951 and 1957).

⁶¹ Ibid., 6.

most appropriate for worship.⁶² These features continued into the third group – *analytical traditions* – within Dalhaus's classification.⁶³ As already noted, postmodernism had placed under renewed scrutiny prevailing analytical models (for example, where it had relied on a dialectical process, or on the work itself as the sole bearer of meaning) and had sought ways of interrogating the music itself but within a more discursive context, towards uncovering 'something beyond and behind the mere sonic surface'.⁶⁴

One who continued the traditions of analysis was Austrian-born Heinrich Schenker, whose approach to the analysis of tonal music in terms of its 'foreground', 'middle ground' and 'background', where the latter was the deepest layer upon which the other layers were successive elaborations, has become influential in recent years. One of his followers was another Austrian, Victor Zuckerkandl, who is one of those whose work lies behind Begbie's proposals in *Theology, Music and Time*. Zuckerkandl, however, went beyond some of his colleagues in setting a far wider agenda for the musicologist. His avowed aim was to contribute to the debate about the nature of reality by exploring 'how music is possible'. 'What must the world be like, what must I be like, if between me and the world the phenomenon of music can occur? How must I consider the world, how must I consider myself, if I am to understand the reality of music?'⁶⁵ Reviewing the customary tools brought to bear on this task, he finds each in the grip of unacknowledged preconceptions. The efforts of the music theorist are applied in fact to the making of music rather than understanding it; the acoustician may enlighten us on its nature as physics knows it but cannot say what in a melody is not physical but art; the psychologist, interested in what takes place inside a person, seems to suggest that the arena of music is in the inner world; aesthetics views music through categories of beauty, taste and feeling but these are rooted in philosophic systems and are not indigenous to the tonal world, and the musical experience nowhere suggests them.⁶⁶ Zuckerkandl's work is closely analytical but always underpinned by his intention to offer to 'outline a musical

⁶² See Beard and Gloag, *Musicology*, 11-12.

⁶³ Grove Online, 'Musicology, II. Disciplines of Musicology, 2 (ii).

⁶⁴ Quoted Beard and Gloag, *Musicology*, 13.

⁶⁵ Victor Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol*, trans. Willard R. Trask (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), 7.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 12-15.

concept of the external world'.⁶⁷ He challenges the position which sees music as important in that it provides the nourishment which is drained away by the mechanical and the technical by which we have to live, a release from the bonds of material reality. His contention is that the two areas of 'reality' that are being juxtaposed are not in fact separate. Inner and outer world 'meet in melody', indeed they 'penetrate each other'; in music, unlike our physical connections with the world which place us over against it, we are conscious of penetration, of participation. That said, the boundary between the inner and the outer world is not defined by 'in me' and 'out there', not vertical between me and the world but horizontal, running through both.⁶⁸ Music is a window through which we can look out from our world. Music crosses a decisive frontier; indeed we find music's most essential nature in the crossing, this 'transcendence', a transcendence which occurs nowhere else in the same way, with the same directness.⁶⁹

Questions of meaning are very close to questions about value. When asking whether a particular composition is consonant with the meaning or significance of the text or ritual it accompanies, one also is raising, in the same breath as it were, the question as to whether that music is 'equal' in its level of expression to an act of worship which calls for the best and the deepest that participants can offer. However, it is precisely here that questions continue to be raised, since both spiritual experience and the ability to bring feelings to expression through words, imagination and music varies greatly from person to person. Further, the cultural context from within which a person finds the 'vocabulary' can also differ. Thus the project to evaluate church music is still left with questions. They include: can any music be given liturgical status and religious meaning for a particular group of receivers or might there be something in the music that precludes this? is it possible to construct strategies of interpretation that can find common ground across a wide range of music contexts? and do different types of music pose different questions that demand different aesthetic responses?

⁶⁷ Ibid., 363.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 368.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 4.

4.2 An approach through semiotics

One continuing line of enquiry is that which has resulted from the influence of linguistic theory, the discipline known as semiotics in which, for example, an attempt is made to read the musical signs in relation to other forms of language, as in the verbal or ritual content of liturgy. In his critique of current research in church music, Mark David Parsons had noted a lack of consistency in the various theological approaches.⁷⁰ One shortcoming, as he saw it, was the inability to accommodate the manifold nature of song. In seeking an integral model that would be able to approach music and text simultaneously, he cited the Dutch musical analyst Willem Marie Speelman as uniquely having developed an approach which fulfilled this function. The task pursued in this chapter may be broader than only text and music, but the work cited is nevertheless promising. Speelman⁷¹ sets out, using ‘greimassian metasemiotics’,⁷² to enable various modes of Christian utterance (e.g. biblical texts, church architecture, and, in particular in this study, liturgical songs) to be read in terms of one another. Interestingly, in his Dutch context, Speelman too understands himself, among other things, as trying to bring healing to people who are ‘quarrelling’. The problem arises, he suggests, because we all ‘know’ what a song is doing but cannot talk about it. However, other people also ‘know’ but know differently. ‘A wise person may enter into the quarrel and say that communication about liturgical songs can only succeed when we sing together. Then we will sing together, confused and angry, because we now also know that the other people may sing very well but do not understand what they are doing.’⁷³

Although semiotics developed within linguistics (Speelman particularly draws on the work of the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, and two other theorists who continued his work, Greimas and Louis Hjelmslev), it can be applied to any ‘system of signification’, whether it relates to images, gestures, rituals, public entertainment, or music – any situation where anything ‘stands for’ something else. The use of the word ‘sign’, therefore, goes

⁷⁰ Mark David Parsons, ‘Text, Tone, and Context: a Methodological Prolegomenon for a Theology of Liturgical Song’, *Worship* Vol. 79 (2005), No.1, 54ff. See chapter 3, pages 113ff.

⁷¹ Willem Marie Speelman, *The Generation of Meaning in Liturgical Songs* (Campen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1995).

⁷² A reference to the Swiss semiologist Algirdas Greimas.

⁷³ Speelman, *The Generation of Meaning*, v.

beyond its customary use. Semiotics studies how meanings are made, and is not just concerned with communication but with the construction and maintenance of the reality which is communicated. While some theorists see it as impossible for two different systems to be synonymous (enabling one to be translated in terms of another), Hjelmslev had asserted that ‘in practice, language is a semiotic into which all other semiotics may be translated’.⁷⁴ Semiotics also leads to an awareness of the medium in which the system of signification is expressed, how its ‘transparency’ (in that we can forget that it is ‘there’) can lead to our being subtly influenced by the medium in the direction of redefining our goals, but also – a factor with which musicians will resonate – how we serve its ‘purposes’ as well as it serving ours. In making music, we both act and are acted upon. However, to focus on the medium is also to focus on how the signs are organised, the codes used, so that meaning may be read. Semiotics may have salutary lessons for analysts dealing with liturgical music which has become ‘too familiar’ through repeated use.

Speelman notes how, in pursuit of this enquiry, Saussure made a distinction between *langue* and *parole*, language and speech, the former being the system of rules which is independent of the user while the latter is its use in particular instances. Other ways of expressing this relationship are *code/message*, *structure/event*, *system/usage*. Speelman himself uses Hjelmslev’s distinction between *expression* and *content*. It was upon the former of these pairs that Saussure concentrated, seeing as most important the underlying structures rather than specific performances, although theorists disagree as to whether the system precedes usage or *vice versa*. More recent theorists have moved away from the study of the systems to the work performed through them. It is this that constitutes or transforms the codes, and the users of the codes. The benefits of semiotics may be summed up as assisting us to become more aware of reality as a construction, and the roles played by ourselves and others in constructing it. ‘Meaning is not “transmitted” to us – we actively create it according to a complex interplay of codes or conventions of which we are

⁷⁴ Ibid., 5-11.

normally unaware. ... To decline such a study is to leave to others the control of the world of meanings which we inhabit.’⁷⁵

Another factor which Speelman draws on is Saussure’s emphasis on the differences between signs, since for him language was a system of functional differences and oppositions. A term needs at least one other term to give it definition, and the same is true of a musical note. For Saussure, ‘concepts ... are defined not positively, in terms of their content, but negatively by contrast with other items in the same system. What characterizes each most exactly is being whatever the others are not’. One other factor needs to be stated, namely the arbitrariness of the sign: there is no necessary, intrinsic, direct or inevitable relationship between the signifier and the signified. This contributes to the versatility of language, and we may also see this as enabling the enormous variety of relationship that may be possible between the notes written and the meaning that is understood to be communicated.

The main part of Speelman’s study is the analysis of five liturgical songs, hymns or settings. Some are monophonic, and in the case of the others it is only the melody line which is the subject of analysis. It is necessary to outline some of the categories Speelman uses before reporting on how he applies them. As we have noted, a semiotic has two planes, *expression* and *content*. A *metasemiotic* refers to ability to read each plane in terms of another. A *syncretic semiotic* allows the analyst to read two different semiotics (e.g. the music and words of a song). However, what is not being read is objective meaning. Meaning is not a thing, but an event.⁷⁶ It is a ‘generative process’ for which is used the term *discourse*. Meaning goes from the *deep level* via the *surface level* to the *discursive*⁷⁷ level. The bringing to light of meaning is to generate an event. The metasemiotic which reveals this meaning must be such as can follow the trajectory of an event. This ‘tool’ is given the title *generative trajectory*. Each level has a *semantic* component and a *syntactic* component.

⁷⁵ Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics for Beginners* (University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1995). This was available on line but a published version is now available as *Semiotics: the Basics* (Routledge, 2001).

⁷⁶ Speelman, *The Generation of Meaning*, 12.

⁷⁷ ‘Discursive’ may be meant.

Speelman's analyses of the text and the music are mirror images of each other. Each is divided into an analysis of the expression and content forms, further divided into the discursive and the narrative, both subdivided into the syntactical and the semantic. What kind of conclusion is the analyst led to? In the case of one song, he finds, in both (literary and musical) expression forms, that the two are not identical but that the former is able to 'change the music' to conform, while in the case of the two content forms he finds the themes homologous, and, further, that the musical engagement with the liturgy is related to the literary engagement with the Bible. However, on the deep level, he discovers that the song is a semiotic system *stricto sensu* and this cannot be analysed further.⁷⁸ In the case of another song, however, he is able to be more positive, finding all the forms to be interdependent; he describes the song as 'symbolic' and as 'a perfect form for metaphoric or ritual communication'.⁷⁹

Speelman's approach is of interest in that he has shown how two different fields of meaning may be read in conjunction. In this case, his comparison was between text and melody. Although these were liturgical items, the relationship between song and liturgy was not the focus of the study. Nevertheless, it was claimed that the process is intended to enable various modes of Christian utterance to be read in terms of one another, and therefore it might well be possible to apply the same kind of analysis to particular music and to particular liturgical moments. It would perhaps also be possible – to take the most immediate focus of this present study – also to read ecclesiological terms and musical language in parallel and to deduce whether particular settings were suited to their proposed liturgical context. Although the concept has been criticised as tending 'to concentrate on pattern rather than content, to seek out structure rather than to interpret meanings',⁸⁰ these musical events do impact on the receiver, whether this is recognised or not. Something of Speelman's work may therefore be of interest in a subsequent chapter.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 250.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 220.

⁸⁰ R. Monelle, quoted Beard and Gloag, *Musicology*, 164.

5. CONCLUSION

As we proceed to identifying criteria for evaluation, due weight should be given to Joseph Kerman's proposals that the attention must remain trained upon the music itself, albeit adopting a more critical approach to avoid creating new orthodoxies and grand narratives. In the face of the fears of some that close readings of the score would represent a return to modernism, Kerman argued not that musicologists should get out of analysis 'but only out from under', seeking a synthesis between analysis and a consideration of social meaning.⁸¹ Kramer similarly called for focus on the score, suggesting that a postmodern approach meant seeking, inscribed within the music, those mediating structures usually positioned outside. Thus are deconstructed the boundaries between the internal and the external natures of music.⁸² In thus privileging the music itself, there is no suggestion that the enquiry is solely into the music, given that we have already espoused the inseparability of music, liturgy and assembly.

As we have already observed, and will encounter again in Chapter 6, one of the constraints of the dialogue and discussion about music in the liturgy is the limitation of the modes of thinking and evaluation relating to music, its nature, understanding and context. This has been a fleeting review of selected aspects of the burgeoning field of musicology – a discipline (or rather group of disciplines) that has been increasingly responsive to and integrated with other modes and fields of enquiry. Many of the references are to textbooks or reference books, and in that sense it may be subject to the challenge that the review of the field has been too cursory or superficial. However, the potential for the development of separate studies of music in liturgy is readily apparent.

Early in the thesis we observed how Jeremy Begbie drew on aspects of critical musicology in his writing, and how those studies developed in response to developments in critical musicology: this is not a static mode of enquiry. In general, Begbie is less interested in music for worship (though in *Resounding Truth* he notes the persistence of those who hear him speak in wishing to discuss the difficulties of music in worship);

⁸¹ Beard and Gloag, *Musicology*, 14-16.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 144.

nevertheless, he has demonstrated ways in which theological and musicological discourse can interact, the one informing the other. In this thesis there is an attempt to enlarge on the current discourse about music in the liturgy by introducing, even at a preliminary and exploratory level, some of the critical, analytical, cultural, anthropological and sociological aspects of musicological enquiry.

PART TWO

Chapter 6

6

THE EVALUATION OF LITURGICAL MUSIC AND ITS STRUCTURES

1. INTRODUCTION

In seeking a new approach to the perception and evaluation of music in worship, this thesis has reviewed the writings of individuals and the reports of commissions and conferences. Running through these has been a call for the development of theological principles to undergird the choice of music for worship, since factors to be taken into account go beyond the purely musical. A variety of approaches has been proposed, each adding something of note. Many have focused on the pragmatic, as befitted what is seen as the urgency of the matter. In this chapter, an attempt is made to develop a theological structure and language to assist in the assessment of music proposed for liturgical use.

However, the task now pursued is not so much the extraction of overall theological principles or guidelines which might be ‘applied’ to particular cases but rather the identification of a theological approach to support a *common discourse* by which participants (for example, worship committees, clergy-musician planning meetings, church members in conversation) might achieve greater understanding of each others’ positions as they approach together the evaluation of the music they use, in the interests of the fullest experience of worship. This approach is concomitant with one of the goals stated at the outset,¹ namely the desire to address the conflict common in local congregations when favoured music is lost and unfamiliar repertoire introduced, and it is supported by the suggestion of some authors that what is required is a process of ‘discernment’ in local churches where these issues have emerged.² The approach also arises from a belief, articulated by Mary McGann,³ in the liturgical competence of those who worship, gained not so much through study or office but through faithful practice.

¹ Above, pages 3-5.

² Above, page 40.

³ Mary McGann, *Exploring Music as Worship and Theology: Research in Liturgical Practice* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 80.

An additional reason is that one cannot assume one knows what others are hearing, especially in styles that some consider superficial, and people need to be encouraged to express what they uniquely take from particular music. In this we follow Frank Burch Brown when he proposes that ‘what is needed is dialogue and exploration rather than an uncritical application of artistic and liturgical principles presumed to be fixed and universal’.⁴

Such common discourse must be accessible to those with greater or lesser ability in discussing music or a greater or lesser familiarity with doctrinal formulations. It is possible that such a mode of discourse, if developed, could be found relevant also to other areas of controversy in the church where professional approaches are found to clash with popular opinion, such as in matters concerned with the re-ordering of the sanctuary. For the fashioning of such a discourse, a return will be made to the relevant areas of musicology (outlined in chapter 5) and to ecclesiology (chapter 4), the latter on the assumption that what can be said to be true of the nature of the church should be true also of its outward expressions, not least the worship that is at its heart. Liturgical ecclesiology will be of most direct use because it both probes the relationship between church and liturgy and enables evaluation of the quality of that relationship. With these tools, it is hoped to construct bridges between the church people experience, with how they conceptualise this, and the music in which they participate, along with how they explain and analyse its impact upon them. Those five dimensions of *koinonia* derived from the study, in chapter 4, of the world-wide ecumenical discussion will be employed as starting points.

Before proceeding, some observations about the nature of liturgical music are offered. Here the term liturgy is used not to refer exclusively to the mass or eucharist, as is common in some branches of the church, but to structured worship, even when this structure is not written out or even clearly visible. There are three factors which pertain to liturgical music which will have some bearing on evaluation.

⁴ Frank Burch Brown, *Religious Aesthetics: A Theological Study of Making and Meaning* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 22.

1. The first is the intimate nature of the relationship between music and liturgy. This factor has required re-emphasis in the present day. Critics such as Harmoncourt and Jeffery, for example, have found *Sacrosanctum Concilium* wanting in this respect,⁵ seeing it as inheriting an earlier severance between music and word, where music is seen as secondary and optional. Churches of the Reformation are not exempt from this charge. Both the Reformed 'logocentric' readings of music⁶ and the view, which is heard commonly stated in the Catholic Church at present, that music derives its sacred quality from its association with the liturgy, are a departure from the medieval ability to see and respond to many 'layers' in the liturgy, engaging at different levels and in different ways (and indeed as different groups of people simultaneously).⁷ Critical note should also be taken of a new emphasis on music as functional, notwithstanding that the function may have a good outcome: to integrate (with Vatican II) or to enlarge the meaning of the words and, in the process, of the music itself (with *Universa Laus*). In an authoritative dictionary source, Catholic theologian Jan Michael Joncas explicitly defines liturgical music as 'not ontological but functional', with a task of communication derived from the four traditional marks of the church.⁸

However, a number of both Catholic and Protestant commentators have found such an approach limiting. Pahl's summary at Turku of the characteristics of liturgy, and therefore required in its music, suggests an understanding of music that is more than adjunct.⁹ Rather, liturgy is inherently musical, where music performs the same role as breathing in human life; music is 'sung prayer'.¹⁰ Music, on an equal basis with words, ritual, place, time and artefact, enables the encounter between God and God's people. For some, this understanding is founded not in the nature of liturgy but in humanity itself. 'Music, as song, belongs among the essential and therefore indispensable structurally

⁵ Above, page 71.

⁶ Above, pages 113 ff.

⁷ Bangor University School of Music Postgraduate module WMP 4043, 'Music and the Sacred', Unit 8 (John Harper).

⁸ Jan Michael Joncas, 'Music as Worship', in Paul Bradshaw, ed., *The New SCM Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* (SCM Press, 2002), 326.

⁹ Above, page 11.

¹⁰ Don E. Saliers, 'The Integrity of Sung Prayer', *Worship*, Vol. 55 (1981), No. 4, 290 ff.

determinative elements of Christian liturgy'.¹¹ The implication is that there is no liturgy without singing and that where music is involved there is a fullness to prayer. That music does far more than increase or enhance intelligibility is borne out when the varied relationship of music to text is taken into account, shown in Gelineau's diagram which starts with ordinary speech and ends with the *jubilus*, pure vocalisation.¹² Sometimes words dominate, as musical sound 'heightens and formalises speech', while at the other end of the spectrum text merges into the, dominant, music to add colour and articulation.

2. A second factor to have a bearing on the evaluation of liturgical music is that whereas *sacred* music is 'answerable' to its text (which of course will often have a larger context), *liturgical* music is written, performed or heard in the context of the whole liturgy. The liturgical event, while it is made of contributory episodes, is a dramatic whole, and a construct of a particular kind. The composer, the designer, the participant are restricted, albeit in such a way that leads to a greater freedom, by the whole unified dynamic movement of the liturgy, and their choices are hedged around by circumstances beyond the immediate musical or ritual moment. The broad musical, textual and liturgical dimensions also overlap into the theological, the ecclesiological, and the cultural.

3. A third factor to be kept in mind when evaluating liturgical music is that the definition of liturgy is not complete when texts, rituals, preaching, calendars, indeed histories and theologies, have been taken into account. All-important is what is now usually referred to as the 'assembly', which Lathrop calls 'the most basic symbol of Christian worship'. Liturgy functions, in part, to constitute the assembly,¹³ differing as it does from other gatherings, other audiences. This, into which people are brought by baptism, becomes, through interaction between participants and materials, a place where God is found in the midst and from which 'lines of meaning ... extend from the meeting into the re-

¹¹ Philip Harnoncourt, 'The Anthropological and Liturgical-Theological Foundations of Music in Worship', *Studia Liturgica*, Vol. 28 (1998), No.1, 16.

¹² Jones, C., Wainwright, G., and Yarnold, E., *The Study of Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 1978, corrected 1980), 504. This has now been revised (1992) with additional editor Paul Bradshaw.

¹³ 'Constitute' in the sense of calling people together to engage in the liturgical event and being shaped in their relationships with each other and with God by the nature and content of this event.

description and re-imagination of all ordinary life'.¹⁴ The recovered emphasis on the central role of the people, a principle of the Reformation, was reaffirmed in the twentieth-century Liturgical Movement in a re-investment in ancient patterns by which the people of the church on the way to the Kingdom, who were also people of the world which longed for reconciliation, were given the dignity of being a 'priesthood' and enabled of themselves to offer in thanksgiving and intercession the world of which they were the authentic representatives. It is the addition of this factor, which has been such a strong theme in the documents of Vatican II, indeed threatening to swamp other insights of importance, which has led subsequent documents and commentators to seek, in evaluating music for liturgy, a right balance between three criteria first proposed by the American bishops, when they (and later the Milwaukee Report) wrote that composition and choice should be guided by what is *musically good, liturgically appropriate, and pastorally sound*.¹⁵

The five categories or characteristics of *koinonia*, isolated in chapter 4, are now examined in turn. It is inevitable, given that a single image is being examined, that there will be overlap between some of the sections.

2. APPLYING THE CRITERIA

2.1 A Eucharistic Community

Defining factors

The Pauline identification of the crucified body of Christ, as re-membered in the eucharist, with the body of Christ that was the physical community of believers at Corinth gives to the latter a unique quality that sets it apart from any known model of human gathering. Here, the term 'member' describes, not the relationship between individual participants and the organisation, but between the *koinonia* and Christ, thus defining the

¹⁴ Lathrop, Gordon W. *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 23.

¹⁵ Above, pages 60, 62.

source of its life.¹⁶ That is, when this community gathers, it gathers with Christ, whose presence is affirmed anew in the eucharist, its prayers patterned on Christ's own¹⁷ and prompted by the Holy Spirit,¹⁸ the active energy which both gives the assembly its unique identity and initiates its worship. This experience of the beyond-in-the-midst is often described by worshippers as transcendental. The quality of communion or fellowship that is captured by the image is therefore very different from associations in which human persons conjoin for a common purpose.

Before any discussion of music, it must be acknowledged that the *koinonia* itself may fail to display the characteristics claimed for it. Some of its forms, structures and expression may cause damage to the personality or take away the dignity and freedom of participants; clerical domination may dilute the richness of the 'priesthood of all believers'; members may remain aloof from the world and thus prevent the church from fulfilling its calling as a sign and instrument of the Kingdom.¹⁹ Music may assist in bringing the desired quality to the assembly but it may also prevent its achievement. The question to be put is whether it is possible to identify and agree what music best serves this unique community and whether, conversely, there is music which inhibits its fullest expression. Gordon Lathrop writes:

There is no one absolutely pure and godly music ... commanded by God or required by the church, by which alone we may sing ourselves into heaven. There are only a variety of human musical traditions, some better suited than others to enable the assembly to gather around the word and the sacraments, suggesting harmony and dialogue, diversity and unity, holiness and accessibility in their singing.²⁰

In what resides the 'suitability' to which Lathrop refers? Is the intention of the composer sufficient, or the devotional content invested by the assembly? If, as many understand it, being appropriately partnered with the liturgy renders music suitable, what quality in the

¹⁶ Cf. Romans 12:4f 'As in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.' For Herman Ridderbos, this 'most typical description of the church in Paul' denotes 'the special, close relationship and communion that exist between Christ and his church': H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (London: SPCK, 1977), 362.

¹⁷ Hebrews 4:14-16.

¹⁸ John 14:25-26; 16:12-14.

¹⁹ Lathrop's critique of the 'seeker service', above page 38, may provide an example.

²⁰ Lathrop, *Holy People*, 201.

music makes it appropriate? What – as Irmgard Pahl puts it – enables the ineffable to take on acoustical form?²¹

Resources from musicology

The question as to what music means has continually been restated, coming fully into focus in the nineteenth century. It is also one of the defining questions of musical aesthetics.²² In a discussion about Christian liturgy, such questions relate not only to music's ability to capture the 'surface' meaning of texts but to point to meanings hidden in symbol or ritual or in the liturgy as a whole. Ethnomusicologist Timothy Rice finds the term 'meaning' restrictive in describing what is perceived in music, and substitutes for that single concept related pairs of terms: signification/significance, reference/importance, semantics/value, which serve to indicate that as well as supporting immediate meanings music may engage receivers or participants at other levels.²³ While texts have meaning and may, in conjunction with music and as a result of their liturgical context, become capable 'in the same breath' of carrying back enhanced meaning to the assembly, liturgical music – music being a discursive symbol²⁴ – cannot solely be about 'meaning' in the sense that *information* is conveyed. Liturgy and its music also takes the participant 'beyond' the thematic, the instructive, and the logical. Rice's explication of meaning in music assists this understanding and offers a scheme by which music in liturgy can be apprehended as relating simultaneously to narrative, concepts or feelings as well as to the divine-human encounter within which these are expressed. In Rice's pairings may be heard an echo of the *Universa Laus* division of critical comment into questions of *quality* and of *value*, each supported by different interests,²⁵ whereas Rice may assist in keeping these in touch with each other.

More directly applicable is musicologist Victor Zuckerkandl's use of the term 'transcendence' itself. He describes his quest as seeking the essence of music, eschewing

²¹ Irmgard Pahl, 'Music and Liturgical Celebration: Presidential Address', translated from the German by Robert J. Daly, SJ, *Studia Liturgica*, Vol. 28 (1998), No. 1, 2.

²² David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, *Musicology: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2005), 106.

²³ Above, page 163.

²⁴ Susanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: a Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art*, 3rd edition (Harvard University Press, 1942, 1977), 14.

²⁵ See above, page 58.

such customary tools as acoustics, analytical theory, psychology, and aesthetics. Rejecting the reading which divides human experience into the material and the spiritual, he prefers the distinction between the world of the person and the world to which that person relates. These two worlds do not interface ‘vertically’: it is not that I am here and the world is out there, but rather that my world and that world have the same ‘depth’, and what music enables is the crossing of the frontier between my materiality and the world’s materiality as well as at the same time between my depth and the world’s depth. ‘Music is a window through which we can look out from our world’; in fact, doing this is part of our nature. Transcendence, both within and without, is reached most directly by music.²⁶ The suggestion that music is bound up intimately with the person, with an inner as well as an outer direction, is borne out by Walter Ong’s analysis of the attributes of sound:²⁷ as more real or existential than another sense object because it is related to present actuality rather than to past or future; as ‘a special key to interiority’, allowing access to an individual’s inner self without physical invasion; as ‘unit(ing) groups of living beings as nothing else does’ (noting that the distance tolerated in sound as against touch is important in enabling closeness, and the fact that sound binds ‘interiors’ together); and as ‘situat(ing) man in the middle of actuality and in simultaneity’ (unlike vision which puts us in front of things and in sequentiality).²⁸

Other insights and proposals

The sacramental dimension

Reviewing other studies which might have a bearing on interpreting the eucharistic dimension of *koinonia* in terms of music, an obvious starting place is with those who take a sacramental approach to music. We may assume that these sources are using the term ‘sacramental’ in its full sense, where the materials do not simply prompt a memory but convey the presence of Christ or, rather, help render the unrecognised presence as

²⁶ Above, page 174.

²⁷ Ong was an American professor of literature, cultural historian, and Jesuit priest (d.2003).

²⁸ Edward Foley, *Music in Ritual: A Pre-Theological Investigation*, American Essays in Liturgy 1 (Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1984), 16-17.

recognised. The *Universa Laus* group²⁹ speak of music as referring beyond itself to ‘the *sacramentum* and the *mysterion* of the realities being celebrated’. The ‘real presence’ of Christ in the eucharist is more than metaphor for George Steiner, who sees the arts as uniquely enabling the encounter with the ‘other’, while for Simone Weil beauty represents ‘the real presence of God in matter’.³⁰ Both Begbie³¹ and Leaver³² find musical reference in the central eucharistic act of *anamnesis* which is the ‘mechanism’ by which Christ becomes present to those who ‘remember’, when time dimensions flow into one, an effect (as Begbie points out) which music is particularly capable of producing through one of its most basic procedures, repetition both small scale and large.³³

For Albert Blackwell, what takes the receiver into the realm of the transcendent are two sacramental traditions taken together, one which appeals to the senses (the ‘incarnational’) and one which requires the intellect (the Pythagorean). In the latter, it is through the contemplation of an abstract core of numbers – the ratios and overtone structures within the music – that the contingent gives passage to the transcendent. Blackwell adopts this (Augustine’s) pattern so that, just as Pythagorean contemplation produces trust in the cosmic order, so also for him it contributes to a trust in the second person of the Trinity, God’s *logos*, serving as a ‘path of human and divine meeting’.³⁴ Blackwell’s appeal to the sacramental resonates with Rice’s double meanings which allow users of music both to see/hear what is presented but also to see/hear beyond the sound or the score, but his insistence on fusing the two strands, senses and intellect, offers to take us into another aspect of the matter.

Here it is Saliers who suggests the next step when, arguing that the senses are central to the spiritual life, he proposes that these senses have to be schooled to ‘read’ the sacral. To

²⁹ Claude Duchesneau and Michael Veuthey, *Music and Liturgy: The Universa Laus Document and Commentary*. Translated by Paul Inwood (Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1992). Part I, paras. 7.4 and 7.5.

³⁰ Above, page 94.

³¹ Jeremy S. Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 171.

³² Robin A. Leaver, ‘Liturgical Music as Anamnesis’, in Robin A. Leaver and Joyce Ann Zimmerman, eds., *Liturgy and Music: Lifetime Learning* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 395.

³³ Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 155-175, where there is an extended discussion of repetition in music in relation to the eucharist.

³⁴ Albert L. Blackwell, *The Sacred in Music* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1999), 86.

hear 'theological import' in music requires both a musical ear and a sensibility for hearing music as revelatory, since one does not 'simply' gain access to the transcendent, or at least, recalling Zuckerkandl, the transcendent in which dwells the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Saliers suggests that we recognise in certain musical forms or specific works our own experience of the 'melody and rhythm of life' and that this reciprocity of sound and life can deepen theological perception through time. But for this to happen, work must be done. We have, he says, to bring as much of our life as possible to bear on our experience of music in worship and we have also to work on the depth and reach of our sense perceptions. Saliers argues elsewhere that we are prone in worship to filter out the more disturbing feelings and emotions, whereas true worship must embrace the realities of our lives.³⁵ In this regard he makes comparison with the icon, where the perceiver trains the mind and sensibility so that he/she does not only look with understanding but 'is gazed upon'. These observations of Saliers are of profound significance not only in the present context of experiencing encounter with the Other but when considering the basic question as to how music can contain and reveal meaning. In conjunction with findings from other dimensions of *koinonia*, we shall have cause to return to this contribution.

These explorations put forward the sacramental dimension in music not as a devotional feeling as much as an active engagement, summed up in Brown and Loades' characterisation of sacrament as transformative, as redefining who we are.³⁶ The place in which this interchange occurs is the human capacity for imagining, seen by McIntyre as increasing knowledge (which is real knowledge) of dimensions of reality which are hidden from normal view. His view of the imagination as able to contemporise history, to bring the future into the present, to make the absent present, to recreate former insights, feelings and experiences,³⁷ suggests a rich and flexible space where different kinds of 'information' can combine to take someone 'to a new place'. As we 'dwell upon' the words, rituals, visual stimuli and sound, we see mystery coming to light.³⁸

³⁵ Don E. Saliers, 'The Integrity of Sung Prayer', *Worship*, Vol. 55 (1981), No.4, 294.

³⁶ David Brown and Ann Loades, eds., *The Sense of the Sacramental: Movement and Measure in Art and Music, Place and Time* (London: SPCK, 1995), 3.

³⁷ John McIntyre, *Faith, Theology and Imagination* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1987), 174.

³⁸ Mark Searle, 'Liturgy as Metaphor', *Worship*, Vol. 55 (1981), No.2, 98ff.

The music

If the readiness of the worshipper is an essential part of the sacramental encounter in music, as Saliers suggests, the music itself must be such as invites or enables this encounter. Is it possible to isolate what qualities or procedures issue in a transparency by which the Other becomes a felt presence? Perhaps one way is to note the characteristics of music which have developed with the liturgy over centuries. Examples might include: plainchant psalm-tones, polyphony, Anglican chant, the metrical psalm tune, and the chorale. It is noteworthy that the recent report of the American Catholic Bishops, *Sing to the Lord*,³⁹ encourages musicians to seek guidance as to what in music constitutes true sacredness by returning to the church's treasury of sacred music.

As regards the **plain song psalm-tones** and their psalm texts which formed the staple diet of the daily office, it is possible to see its 'modest risings and temperate descents', as Pope John XXII put it in a papal decree of 1325,⁴⁰ as leaving space for the soul to breathe, and the lack of flourish or undue embellishment in its melodies, the open-endedness of its cadences, and the resting places in its contours, as suggesting space into which one might gaze and from which one may feel gazed upon, to adopt Saliers' image of the icon. Developed from plain song was **polyphony** which came to 'belong' with liturgical texts and occasions, and which, especially that from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, is still valued as part of the church's musical tradition. Its suitability may be found in a structure where no one voice predominates, where the inner movement of the texture suggests an energy continuously renewed, where the well-prepared yet unexpected entry of each new voice suggests that there is more to be heard that meets the ear.

Anglican chant, which was originally derived from the harmonised embellishment of plain song psalm-tones, displays a certain sparseness, even humility, before the text,⁴¹ yet at the same time a good example is a musical composition of movement and interest. In

³⁹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* (2007). www.usccb.org/liturgy/SingToTheLord.pdf.

⁴⁰ Quoted Blackwell, *The Sacred in Music*, 224.

⁴¹ Of course, there are some by contemporary composers which are less reticent.

its simplest form, there is the progression towards semi-closure half way through, while in the second half the reciting note gives way to a slightly more elaborate cadential passage which gives a stronger feeling of closure. While each chant is a minimalist composition in its own right and has its full quota of harmonic incident, yet it does not entirely rely on this for its interest. The cadence may be performed very lightly, leaving the memory with the reciting note and the text it sets. Of great importance for the overall effect, of course, is the fact that it is repeated many times. The added circumstance that it is never the same twice, since every verse is a different length, diverts the attention from thinking of this as a composition in its own right, but bedded into the liturgy.

Again, there is what Erik Routley characterised as the ‘poise and simplicity’ of the **metrical psalm tune** of the Reformation (out of which developed the hymn tune, as did the Western hymn from the metrical psalm). The style of these melodies, commissioned from such composers as Louis Bourgeois, conformed to Calvin’s view, derived from St. Augustine, that they be ‘neither light nor frivolous but have weight and majesty’, adding that ‘there is a great difference between the music which one makes to entertain men at table and in their homes, and the psalms which are sung in the Church in the presence of God and his angels’.⁴² An important requirement was that they should be such as not to cause people to be more attentive to the music than to the words. The result was a sonorous style of melody, moving with dignity and regularity but with a strong underlying rhythm. Some similarities exist between the metrical psalm tune and the **chorale**. The melody of the latter, while eventful, is measured, which in many cases means that the rhythms of an earlier secular tune have been smoothed out. It may be a long melody led through several keys before arriving at a strong cadence.

In addition to the characteristics identified in these five forms of liturgical music, we might find helpful Nathan Mitchell’s discussion of the nature of reverence and the accompanying concept of ‘right-sizedness’,⁴³ by which human aspiration and utterance are kept in creaturely proportion as compared to the Creator. Routley was seeking the

⁴² Charles Garside Jr., ‘The Origin of Calvin’s Theology of Music: 1536-1543), *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 69, Part 4, 1979, 18-19.

⁴³ Above, page 69.

same quality when he made the comment that the quality in contemporary church music most conspicuously lacking was modesty.

Assertiveness talks; modesty listens. The best church musicians have always been the best listeners. ... The great church musician listens to the conversation already going on before joining in it. ... There is a tendency at present ... for church music to break in on the conversation and make gestures comparable to a person bursting into a room and stopping everyone present that he may assert himself.⁴⁴

Is it this sense of proper proportion, perhaps, that allows these musical genres to prepare the ground for the encounter between creature and Creator, combining with an approach from the worshipper which is truly aware of shortcomings but also claiming full humanity in all its strength and richness – what Saliers described as bringing as much as possible of our life to bear on our perception of the music of liturgy?⁴⁵ The same author puts this in a different way when he remarks that ‘(m)usic confers upon human language addressed to God the appropriate silence and mystery required by prayer’.⁴⁶ Such a silence is beautifully expanded upon in the second *Universa Laus* report when it speaks of listening as an essential component of liturgy, a listening which engenders silence. ‘Word and song take their value from the silence from which they are born and from the silence they bring about.’⁴⁷ This quality of enabling the act of listening, of silence contained within the music, could be said to be present in the forms we have looked at here, where words are set in such a way that ‘space is left’ between them, when time seems to be suspended.

Nevertheless, there are two dangers which need to be acknowledged. One is that in the forms examined above, there no doubt are inferior examples, some of which have not survived. Should we be saying that psalm-tones, Anglican chant and the like are best to be considered not as individual musical compositions but as genres, leaving evaluation still to be made of particular examples? Or might we rather argue that a particular genre has possibilities inherent in it that the best examples – and particularly perhaps those that

⁴⁴ Erik Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith* (London: Collins, 1980), 89.

⁴⁵ Above, page 99.

⁴⁶ Don E. Saliers, *Music and Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 4.

⁴⁷ *Music in Liturgies*, *Universa Laus* Report II, translated Paul Inwood. In *Music in Liturgy* (Spring 2004), 20-22.

have come down to us over the centuries – successfully attain to? For instance, there are those who would regard a chorale, with substantial melody and rich harmonic language, as being part of a religious act: dignity of movement, spaciousness from the strongly buttressed tonalities, passing notes unsettling the harmony which touch in the pleading of the human soul, all speak of awe in the presence of a higher being. A second danger is that, by highlighting these historical forms, one might seem to agree with those who call for a return to the musical traditions of the past as being the only music acceptable for use in liturgy. In this case, however, we have scanned these forms not so much for what they are but for what they might yield to those who seek to continue the traditions into the present day, maintaining the same quality but at the same time consonant with the culture of place and times.

A fuller account than this would enter here into discussion of contemporary genres in sacred music where there has been an intention to relate back to the development of music in partnership with liturgy over the ages. Such a discussion would examine particular forms of church music with respect to their authenticity both in relation to the tradition and to the times and places in which they have been, or are being, written. We might have discussed: responsorial psalms of such as Joseph Gelineau and Christopher Wilcock;⁴⁸ Taizé canons and ostinati; the use of answering voices in examples as widely spaced as Bernadette Farrell and African songs;⁴⁹ the refreshing of plainchant in *Music for Common Worship*;⁵⁰ newly-written hymn tunes such as ‘Joel’ and ‘Coe Fen’ which renew the vocabulary of the traditional psalm and hymn tune;⁵¹ the identifying and arranging of folk tunes of a modal caste. Here, only the last is given – brief – attention.

Much folk song has in common with plainsong the ‘church modes’ (all eight are found in Scottish folk song, even the rare Lydian mode, an example of which is used in *Common*

⁴⁸ For example, *Together in Song: Australian Hymn Book II* (East Melbourne: HarperCollinsReligious, 1999), No.32.

⁴⁹ Examples in *Church Hymnary Fourth Edition (CH4)*, also published as *Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise (HGSP)* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2005), hymn nos. 151, 428, 487, 757.

⁵⁰ John Harper, ed., *Music for Common Worship, 1. Music for Sunday Services* (Dorking: RSCM Press, 2000).

⁵¹ See *CH4/HGSP* nos. 217, 128.

Ground.⁵²) Like plainsong also, folk song is typically performed by unaccompanied voices. One effect of this modal nature of folk song (met not only in the West but in many parts of the world) is the ‘pentatonic’ or gapped scale, found in both older as well as more recent folk melodies as the latter acknowledge their modal ancestry. This common modal foundation may enable much folk song to share the characteristic of being ‘revisitable’ – the gap still to be filled, the utterance never complete, a recurring moment of the unexpected which ‘lifts the curtain’ into the numinous.

There is another reason why the folk idiom may be eloquent in worship. At first sight, folk songs seem to be very much attached to ‘the world’. Their themes celebrate humanity and the structures of human life, but there is characteristically the acknowledgement of certain realities – of death, of loss of love, of the hardship of survival. Folk song serves to bind people into community or into a common task. It brings people together in humanity, not just in a particular corner of humanity but humanity as a whole. It is folk song which is often a country’s most readily exportable commodity. But it also has the capacity of being open to larger questions. It has deeply unifying undertones: its subject matter tends to chronicle the unreliability of human relationships, of the reality of violence, of the inevitability of death. But it does so with text often polished by centuries of repetition. Its music matches this: the melodies have that tinge of dissent, melancholy, resignation which suggests powers outwith the realm of human responsibility, a touch of the transcendent. Perhaps it is these hints of otherness which haunt folk song that have caused hymn-book editors from Ralph Vaughan Williams⁵³ onwards to find in examples of this genre music which seems so at home in the church and its worship, inviting us to reflect, not just on these human themes, but on the Word made flesh, dwelling among us.

This discussion of folk music prompts a further observation about music that could be said to be sacramental. There have been times in the history of the church when composers have sought to write music that has a ‘religious’ feel to it, music which is

⁵² *Common Ground: a Hymnbook for All the Churches* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1998), no. 55.

⁵³ *The English Hymnal* (1906).

‘obviously’ suitable for use in worship. Many Victorian hymn tunes were written on this premise, and it might be possible to detect a similar approach in the writing of some contemporary worship songs or music ‘in a Celtic style’ that is intended to convey or enable a certain spiritual content. Sacred music is not music which goes out of the way to be special. Music that serves the mystery is ordinary music – that is, written with all the crafting the composer can bring. It is when things do what they are meant to do that they glorify God.

What, however, must our response be when there is a genuine recognition of the Other in music and song which seem too culture bound, too corrupt, too carelessly written, and far from being right-sized? Clayton’s application of the notion of ‘affordances’ to music,⁵⁴ the idea that music may be actively scanned for sense patterns rather than decoding fixed meaning from a given source, might suggest that different people, taught to expect an experience of transcendence in worship may be able to find it in music of a wide range of idiom. At this point, we enter the area of aesthetics which will be explored in another section, but suffice it to say that *koinonia* is a communal image, and there is a sense in which all together must seek to draw from each other the fullness of the experience of gathered worship. Such is the spread of forms of religion which privilege the individual today that it is difficult sometimes to remember that the image of the church is a body and the future of church and world belongs in a Kingdom – both corporate concepts. To exalt individual or particular group experience over the context and doctrinal norms of the larger faith community, as Westerfield Tucker has reminded us,⁵⁵ is to ‘capitulate to the god of individual experience’. To say that ‘this is the kind of music I like’ can only be part of the story.

There is one remaining outcome of the above discussion centring round the dimension of *koinonia* as a eucharistic community. So far the focus has been on music which is most likely to constitute the *koinonia* as a eucharistic community. We also acknowledged that

⁵⁴ Martin Clayton, ‘Introduction: Towards a Theory of Musical Meaning (in India and Elsewhere)’, *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, Vol.10, No.1 (2001), 7-8.

⁵⁵ Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, ‘A Decade of Christian Song: Observations on Recent Hymnals and Songbooks’, *Studia Liturgica*, Vol. 31 (2001), No.2, 209.

certain music may serve to keep the body of Christ at the level of a purely human gathering, albeit with an elevated purpose. What is written for the church at worship, especially when it is for people to sing, often does no more than promote human solidarity, albeit Christian solidarity, a musical echo of a community of like-minded persons with a common cause and leader. This is music whose principal effect is to make people ‘feel good’ in their communal life, where there is more than a hint of entertainment music about it, confirming people in their own interpretation of themselves without trying to draw them forward from their ‘comfort areas’. The outcome has often been that it serves only a limited understanding of the nature of the church and inhibits the ability of the worshipper to capture a sense of the numinous. In contrast, music which serves and enables the eucharistic dimension of *koinonia* is such that warmly embraces but at the same time leaves room for Christ to move freely amongst those who make up the body; it is music capable of directing our thoughts through and beyond our belonging together to our being one in Christ, music which has a numinous or transcendent quality at the same time as recognising our need for each other, music which after, within, or in spite of, the human contribution has been made, mediates the divine.

2.2 A Relational Community

Defining factors

The second dimension of *koinonia* is that its texture is that of relationship, founded not only in the eucharistic event but in the Holy Trinity, where the ‘perichoresis’ of the three persons (‘permeation without confusion’) offers a pattern of mutual loving and giving which also gives space and freedom for the individual.⁵⁶ As discussion of the first dimension has implied, relationships within the *koinonia* are not just with each other but with, and in, God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. The relationship is also with the church of every age that has been and is to come, with the communion of saints, and with those who will gather in the Kingdom of God. The church’s music needs to be such as can ‘reach round’ this great company and express the dynamic between its different dimensions. A recent Church of England report on liturgical formation states at the

⁵⁶ McGann, *Exploring Music.*, 68.

outset, ‘We become Christian through our interaction with others, and ultimately with the mystery of the Other whom we call God, the God whose very life we are called to share (2 Peter 1:4b)’.⁵⁷ McGann calls worship and its music ‘performed theology’ in that they ‘express embodied relationality’. They ‘actualize and manifest the spiritual, ecclesial, eschatological, and ecological relationships that express and create a community’s identity’. She quotes ethnomusicologist Christopher Small who finds these relationships ‘enormously complex – too complex to be expressed in words ... but ... not too complex for our minds to encompass. ... [Music and ritual] provide us with a language by which we can understand and articulate these relationships’.⁵⁸

Resources from musicology

With the change in recent decades in the field of musicology from a positivistic approach with its focus on the musical work to one which acknowledged that performer and listener contribute actively to the interpretation of the music, more attention is now paid to the whole process by which sound is created and received. Kramer’s definition of music as a cultural practice rather than as a species of language,⁵⁹ and the move from fixed understandings to the recognition of ‘a horizon of expectations’,⁶⁰ had followed from the application to music of hermeneutic analysis, an approach particularly apt in the case of liturgical music given its use in other fields in situations of opacity or multiple meanings.⁶¹ Nattiez’s idea of a ‘web of interpretants’, the route by which the ‘trace’ of a musical performance is reconstructed in the mind of the receiver as significant sound,⁶² has a bearing on the evaluation of church music in that it places on the receiver the onus of interpretation, and recognises that this interpretation cannot be an exact reproduction of the original intention of the composer, and indeed may be apprehended differently by different receivers.

⁵⁷ *Transforming Worship: Living the New Creation*, Liturgical Commission of the Church of England (London: Church House Publishing, 2007), 14.

⁵⁸ McGann, *Exploring Music*, 38-39.

⁵⁹ *Grove Online*, ‘Hermeneutics, 5. Musical Hermeneutics: 20th Century’, 2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 4. The phrase is from Hans Jauss, following Hans-Georg Gadamer.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, ‘Hermeneutics’.

⁶² Above, page 157.

Other insights and proposals

Mary E. McGann's discussion of the manner in which ritual music relates to the whole *koinonia* as a relational body offers a helpful transition between the musicological and the ecclesiological. Referring to Alan Merriam's threefold division of music into sound, the behaviour involved in making music, and the conceptualisations people have about their music, McGann suggests more attention should be paid to the social processes which shape the performance of music, how history, training or personal formation influence the roles people take.⁶³ Whatever the musical score or the intention of the composer, how the music unfolds in time is shaped by the intentionality and expectations of those engaged with it. The processes of communication that take place in musical performance are themselves forms of social action and interaction. 'Through these processes, certain types of social relationships are brought into being and expressed. ...This experience is a form of social bonding.' The relationships brought into being and maintained in the musical process affect the manner in which the community knows itself as a whole. Further, suggests McGann, in an assembly's performance of its music other dimensions – visual, kinetic and tactile – are also involved. The experience of music-making thus affects human beings as total persons,⁶⁴ which means persons in relationship.

The music

How may music be part of the relational texture of the *koinonia*? In many modern settings for church the use of antiphonal devices has become popular, not out of antiquarian interest but because they answer to contemporary liturgical need. The call and response type of setting restores a dynamic which had become submerged, encouraging and enabling the assembly to give voice. This also can enable more complex music to be introduced without displacing the people, or the incorporation of variable material performed by the more skilled singers and affirmed by a simple refrain. Psalm settings in which cantor and people interact are a substantial new contribution from recent times, not least in the Catholic Church. Other examples are dialogue music from, say, African cultures where the interaction builds to deepen the feeling of communion. There

⁶³ McGann, *Exploring Music*, 23-24.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

are examples, too, of the use of more than two groups of voices (one of which may be a cantor), such as Bernadette Farrell’s ‘Eastertide Acclamation’. Every verse lists four ‘names’ of Jesus, each greeted with the acclamation ‘Jesus Christ!’ There is then a refrain for the whole group or for the largest group to sing.⁶⁵ Here it would be possible, and effective, to use three different forces in relation to each other, namely a cantor, a small choir for the acclamations, and the congregation for the refrain.

The musical score is written on a single staff in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It is divided into two systems. The first system is labeled 'Cantor' and 'Choir' above the staff. The Cantor part consists of four measures, and the Choir part consists of four measures. The lyrics are: 'Word of the Fa-ther: Je -sus Christ! Hope of the world: Je -sus Christ!'. The second system is labeled 'Refrain: All' above the staff. It consists of four measures. The lyrics are: 'Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, Je - sus, ri - sen'. The melody is simple and repetitive, using mostly quarter and eighth notes.

Another example is Marty Haugen’s ‘All you works of God’, when the main body of singers provides a refrain following a cantor alternating with small choir, or two contrasting groups, singing the verses.⁶⁶

A remarkable experiment in uniting different groups in single compositions which acknowledged the particular skills and abilities of each was carried out by John Currie⁶⁷ in the 1960s in Govan Parish Church in Glasgow. Each week, one of the hymns was arranged for the different forces available. The following example, based on ‘Adsis, Jesu’ (‘Jesus, stand among us’)⁶⁸ groups the treble instruments on the top stave, the lower instruments on the bottom, with the melody of the hymn in the middle stave. In this particular case, only the treble part was included, the singers leading the congregation. The architecture of the composition would vary from week to week according to who was expected to be present.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ CH4/HGSP no. 428.

⁶⁶ CH4/HGSP no. 151.

⁶⁷ Currie was a lecturer in music in the University of Glasgow and the director of the John Currie Singers, an internationally known Scottish vocal ensemble.

⁶⁸ *Church Hymnary: Third Edition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), no. 11.

⁶⁹ The example given was the only one to have survived among the papers of the student; other, more complex, settings were also used.



However, 'performed theology' is more than ordering the various contributions; it also challenges the quality of the interrelationships which underlie the making of music. The recovery today of musical styles which depend on different and contrasting musical forces offers a way not only of enriching the sound but establishing an awareness among different groupings of the importance of their contribution. Many congregations, who have been used to a diet of hymn singing coupled with listening to a choir, accept such new patterns with reluctance. This may not simply be the result of caution over something new and unfamiliar but because this style of music requires an increased attentiveness from the participant. There has to be alertness to what other people are doing and a readiness to respond at the right time and at the right pitch. A certain laziness which can creep into the singing of a hymn can be disturbed when voices are passed back and forward. Not only better listening is required but sometimes eye contact to receive visual cues is called for, an activity that can studiously be avoided in an assembly gathered for worship. The experience is one in which a dynamic is created and which sites members of a congregation in a different and more active relation with each other

and with other musical forces. A bonus is the opportunity given for a variety of ‘texture’ in liturgical music, a variety which in itself has the power to ‘take us beyond’ the commonplace or the expected so as to open further the feelings of the worshipper towards each other and the object of their worship.

Reference has been made to the relationship with the communion of saints. It is only relatively recently in the history of the church and of music that we have had access to what was sung by our ancestors. In the Middle Ages, each generation tended to discard polyphony that had become unfashionable and only sing, play or hear the music of its own time. There is surely a real advantage today, for retaining a lively consciousness of the communion of saints, in being able to sing what they sang, and for our composers to write with knowledge of and reference to the styles and idioms of past witnesses to the bounty of God. Yet our consciousness today, in spite of that, may not be any stronger than was our ancestors’ with regard to those who had gone before, a reminder that the great cloud of witnesses is not an historical construct but a lively presence, challenging, supporting and bearing up the church of the present day. This is a note which has been struck in the church’s music from the beginning, ranging across the spectrum from music which partners texts to the almost wordless music which expresses the Hallelujahs and Hosannas of the angels’ song.⁷⁰ There is therefore room in the church’s repertoire for the music of ecstasy, enabling, in Blackwell’s words,

a sense of intimate communion with transcendent reality infinitely greater than ourselves; a range of sensibilities concerning the nature of transcendent reality, from astounding hiddenness, through radical yet communicative divinity, to proximate or immanent holiness; an ecstatic sense of spiritual completion, as contrasted with the spiritual intoxication of trance; and awareness of profound intellectual and emotional enlargement and fulfilment.⁷¹

The music-makers

The musicological developments outlined above offered a different pattern of relationship between those involved in their several ways in the making of music, a movement away

⁷⁰ Jones, Wainright and Yarnold, *Study of Liturgy* (original edition), 452-3. See footnote 12.

⁷¹ Albert Blackwell. *The Sacred in Music*. Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1999, 208.

from an hierarchy where composer is 'senior' to listener, pundit to consumer, scholar to amateur, and arbiters of taste (such as church authorities) to individual preferences. These developments also correspond with movements within music and liturgy, the principal one being the recovery (for some), the discovery or the underlining (for others) of the 'musical ministry' to be exercised by the worshipping assembly in its own right. This, in turn, brings a fresh appraisal of the relationships between specialist musical groups and their leaders and the body of the worshippers, with the recognition on the one hand that they are by no means redundant (in some Catholic and charismatic circles), and on the other that they are not the only ones who matter. Therefore, at the same time as music is being written which calls on more than one musical grouping, specialist groups such as choir, band or instrumentalists, are beginning to see themselves as exercising a role within the whole people of God in that place, while music leaders are embracing a wider role – for example, in building up the repertoire of the congregation, or for the identifying of musical talent not being offered through the customary channels.

The texture of relationship is endemic in music-making. Musicians are particularly conscious of how they need to relate to others. Thus the modifying of one's own contribution to blend with that of others, as when singing in parts or, more generally, adapting one's developed talent to the less developed talents or experience of others (or the opposite). Members of choirs are gifted musically, and, one hopes, are aware that these gifts are not for self-advancement but exercised within the whole body of musicians. However, members of choirs also have the giftedness, each in his/her own way, to minister to the rest in broader ways. To a musician, often the nearest pastoral ministry is that of other musicians. Thus musicians are bearers of the love of God to each other, graciously available to them as persons who have particular needs. This is particularly applicable in respect of those for whom the choir is sufficient 'church', who may not wish to express what is within them in the traditional ways of set prayer and creed but in the act of making and appreciating music in the context of liturgy, together with the preparation, the learning, and the fellowship that comes with this. Equally, the choir as ministers touch the lives of the congregation, whether through their art or through their availability as fellow pilgrims and spiritual seekers.

In considering the relationships between the more isolated and prominent roles in a congregation, such as director of music, organist, clergy, it is important to re-iterate that what we are exploring are not relationships between persons or groups but the quality of relationality that resides in the *koinonia*. This is a texture of belonging and accounting that is shared in before it is achieved, and it resides in the already created relations between Christ and his church and the persons of the Trinity. The starting point is therefore what is already shared before what needs to be shared. Being in relation to others not only consists in accepting that ‘they have their job and we have ours’ but that the interests and skills of others may impinge (legitimately) on or overlap with one’s own expertise. On the part of the clergy, there has to be a realisation that musicians are part of the body of Christ who, over many years, have developed their own understandings and instincts about the worship of God, and indeed, because of their skills, have points of access to knowledge which could add to the whole. For the congregation, the choir should not be seen as a musical elite but as carrying out its role of maximising the musical expression in relation to all present. To the musicians, clergy are to be accepted as endowed with musicality in the sense that sound and song are an inevitable part of being human, and not disbarred from dialogue about music for the lack of technical knowledge. By the same token, clergy are not to think of themselves as disadvantaged in the face of musicians’ believed ‘superior’ knowledge, voluntarily disenfranchising themselves in the encounter, nor, on the other hand, as above musical considerations since their role and the materials they work with are primary and others less important.

2.3 A Community Growing to Maturity in Christ

Defining factors

The third dimension of *koinonia* is one which also makes demands not only on the music but also on the music-makers. The expectation is that, leaving aside for the moment the undoubted fact that not all those who contribute to the musical life of a congregation are committed Christians, the life of the baptised is one of continuing maturation in terms of spiritual insight, intellectual understanding, openness to others, and ethical probity. The

association, in the biblical witness, of this growth towards greater perfection with the giving of gifts⁷² – not for individual satisfaction but for the building up of the body – suggests that maturation takes place in the company of others, who are to share in the nurturing process. The community characterised by a journey of growth to maturity also makes demands of the music which expresses and accompanies the looked-for transformation. Indeed, the rare biblical passages which make specific reference to song in the Christian community associate this closely with mutual accountability in a developing understanding of the word of Christ (Colossians 3:16) and with the increasing depth and quality of the way members relate to each other (Ephesians 5:19). The question to be put in any particular case is whether the music enables growth, movement and maturation, or whether it merely anchors people at the point they have reached – whether it offers a diet of milk or of meat (Hebrews 5:13-14), a judgement which, for Erik Routley, is at the heart of any church music criticism.⁷³

Resources from musicology

Studies on the nature of meaning conveyed in music see it as capable of carrying both exact and inexact messages. On the one hand is music's ability to address the affective dimension and evoke simultaneous response whose 'content' can be unmistakable and capable of definition. At the same time there is left a considerable range of possibility within which different receivers can find their own definition, but a definition which always remains open to further dimensions. Kramer, drawing on hermeneutic traditions, spoke of the propensity of music to resist fully disclosing itself. The receiver needs to work at understanding music's import, using 'windows' which allow entry beyond the surface into areas of hidden meaning.⁷⁴ Kramer's three types of window ('textual inclusions', quotes or allusions, 'structural tropes') may be found to have their counterparts in liturgical music, such as the texts it sets, the rituals which it accompanies, rubrics, gesture and posture, not to mention the physical surroundings – the shape of the space, furnishings, visual imagery.

⁷² Such as Ephesians chapter 4.

⁷³ Erik Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith*, 76.

⁷⁴ *Grove Online*, 'Hermeneutics: 5. Musical Hermeneutics: 20th Century'.

There is some overlap between Kramer's 'windows' and Rice's 'process' of identifying references within a piece of music to events external to that music (objects, sounds).⁷⁵ Rice outlines four modes of reference: intertextuality, iconicity, association and contrast. In *intertextuality* (the allusion to another composition or musical style) significance is added to the present composition or setting. Rice gives the example of an instrumental version of a song with text; we might think of musical allusions to the 'Dies irae'. Recognition of such references will require close listening. *Iconicity* refers to the way music may contain reference to non-musical constructs. Under this head he suggests links to ideologies and indeed religious beliefs. In the field of church music, one might think of the burgeoning list of modern compositions and settings which are claimed to be 'Celtic' in style, where, although they may not be setting words at that particular point, there is a recognition in the listener of the set of emotions, musical references to nature, or music which by its vocabulary or instrumentation implies a particular meditative stance. Rice's third category is the *association* between music and objects; his example is a backdrop of flags, we may think of the many visual and spatial signals in a place of worship. Finally, there is the *contrast* between what was expected and what is actually heard, where the new version stimulates a fresh interpretation of the old. The author's own example is the expansion and freeing of the scale and the dynamic of Bulgarian wedding music following the collapse of the Communist system; we might cite the arresting experience resulting from the 1950s' and 1960' use of popular idioms in what had been a 'closed' system of church music, the effect being to shock the worshipper into an awareness of the relationship of the Christian faith to materiality and the relevance of belief to the life of the world. These connections await further exploration; they require a certain effort and attention, and an exercise of the imagination and will.

Other insights and proposals

Aesthetic issues

Both the biblical witness and these findings of ethnomusicology use the vocabulary of struggle and effort in achieving a goal. In his studies of aesthetics and taste, Frank Burch Brown makes a similar demand. Differences in taste are, according to Brown, at the heart

⁷⁵ Above, page 165.

of any congregational conflict regarding music. A common view is that questions of aesthetic taste should not enter into matters of faith, with some believing that the very ‘tackiness’ of much Christian art and utterance is testimony to something greater working through it.⁷⁶ The view expressed in some parts of Protestantism that the arts are for the spiritually immature dies hard, a crutch for those who have still some distance to travel. The reason that these matters can so divide people is that they concern things that are near to the heart and cannot be disengaged from other values and commitments that define people’s understandings of themselves. Brown sees three aspects of taste – perceiving, enjoying, judging – and understands that all of them ‘have to do with stretching and learning as with inherent disposition’. This implies an obligation to develop one’s sensibility towards artistic forms, since ‘at its highest, taste enters into the sense of God and the sense of good’. As such, taste should be placed among the spiritual gifts and disciplines.⁷⁷

Brown writes widely about aesthetics, a field in which beauty is a common theme. The quality of beauty has often featured in writings about church music, when it is seen as a goal. We have noted in chapter 2 how the Apostolic Exhortation from Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*,⁷⁸ placed particular emphasis on the ‘liturgical category of beauty’, which is ‘no mere aestheticism, but the concrete way in which the truth of God’s love in Christ encounters us, attracts us and delights us’. Other writings considered in this study have described beauty more broadly than a quality inherent within a work of art. In chapter 3, in a survey of writings on beauty, we noted that both Farley and Begbie spoke of beauty as lodged in redemption and the life of faith. Applying this understanding, we spoke of beauty as inhering not just in the music itself but in the life of discipleship, the quality of engagement of those who write, make or select music (for there is artistry also in the latter). Beauty, therefore, was to do with people and their gifts and actions.⁷⁹ There was something in it of the journey to redemption, one that is open to suffering and

⁷⁶ Frank Burch Brown, *Good Taste, Bad Taste and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), chapter 1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷⁸ www.vatican.va/holy.father/benedict_xvi/apost.exhortations/documents/hf_ben_xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis_en.html. See para. 35.

⁷⁹ Above, page 113.

conflict; God's beauty (in Barth's words) embraces 'death as well as life, fear as well as joy'.⁸⁰ This is a journey the artist must also take. Beauty may be said to be an outcome when people, whether listener/performer or composer, reach deep and offer the most in the search for expression. Thus a 'new thing'⁸¹ is created, not merely an object of abstract beauty but the effort of arriving at this point, including the receiving of it with attention and engagement. Saliers was making a similar point when he remarked that beauty is the heart at full stretch,⁸² a phrase which suggests effort and growth. Beauty may therefore be said to be a spiritual as well as an aesthetic quality, the result of our offering of ourselves for our remaking in the image of God.⁸³

Taking liturgical risks

There was growth and challenge too in Saliers' suggestion that the maturity we seek is not just in knowledge and understanding of purpose, history or content but in the range of emotion and feeling we are able to access and express in worship.⁸⁴ Is the range of both text and musical articulation too narrow? Do we settle for the conventional or the comfortable, conforming to the musical tastes of the congregation? Or do we really enter into the longings, hopes, rejoicings and testings that are at the heart of the Christian gospel? This represents a considerable challenge to our often bland acts of worship. David Batchelder calls for the taking of risk within a more 'dangerous liturgy', characterising much worship as 'strolling through the ordo', keeping our lives intact.⁸⁵ He finds that too much of what is offered as renewal in worship leans towards cleverness and fails to achieve a creative engagement of mind and senses. While affirming the continuing 'catechesis' that must accompany a deepening and more intelligent understanding of worship, he emphasises the need also for 'mystagogy', the reflection upon the meaning of what we say and do. Without this, the liturgy will be an experience

⁸⁰ Jeremy Begbie, *Voicing Creation's Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 224.

⁸¹ 2 Corinthians 5:17.

⁸² Don E. Saliers, 'Sounding the Symbols of Faith: Exploring the Nonverbal Languages of Christian Worship', in Charlotte Kroeker, ed., *Music in Christian Worship* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2005), 20.

⁸³ See further above, page 113.

⁸⁴ Don E. Saliers, 'The Integrity of Sung Prayer', 294.

⁸⁵ David B. Batchelder, 'Holy God, Dangerous Liturgy: Preparing the Assembly for the Transforming Encounter', *Worship*, Vol. 79 (2005), No. 4, 290.

which is ‘head-first rather than an experience of both head-and-heart’. The tendency has been for the church to ‘mask, conceal, and cosmeticise’ the scandal of the Gospel.⁸⁶ The Liturgical Commission of the Church of England’s *Transforming Worship* sets out to engender such reflection, with the refrain running through it that worship is nothing less than transformative.⁸⁷ We are to make it our business to prepare for worship where an encounter with God could potentially leave us changed.

The music

The corollary of these positions is that music which does not provide handholds for such an engagement falls short of what is required to match this characteristic of *koinonia*. Troeger, developing a theology for church music, had proposed that to participate in music-making was to continue on the path of discipleship. To prefer music which is immediately accessible is to refuse the call. Weak music and lyrics will not aid growth to maturity. They say (he suggests): Talk about discipleship but do not embody it in your song and your worship.⁸⁸ Blackwell regrets that much contemporary Christian music merely skims the effects off more substantial music and more profound texts. It is not surprising that the result is at best ‘poorly crafted attempts to tell God how we feel’,⁸⁹ and at worst spiritual entertainment.⁹⁰ His critique of ‘renewal music’ as ‘high on psychological energy but confined in spiritual compass’ identifies a lack of that quality which offers the way to greater Christian maturity.

Burch Brown considers the situation of potential Christians offered a sole diet of ‘culturally relevant’ music, and comments that ‘(t)he possibility that a relatively casual and unchallenging style might be all there is to a given community’s worship life or musical language is bound to be deflating to those whose call to discipleship causes them to yearn for something more by way of aesthetic formation and development’.⁹¹ Erik

⁸⁶ Ibid., 297.

⁸⁷ *Transforming Worship*.

⁸⁸ Above, page 83.

⁸⁹ Albert L. Blackwell, *The Sacred in Music* (Lutterworth, 1999), 151, quoting Westermeyer, *Te Deum*, 318.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 151 quoting Samuel Adler, ‘Sacred Music in a Secular Age’, *Sacred Sound*, ed. Hoffman and Walton, 290.

⁹¹ Frank Burch Brown, ‘Religious Meanings’, 142.

Routley once remarked that the hymns and choruses of Moody and Sankey were too strong in calories and too short in protein to enable their singers to grow beyond a certain point. Writing during the first enthusiasm for employing popular idioms, he commented: 'Congregations are waiting for ... a reconciling and accepting music which will nourish their Christian growth. It always was available; people have not stopped writing it'.⁹² Begbie, in the context of his discussion about how music echoes the theological understanding of redeemed time, speaks of music teaching the patience of waiting in 'eager longing' (Romans 8:19ff), a patience in which '*something new is learned of incalculable value*, which cannot be learned in any other way' (Begbie's italics). Church music should reflect the belief that salvation is a learning process 'in which we are led towards goals by paths that are not easy, straightforward or expected'.⁹³

What is the music like that enables and encourages *koinonia* experienced in this dimension of growth towards maturity in Christ? The new life embraced by *koinonia* is 'linked profoundly to Jesus' death',⁹⁴ accepting, not in a theoretical way but felt in the body, the reality of Christ's victory over death, sin and injustice. This means that it shares Christ's journey as Christ shares in our continuing journey. It both stumbles in Christ's very steps to Calvary and walks by his side to Emmaus. 'Without such costly self-giving, *koinonia* is just a game we play.'⁹⁵ This is a journey that is known to the artist and composer; indeed, it may afford the best description of the process of artistic creation. The true artist does not see his or her task as merely to entertain, which is often to confirm prejudices and leave a world view unchallenged. Simone Weil said that 'every time we really pay attention we destroy some of the evil within'. It is this quality of attention of which Hildegard spoke when she saw music as awakening the sluggish soul to watchfulness.⁹⁶ If the process of artistic creation at its truest treads the journey from

⁹² Erik Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith*, 137.

⁹³ Jeremy S. Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 106.

⁹⁴ Dorothy Lee(-Pollard), 'A Vision of *Koinonia*: the Anointing at Bethany', in Thomas F. Best and Gunther Gassmann, *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, Faith and Order Paper 166 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994), 82.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 84.

⁹⁶ See Sabina Flanagan, ed., *Secrets of God: Writings of Hildegard of Bingen* (Boston & London: Shambhala Publications Inc., 1966). The quotation in the present form was taken from an accompanying booklet to a compact disc.

death to resurrection, so a composition itself, if it is authentic, will reflect this motif and this journey.

Without this understanding of the creative process and the Christian journey, the call that goes up is for hymns that are ‘bright’, in which people can have ‘a good sing’, which are not ‘dirge-like’ and dull. The Easter joy by which the church lives, however, is a joy that arises from the dark places, a joy that discovers God even in the depths, ‘the joy which seekest us through pain’,⁹⁷ a joy that has travelled the way of the Cross. Evidence of such a journey is present in compositions which have been laboured over, which have been made with cost. The temptation to live comfortably is natural, to have people ‘speak well of you’ (Luke 6:26).⁹⁸ Musically speaking, it may lead a composer to try for beauty, to make attractive music that people will like. But this is an inauthentic goal, artistically as well as theologically. John Harper has suggested that an important characteristic of the music we seek today may find its models in the world of crafts rather than art, quoting Eric Gill, ‘Things must be right in themselves, and good for use’.⁹⁹ The old Scottish word for a poet is a *makar*, the person who makes – crafts – things. The true composer makes something as well as he or she can and if it is beautiful, it is a bonus. The true artist or craftsperson will testify to the struggle to reach full expression, and the journey will be experienced and appreciated by those who participate in the finished work. Music in which there is an unwillingness to encounter tension is music which in Erik Routley’s words ‘bypasses the way of the cross’.¹⁰⁰

2.4 A Diaconal Community

Defining factors

The diaconal dimension of *koinonia* reveals the kernel of service that lies at the heart of church and gospel, based on the Christ who ‘came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many’ (Mark 10:45). Karl Barth notes that ‘service is not just

⁹⁷ From the hymn by George Matheson, ‘O Love that wilt not let me go’, in *CH4 HGSF* no. 557.

⁹⁸ Erik Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith*, 67.

⁹⁹ John Harper, ‘Throughout All Generations’, *Church Music Quarterly*, December 2005, 7.

¹⁰⁰ Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith*, 67.

one of the determinations of the being of the community. It is its being in all its functions'.¹⁰¹ Ecumenical discussion of this dimension has emphasised that 'diakonia to the whole world and *koinonia* cannot be separated'.¹⁰² The service of the *koinonia* is that which strains towards the final purpose for the whole of creation. It is therefore expressed not just in acts of alleviation of need but in intervention in the cause of justice and in pursuit of reconciliation. In terms of music, an important starting point is that diakonia does not consist only in external activity based on the example of Christ but is bedded in the doxology that is the heart of worship. The Moscow Statement (Anglican/Orthodox) spoke of the church as 'drawing from the meal the reality of its fellowship in Christ ... enabling it to present this possibility of fellowship to the world'.¹⁰³ This eucharistic community is 'sign, instrument, and foretaste' of the promised reconciled community, the Kingdom of God.¹⁰⁴

Resources from musicology

Given that the diaconal dimension is understood as deriving its shape and motive from the approach of the Kingdom of God, the Parousia,¹⁰⁵ coupled with the conviction that aspects of the Kingdom may be recognised and affirmed in the present, assistance may be found among those who study the relationship of music and time. Against a musicological background, Jeremy Begbie explores in some detail certain analytical pathways which contribute to an understanding of the meaning, as he sees it, of Parousia.¹⁰⁶ A basic musical process is repetition, whether of phrases or whole sections. Far from simply extending the duration of a piece, the effect of repetition, skilfully handled, is not to exhaust an idea but to refresh it and increase anticipation of its further return. Another musical building block is metre, which occurs at several levels, from shaping short segments and longer passages to providing the overarching shape of a

¹⁰¹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956, 1975), Vol.IV/2, 690.

¹⁰² As, for example, in *The Nature and Purpose of the Church: a Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*, Faith and Order Paper 181 (Geneva: WCC, 1998), para.42.

¹⁰³ H. Meyer and L. Vischer, *Growth in Agreement: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level* (Paulist Press/WCC, 1984), 448.

¹⁰⁴ Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue, *Church as Communion*, in Gros, Meyer, and Rusch, eds., *Growth in Agreement II*, 334, para.24.

¹⁰⁵ The Greek word means 'presence' or 'arrival'.

¹⁰⁶ Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 122.

composition as a whole. This, not least when it interacts with rhythm, contributes to a heightening rather than a resolution and the sense that beginning, middle and ending are not in sequence. Each partial fulfilment is a limited realisation of the end, and time, customarily seen as unfolding in linear sequence, is given a different contour.

Four aspects of music's diaconal role may be identified.

1. Music serves God as a component of the doxology which is the church's foundational act of service.
2. Music serves liturgy, in that it enables this doxology to be all that it can be in giving glory to God.
3. Music serves the church in accompanying and supporting its outreach into the community in mission and service.
4. Music serves the Parousia, by helping create patterns of reconciliation in the present which pre-echo the new relationships that will characterise God's Kingdom.

Music in the service of God

James B. Torrance begins a book about worship, 'God made men and women in his own image to be the priests of creation and to express on behalf of all creatures the praises of God, so that through human lips the heavens might declare the glory of God'.¹⁰⁷ Stewart Todd, from the same understanding of worship, expands this to say that the music which will render the most appropriate service in the church is the music which is 'transparent', 'which lets the light and beauty of God shine through, music which does not just sing itself, but permits of being interpreted in ever new ways by the Choirmaster under whom we do our best singing – Jesus Christ'.¹⁰⁸ What is meant by 'transparent' has been a central question as this study has progressed, and one still being pursued, but what we may take from these observations is the idea that music's prime function is not just to give the assembly a voice, a part to play and even to enjoy, but an act of service rendered by creatures to the Creator, drawn from that creativity that is characteristic of those made in the Creator's image. As an act of service, it is given in humility, as from those who share in the fallen-ness of humanity, praying that this offering will be renewed even as it is uttered.

¹⁰⁷ James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace*, The Didsbury Lectures 1994 (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 1.

¹⁰⁸ Stewart Todd, 'Music in the Service of the Church', The Lee Lecture 1964, *Church Service Society Annual*, May 1965, 63.

Music in the service of the liturgy

We have noted the view of Todd, Leaver and Gelineau that music in liturgy must adopt a servant role.¹⁰⁹ Todd was trying to express why the popular music experiments of the times in which he was speaking (the 1960s) jarred, and suggested that they were ‘too musical’, in that they were strongly idiomatic – a critique he went on to apply to other styles as well.¹¹⁰ These authors do not set out to weaken the role of music but are sounding an important warning, that music is capable of obliterating, by stridency or inappropriateness, the meaning and power of word and rite. This is not about the scale of the music, or the exuberance of its composition or performance, since these are characteristics that will be appropriate in their place. What these authors have in mind is music that is flourished rather than offered, which seizes the liturgical opportunity to make a point, or where worship is used as a locus for musical display.

Nevertheless, the view that music should ‘merely’ be servant dies hard. This is frequently heard in Roman Catholic circles when the desire has been to curtail music which is considered inaccessible to the majority, not least when it involves choir and organ. We have also noted some writers who identify in the Vatican II documents an assumption that music should be subsidiary to the text.¹¹¹ One problem in this debate has lain in the understanding of the biblical term *diakonia* itself, and we have encountered John Collins’ widely-accepted suggestion that the flavours the word brought in from secular use, such as ‘go-between’ or ‘emissary’, which would have coloured understandings at the time, should be allowed to correct the weaker image that we have tended to embrace in our time.¹¹²

The notion of the ‘go-between’ is helpful in that it need not suggest a lesser robustness or importance for music in relation to liturgy.¹¹³ The ‘emptying’ of the Pauline epistles was

¹⁰⁹ Above, pages 91-92.

¹¹⁰ Sewart Todd, ‘Music in the Service of the Church’, 62.

¹¹¹ For example, Peter Jeffery; see above, pages 71-72.

¹¹² John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (Oxford: OUP, 1990).

¹¹³ This idea was used as a metaphor of the power of the Holy Spirit in John V. Taylor, *The Go-Between God: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission* (London: SCM Press, 1972, reissued 2002).

far from describing a negative withdrawal but proposed as prelude to an engagement to the point of sacrifice. Applied to music, it suggests that liturgical music should seek this emptying, the purging of characteristics which declare allegiances, or which assert cultural priorities, or which display personal idiosyncracies, prior to engaging with text and ritual, as adventurous musically as it needs to be. Understood as ‘emissary’ rather than as menial servant, the concept of *diakonia* requires music to be music in its fullest sense, music which uses all its art in the service of the Kingdom. The kind of music that is called in question is that which takes such a low profile that it is not equal to the texts it sets. Evelyn Stell gives an example from the Roman Catholic Church where the misconception arose, as she sees it, that music for the people had to be easy to sing (an assumption made from various documents’ emphasis on the ‘capabilities’ of the people). These settings typically would consist of ‘a melody with very few notes, simple rhythms and harmonies, a narrow range to suit all voices, much repetition of words and music, and a major key for preference’. The poverty of this music was intensified by its repetition at each point in the mass.¹¹⁴ A non-liturgical example might be the widely-used version of ‘St Francis’s Prayer for Peace’ where the dynamic implications of what is being said are obscured and lessened by a setting where ‘peace’ is translated into a melodic line characterised by repetitions of the same note and where virtually every line of the text is set to an identical rhythm,¹¹⁵ a setting which suggests that peace is no more than a lack of disturbance.

The recovery of the lament

What is being argued is that music’s service of the liturgy requires it to express the full range of understanding and feeling that is endemic in the liturgy. The final ‘point of reference’ in the first *Universa Laus* report captures this high task.

The demands made by Christian ritual music spring from the ultimate goal of this music, which is to make manifest and make real a new humanity in the risen Jesus Christ. Its truth, worth, and grace are not only measured by its capacity to arouse active participation, nor by its aesthetic cultural value, nor by its popular success, but because it allows believers to cry out the Kyrie

¹¹⁴ Evelyn Stell, ‘Vatican II and Catholic Parish Music: A Personal View’, *Different Voices*, No. 3, Candlemas 2009, 12.

¹¹⁵ Sebastian Temple, ‘Make me a channel of your peace’, *Songs of God’s People* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 76.

eleisons of the oppressed, to sing the Alleluias of those restored to life, and to uphold the Maranatha of the faithful in the hope of the coming of the Kingdom.¹¹⁶

The inclusion of the 'Kyrie eleisons of the oppressed' recalls Harnoncourt's critique that in the present day complaint is almost silenced in Christian song in the present day,¹¹⁷ and people are left with the impression that the Christian faith no longer has roots in the totality of human experience. John Bell and others have argued that there is a responsibility laid upon the church fully to acknowledge, and give people words for, the tragedy and disaster which is part of today's world. Bell writes, 'Not to deal with the depths of life in the writing of music is to court shallowness in the composer and to disenfranchise the congregation or listeners from that which makes life rich and real'.¹¹⁸ Here is one reason for delving more deeply into the book of Psalms whose range of feeling and emotion, which does not balk at naming and facing the worst in human experience, offers permission and encouragement to write new texts that bring before God all the distress and despair of daily life, in worship that is genuine and wrestles in prayer for the world. Perhaps also there is need to take account of music which, in secular contexts, expresses lament or protest, to see how its forms may translate to liturgical use. The need to give room for lament in liturgy challenges, also, local churches whose music and song consists entirely of exhortation and praise, where there is danger of drowning the cries of the voiceless and the dispossessed.

The week-day life of the congregation

It would be true to say that in a local congregation the role of music director and musicians is usually understood as pertaining exclusively to Sunday worship. However, the life of a congregation, if not its growth and development, takes place just as much in the various groupings, age-related or interest-based, which meet on other days. A musical policy which serves all groups may not only enhance their quality but result in the identification and harvesting of talent for the benefit of Sunday worship. Such a policy may also widen the interest and enjoyment of belonging to a choir (and help recruitment)

¹¹⁶ Duchesneau and Veuthey, *Music and Liturgy*, 26, para.10.1.

¹¹⁷ Philipp Harnoncourt, 'The Anthropological and Liturgical-Theological Foundations of Music', 24-25.

¹¹⁸ John L. Bell, 'Music and Worship', given at the Joint Liturgical Group Sarum Conference, September, 1996.

when there is opportunity to contribute to wider church events with music which is outside the normal Sunday requirement, music in a variety of secular idioms perhaps.¹¹⁹ In modules of the Certificate in Sacred Music Studies offered by Bangor University in conjunction with the Royal School of Church Music, possibilities of this kind are explored in more detail. Such initiatives will take time and make demands on musicians, but it is suggested that this is something the church's musicians cannot afford not to do.¹²⁰

Music in mission and service

Mark Bangert has noted how in certain cultures the music leader has to be 'attentive to the social processes surrounding the musical event',¹²¹ a stance he finds suggestive for Western church musicians. To embrace in such a way the life out of which music comes, the life of the local community in which a particular church is set, would lead to a greater engagement between the church and society. Many find their only opportunity for developing their musical skills and their enjoyment of music in the local church. In previous centuries, it was the local choral unions, often church-inspired, or the church choirs expanded to put on oratorios, that provided the occasion for people to come together for the making of music. In some circumstances now as then, the church musician may be the only person who can offer musical leadership and expertise for wider community ventures which are not faith-based. One way of understanding diaconate is that it both represents the church to the world and the world to the church. The diaconal musician therefore, as well as contributing to the personal, even spiritual, development of those who have been beyond the reach of the church, could become a conduit for musical talent in the community to enrich the church.

There is much concern today that choirs are not being able to recruit sufficient people to replace those whose contribution is ending. Many congregations have had to reduce the

¹¹⁹ Scottish psalters of the 18th and 19th centuries sometimes had glees and catches bound in with the psalms.

¹²⁰ Bangor University/RSCM Certificate in Sacred Music Studies, *Music in Worship II*, WSM 1024, Workbook Two, 56-57.

¹²¹ Mark P. Bangert, 'Liturgical Music, Culturally Tuned', in Leaver and Zimmerman, eds., *Liturgy and Music*, 380.

scope of their music-making, and thus the breadth of worship that the congregation is enabled to offer, because of shortage of voices or lack of expertise. One claim often heard in the churches is that people do not want to commit any longer to singing in choirs. It has nevertheless been possible to base a television series on a nation-wide movement of choral singing in various styles, while much publicity has been given to various projects, in this country and abroad, by which young people in areas of deprivation have found they have gifts of voice which have transformed their lives and their outlook. In Scotland, the National Youth Choir of Scotland (NYCoS) has local 'chapters' the length and breadth of the country, from mothers' and toddlers' groups onwards.¹²² Some local choirs even use church halls for practice but no connection is made with the music of the church. Many of these would welcome opportunities to sing, at services or special seasons, whether there is a resident church choir or not. The local church is in a good position to take the initiative. Cross-fertilisation could occur and lead to the strengthening of the church's own musical resources. There are examples of churches which themselves have started a 'community choir' with a mainly secular repertoire with the purpose of promoting the enjoyment of singing in their local area.¹²³

The quality of the church's worship may also benefit. Worship seeks to bring the world before God in impassioned prayer; our Kyries and Alleluias are bedded in the real world and coloured by the times we are in. Music in such a wider community dimension may be able to act as a channel to enrich the worship of the people of God and render it more open and inviting to those for whom at the moment it does not seem to offer them what they need. In this way, the diaconal musician may be breaking new ground for mission.

Music in the service of the Kingdom

This aspect of the diaconal role of the church's music and musicians impact on the matters under discussion in two ways. The first is both an illustration and an extension of the church's mission and service in the local community which has just been explored. Two of the case studies, discussed below in chapter 7, report initiatives in which church-

¹²² See Susan Wilson, 'There's no F in singing, is there?' *Different Voices*, Issue 4, Whitsun 2009, 2-5.

¹²³ Colinton Parish Church, Edinburgh, described in chapter 8, is one such.

based musicians engaged with local groups on the fringe of or outside the church in the context of the issues being faced in contemporary society. Here, the Kingdom promises of justice, acceptance and reconciliation were being discovered, not as good ideas, but as physical embodiment through participation in community by musical means, while the development of individual talent brought a sense of worth and a place in society for some whose voice was not being heard. In discussing this outreach to the wider community, the Bangor / RSCM course mentioned above notes how arts funding bodies encourage professional ensembles, orchestras and choirs to engage in music education and community projects and how community musicians are employed to establish musical activity in a local community.¹²⁴

Secondly, the quite different matter of musical quality is raised, as it was in the discussion of music in the service of the liturgy. Is it possible for liturgical music to convey less than is required of it in a weekly event in which the future promise is grasped as affecting the present? One might say that worship is a succession of 'Kingdom-bearing' moments: a Word-borne 'moment of truth' may engender fresh conviction and be recognised as having ramifications beyond immediate experience as the worshipper glimpses a possible change in the predictable pattern of events; or the experience of sharing in Communion may bring a new momentary grasp of love that opens possibilities of new opportunities for loving actions, felt not as a passing emotion but a structure in which reconciliation might take place. Recalling Begbie, the corresponding quality in the music would be the skill with which the composer handles the 'partial fulfilments' that are part and parcel of the music, having immediate impact but promising more to come.¹²⁵ Much music written for the church today lacks this ability to wait and reach towards a more complete fulfilment but instead drives towards instant satisfaction. Lack of movement or exploration or tension, absence of modulation, a melody that follows the path of least resistance – these play only on the readiest of emotions and underline the predictable. The sense of the not-yet is absent.

¹²⁴ See note 120.

¹²⁵ Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 106ff.

On questions of strategy, this broad sweep which embraces time and beyond time may challenge the sometimes hand-to-mouth approach of our church planning. John Harper comments that compared with the faith of medieval builders, much that we do is very short term. We expect results very quickly, and when they do not appear, we make further changes. He cites a non-musical example of the plans and projects today which are aimed at the renewal of the church and which seem to come in relatively swift succession. Musically speaking, he suggests, we may be investing too much of our effort in present concerns and the very immediate future without sufficient attention to the medium and long term. Some of the present problems facing the church, church music and church musicians have been exacerbated by an earlier unwillingness to look further into the future.¹²⁶

2.5 A Diverse Community

Defining factors

The valuing of diversity which has characterised recent ecumenical dialogue is as relevant to the day-to-day life of the church as it is to doctrinal debate. For Paul, struggling with the potentially destructive effect of the diverse giftedness of the emerging churches, the starting point was unity in Christ. To write, 'all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ',¹²⁷ is not to focus on the difference but the unity. If you have one, there must also be many. The unity of the body of Christ is never a conclusion from diversity. The diversity is one that derives from the pre-existing nature of the unity as organic – it is not a diversity which has to discover or to be made into a unity.¹²⁸ The image is not of a body in which each has a role which must not be trespassed upon by others, a body which is closed against all comers to preserve its identity, but one characterised by a dynamic which flows between its members and which is kept from settling into a rigid shape by the continual renewal brought to bear through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Harper, 'Throughout All Generations', 6.

¹²⁷ 1 Corinthians 12:12.

¹²⁸ John A.T. Robinson, *The Body: a Study in Pauline Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1972), 96.

¹²⁹ Above, page 148.

The church's music can bring home the reality of difference. It is a difference which not only can cause division at the heart of the local worshipping community, but also polarise opinion across the church as leaders, commentators and councils struggle to reconcile the local cultural expressions with the flow of the tradition, or seek ways of enabling what has been handed down to be enriched by what is happening now, or of blending personal preference with common standards. The given-ness of unity in the *koinonia* is enriched by difference, but there is a point when diversity overturns unity. The import of Paul's teaching is that this is not necessarily when it begins to hurt us, and that we must seek to know when to embrace difference and when to seek reconciliation. In a sense, this fifth dimension of *koinonia*, the many within the one, draws together all the others and to explore this is to recall and continue aspects of the church and its music which have already been discussed.

Resources from musicology

Musicology's recent history has seen a broadening of the horizons as to what is acceptable within the field of study. The 'flattening of the cultural field' has blurred distinctions between 'high' art and popular culture,¹³⁰ and has expanded the musicological task beyond the art music of social elites to embrace popular and vernacular music, the oral as well as the written, and the music of other cultures. Musicologists like Graham Vulliamy have countered a common view that a 'high' musical culture has a varied palette and able to discriminate and evaluate, while 'popular' culture, homogenous and manipulated by the market, is beyond the reach of questions of quality. Vulliamy points out that music in the latter category comes from somewhere and can answer to its own alternative musical criteria.¹³¹ Richard Middleton shows how popular styles may be assemblages of elements from a variety of sources, which can be prised open and the elements rearticulated in different contexts (and therefore, we might conclude, susceptible to critique).¹³² We have noted also Theodor Adorno's suggestion,

¹³⁰ Beard and Gloag, *Musicology*, 143.

¹³¹ Graham Vulliamy, 'On Music and the Idea of Mass Culture', in Scott, ed., *Music, Culture and Society*, 152f.

¹³² Richard Middleton, 'On Articulating the Popular', in Scott, ed., *Music, Culture and Society*, 137f.

writing about popular music but also more generally, that the originating context or purpose of music may not in fact be co-terminous with its 'truth content' and contain messages that the user prefers to avoid,¹³³ and Scott's claim that music's social function may 'diverge from the social meaning it embodies'.¹³⁴ These views suggest that popular, folk and cultural styles of music are worth attention but are no less open to scrutiny than the music that traditionally has been the main concern of musicologists.

Of interest also in a discussion about diversity is Rice's identification of four 'metaphors' which assist our listening to music. Where those authors we have just cited help establish that diversity is legitimate, Rice here is offering a pathway by which unity out of diversity may be sought in that these metaphors identify a stance which is both particular to one group but from which it might be possible to hear also what others hear. Where before these metaphors were described as they arose from Rice's own research,¹³⁵ here connections are suggested with particular musical stances within the church. His *music-is-art metaphor* would find favour with the Snowbird authors and the supporters of Musica Sacra, and is increasingly being emphasised in more recent papal pronouncements. The *music-as-emotional-expression metaphor* would be held in high importance by charismatic worshippers and those who seek immediacy and accessibility, while the *music-as-social-behaviour metaphor* connects with the emphasis on the assembly. The *music-as-commodity metaphor* may also have relevance here with its reference to market-driven music, a quality that in some church contexts would be valued as opening up access to new 'markets' for the gospel – and indeed there is much 'worship music' which is disseminated in the same way. To acknowledge that music may be approached through the lenses of these varied metaphors, and that one single piece of music may be approachable in more than one way, may have a unifying effect in situations where acceptance of other positions has been difficult to achieve. What we might observe, however, is that different metaphors can be driven by preferences which are difficult to rise above, and what we seek are ways of enabling people to do just this and to entertain other approaches along with their own. Where Rice may assist this

¹³³ Theodor Adorno, 'On Classes and Strata', in Scott, ed., *Music, Culture and Society*, 115-116.

¹³⁴ Scott, *ibid.*, 118f.

¹³⁵ Above, page 163.

movement is when he suggests that it is not desirable to select one metaphor to the exclusion of the others. It could be but a short distance from ‘This is my metaphor and that is yours’ to ‘Different metaphors enable us together to hear different things being expressed simultaneously in the music’.

Other insights and proposals

In some ways, this dimension leads us to the nub of the matter – the opportunity to be ‘astonished with diversity’,¹³⁶ to see difference as a gift rather than a threat, and to be able to learn from the distinctiveness of the other. At the same time, there is something real behind the fears with which many face the burgeoning diversity in the music being offered to the church. At what point does difference become destructive of the unity – the communion – that is the foundational quality of the *koinonia*? How do we ensure that the ‘many’ are bedded in the ‘one’ and, in Zizioulas’s words, that ‘all diversity ... pass through a ministry of unity’?¹³⁷ It is this concern that lies behind the various calls for criteria for judging the worth or suitability of particular genres and compositions. This has been expressed inclusively (as when Milwaukee deems a work acceptable when it can be shown to be musically good, liturgically appropriate, and pastorally sound), while others would privilege musical quality, believing that such an objective appraisal would lead to these other criteria being met.¹³⁸

Certain authors, as we have seen, believe that this debate can only be carried out – and resolved sufficiently to enable working relationships in particular localities – where a process of discernment is put in place. One of these is Frank Burch Brown, who advocates the development of an ‘ecumenical taste’, believing that there is no centralised global solution.¹³⁹ Finding both the Milwaukee and the Snowbird approaches flawed, Brown, instead of pursuing criteria applicable in all situations, outlines a process designed to assist people to encompass communally a diversity of taste, albeit in a discerning and discriminating way. The result would be a mingling of diverse styles and

¹³⁶ Best and Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, 24, para.21.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 106-107.

¹³⁸ See, for example, the Milwaukee and Snowbird reports, above, pages 61ff.

¹³⁹ Brown, *Good Taste, Bad Taste and Christian Taste*, chapter 6 passim.

voices within a whole act of worship that achieves its own kind of integrity, always realising that in 'blended' worship there will be some things which will not blend. This requires not simply attention to music or people's preferences, but the development of neighbour-love.

It is certainly possible to see local processes of discernment as part of a solution, but the church is 'one' just as it is hoped its local expressions will be. In liturgy and music, as in doctrine, there is a requirement that we express and model that unity and reconciliation globally as well as locally. The two cannot be separated. One of the most constructive ways of approaching this issue in recent dialogue has been, not so much to measure doctrinal statements against each other (this far is creative, this far too much) but to contrast the 'local' with the 'universal', acknowledging that much of the diversity which has become part of the texture of church life derives from localised developments, historically and culturally, and to ask what is the correct balance between the two. In this regard, a promising suggestion has been made by Gordon Lathrop, arising from his work in liturgical ecclesiology.

Lathrop seeks to address the question of the limits of diversity by defining what is the right relationship of the local church (which term is used also to refer to denominations engaged in ecumenical dialogue) to the church catholic. Unity is to be found in the deeper patterns underlying the diversity but also in the gifts that churches give to each other, and his list of examples of traditions and practices and mutual admonishment contains 'songs, hymns, and other music as a mode for all the gatherings of the assembly'.¹⁴⁰ However, 'we do indeed break *koinonia* when untransformed local customs or particular, time-bound customs, come to take required central place, pushing aside the primacy of those things which, in the power of the Spirit, gather us into Christ and so before the face of God'.¹⁴¹

To give full value to the culture- and time-bound while at the same time acknowledging

¹⁴⁰ Lathrop, *Holy People*, 58.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 129-130.

the need for a universality which corresponds to the catholicity of the church, Lathrop proposes the categories of 'local' and 'more-than-local'. Taking the example of images, music and the remembrance of the saints, he proposes:

The locally powerful image is, in the iconostasis or the arrangement of images, both welcomed and disciplined to the central purposes of the *ordo*. The memory of the locally powerful hero is juxtaposed and subordinated to the sacramental memory of Christ. The locally powerful music is turned to Christian purpose, often by being juxtaposed to at least one other style of music, of wider provenance, always by bringing its power to *serve* (as must happen with any *power* in Christian use) an assembly gathered around the central things. When images, saints or music – or, indeed, other features of local power: sexual identity, national aspirations, clan or group spirit – are not so disciplined, the health of the local assembly is seriously impaired and *koinonia* with other assemblies is made difficult or impossible.¹⁴²

The question to be asked is what are the musical processes by which music which starts life as purely culturally-conditioned, purely 'local', can become part of the 'more-than-local'? Lathrop himself suggests two qualities in music which fully serves the common worship of the church. One is that it is transformed by its role as serving the liturgical assembly. The other is that it contains, or consists of, the particular local idiom in juxtaposition with 'music of wider provenance'. Thus we may recognise within a particular contemporary composition enough of that music which, through its use to date (through centuries perhaps), has become indissolubly part of the liturgy, and by welcoming this renew the liturgical event in the new context of this day and among these people. But we also seek the authenticity within the music which arises from its being a genuine expression of this particular people at this time.

Virgil Funk's approach through 'codes' provides an illustration of what such music might sound like in practice.¹⁴³ His suggestion for creating music acceptable for use in contemporary liturgy is to 'mask' and 'mix' codes, with the result that a composition can unite contemporary style and religious tradition, citing as an example J. S. Bach's transformation of the secular tunes used as chorale melodies. Funk cites favourably the

¹⁴² Ibid., 79-80.

¹⁴³ Virgil C. Funk. 'Secular Music in the Liturgy? Are There Any Rules?'. *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No.2, 185ff.

work of contemporary American composers such as Joncas, Peloquin, Proulx and Haugen. Duchesneau in the French tradition identifies Akepsimas, Gelineau, Deiss, Rimaud and Berthier as writing liturgical song that can be 'read' as both liturgical and recognisable to the modern ear at the same time.¹⁴⁴ Some of John Bell's work might provide other examples. Another example of masking could be the rearrangements of worship songs in publications from the RSCM, where harmonies, the way the music is set out between voices, and styles of accompaniment, are altered in such a way as to acknowledge the wider norms in liturgical writing – 'more-than-local'.¹⁴⁵

A striking attempt at providing contemporary liturgical music which at one and the same time affirms its own cultural context while clearly belonging in the tradition of writing for the Christian liturgy is found in the popular mass settings of James MacMillan,¹⁴⁶ written in response to a request from the Roman Catholic Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway.¹⁴⁷ The resulting Galloway and St. Anne's masses are recognisably by one whose music is well-known in the contemporary concert hall and opera house and who has written a substantial mass for Westminster Cathedral and an anthem for the enthronement of the present Archbishop of Canterbury, but combined with this is material which comes directly from Scotland's heritage of song and instrumental music. The ornamentation characteristic of the pibroch is found in the organ introduction to the Kyrie of the *Galloway Mass*:



James MacMillan, *Galloway Mass*, Kyrie eleison © Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd.

¹⁴⁴ Claude Duchesneau. 'Liturgical Song and Song Collections for the Liturgy in the Francophone World'. *Studia Liturgica*, Vol.28 (1998), No.2, 138-140.

¹⁴⁵ For example: William Llewellyn, ed., *Sing With All My Soul* (Croydon: Royal School of Church Music, 1992).

¹⁴⁶ These are published by Boosey and Hawkes. Excerpts from the *St. Anne Mass* can be found in *CH4/HGSP* (Canterbury Press, 2005) at numbers 648, 651, and 653. The Kyrie and Agnus Dei are in *Common Ground* (Saint Andrew Press, 1994) at numbers 70 and 3 respectively.

¹⁴⁷ Until the recent replacements, the Bishop was Chair of the RC International Commission for English in the Liturgy (ICEL).

In the setting of ‘Lord, have mercy’, the people answer the cantor in a phrase which echoes the pentatonic scale characteristic of much Scottish folk music. Freshness is brought to this form, and to the music, when in the third repetition the congregation do not slavishly copy the cantor’s phrase but answer in one of their own, suggesting that the people have their own voice. Another feature is in bar 3 where the characteristic ‘Scotch snap’ connects the singer with his/her heritage of song. A third feature is an echo of the way a great many Scottish dance tunes migrate back and forth between two adjacent key centres without modulation (bar 4). The same device may be detected in the mass settings by Robert Carver.



James MacMillan, *Galloway Mass*, Kyrie eleison © Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd.

A further example of references to Scottish melodic shapes is in the Sanctus and Benedictus Qui Venit of the *St. Anne’s Mass*, with its characteristic leaps of a seventh and its cadential drops from the tonic above (bar 6). At the same time, this is no quote from any one melody nor a direct incorporation of phrases but a reworking of these characteristics into a new form and given new relationships with both text and accompaniment. The result is music which ‘sits well’ with a particular constituency yet is recognisably a fresh contribution to the liturgy from within inherited musical traditions. It is an example of the local meeting the more-than-local.



James MacMillan, *St Anne’s Mass*, Sanctus © Boosey and Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd.

How successfully are the ‘local’ and the ‘more-than-local’ combined in these mass settings? What they do is to enable one particular constituency (a Scottish one) to sing in a recognisable liturgical style while affirming their own cultural context. These masses’

popularity across the local churches and with people of varied musical preferences makes them a possible choice in place of accessible settings with little merit. Nevertheless, the compilers of *Music for Common Worship*¹⁴⁸ did not include these settings, feeling that they were, on balance, too 'local' and too redolent of particular musical idioms which would be familiar to users in England as belonging to another culture than their own. One conclusion from this circumstance may be that cultural idioms need to be more 'coded' (to use Funk's term) than they are in this example. Another might suggest the need for a certain flexibility on Lathrop's line between the local and the more-than-local where particular cultural idioms, locally unremarkable because they are a familiar part of the soundscape, can still, for that culture, point beyond the culture to the fullness of worship shared by the whole church together.

2.6 An analytical approach

There is, however, a third possible conclusion, and that is that the local/more-than-local test needs to be used along with other evaluative processes before more confident assessment can be made. In the course of the musicological survey, the work of Lawrence Kramer had been of interest, with its approach to music as a cultural practice where diversity of interpretation was possible. Meaning was found in music through the medium of the discourses which surrounded it. The 'web of interpretants' proposed by Jean-Jacques Nattiez was also of interest, as is the related assertion that the narrative is not in the music, but in a 'plot imagined and constructed by the listeners from functional objects'. Music is not in itself a narrative but 'the structural analysis in music of an absent narrative'.¹⁴⁹ (There are here echoes of Rice's process of intertextuality, iconicity, etc., which finds in other objects and values that which enables music's meaning to emerge.¹⁵⁰) Clarification may be found for a way forward from the debate which took place between Kramer and Gary Tomlinson when the latter took issue with Kramer's attempt to create a context from which to read the content of music, seeking similar

¹⁴⁸ John Harper, ed., *Music for Common Worship*. See footnote 50. This information was conveyed in a personal communication.

¹⁴⁹ Beard and Gloag, *Musicology*, 116.

¹⁵⁰ Above, page 165.

discursive practices in the language and syntax of the music. For Tomlinson, to fall back on conventional methods of analysis was modernist and reactionary.

This thesis, however, has constructed an ecclesiological ‘discourse’ from study of the New Testament image of *koinonia*, and has sought methods of reading the meaning of music in relation to the dimensions of *koinonia* that have emerged in the study. Kramer’s method offers promise in that it suggests that it is possible to identify through musical analysis patterns and practices which correspond to these ecclesiological narratives. In attempting this, the study accepts the approach to interpretation that has moved from positivistic readings of musical works themselves and recognises that multiple readings of single pieces of music will be the norm in a church context. What is not accepted is that the matter ends there. Questions remain not only as to whether meaning is purely subjective but also to what musical and liturgical utterance people – and the church – have still to aspire to. The study then sympathises with the embracing of a wider range of idioms and genres in liturgical music, recognising that along with this there is affirmation and inclusion of people who were either absent or silent; but it also agrees with the Snowbird conferees that there are ‘touching places’ which can bind the best of music’s art with the fullness of the church’s worship.

In spite of the thoroughness of Willem Speelman’s approach,¹⁵¹ when hymn and liturgical texts and melodies were semiotically analysed to gauge their suitability for each other, there were limitations in that results were confined to how far the ‘signifier’ corresponded with the ‘signified’. The process is less concerned with what the signs ‘say’, and concentrates instead on their internal relations to one another.¹⁵² To seek to apply wider discourses to music, a more conventional approach to analysis is required. This section concludes by testing (albeit briefly) the possibility that the several criteria that have emerged in the course of this chapter might be ‘readable’ in musical terms. In so doing, we recall also Martin Clayton’s caveat that, while being open to a wide range of interpretations, there should be kept a place for semiotic analysis as a final touchstone for

¹⁵¹ Above, page 176ff.

¹⁵² Beard and Gloag, *Musicology*, 168.

calling the imagination to order; indeed, in his embracing of the idea of ‘affordances’ which we scan seeking patterns from which we can make sense, this itself could be seen as an affordance, available similarly for the making of sense.¹⁵³ The purpose is to augment and ‘ground’ other criteria that have been so far identified.

In so doing, however, a door is only being opened a very little way. To apply the discourses uncovered in the foregoing would be a considerable exercise and would require a fresh study. To limit the exercise, the Kyrie of the *Galloway Mass* by James MacMillan already referred to will be taken as the only illustrative material. Each of the five dimensions of *koinonia* are now listed followed by notes about the music that bear relationship to the discussion that accompanied each dimension above.

A eucharistic community

Under that head was discussed characteristics of the music which might be experienced as opening the performer or receiver to the presence of the ‘Other’ in the worshipping assembly. This movement has a modal feel, suggesting the ecclesiastical modes. Like folk song, some of whose characteristics were also affirmed in that section as suggestive of reverence and an awareness of the beyond, it uses a gapped scale, the F always missing in the vocal line (bars 1, 9-11 etc.). There is sonority also in the fullness of the chordal accompaniment (bars 13-15, 21-23 etc.). ‘Archaic’ references are the held bass notes (bars 9-13, 16-21) and the open fifth at the final cadence (bar 41) and elsewhere (bars 9, 13 etc.)

A relational community

The dialogue shape of the setting is required by liturgical practice but that does not alter that fact that to participate in this music is to experience the offering and the receiving that the form of the music suggests. There is also the added relational aspect of singers and organ – an instrument that is most likely spatially distinct, and has both the first and last ‘word’ in the music.

¹⁵³ Above, page 163.

KYRIE ELEISON

The musical score for 'KYRIE ELEISON' is written in 3/4 time. It features two main parts: 'Cantor' and 'All'. The lyrics are: 'Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.' The score is divided into measures, with bar numbers 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, and 40 marked. The Cantor part is written in a single staff, while the All part is written in a single staff. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score includes a variety of musical notation, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p.' (piano). The Cantor part begins with a melodic phrase, followed by the All part. The Cantor part then repeats the phrase, and the All part follows. The Cantor part ends with a final phrase, and the All part follows. The score is a single system, with the Cantor part and All part written on separate staves. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score includes a variety of musical notation, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p.' (piano). The Cantor part begins with a melodic phrase, followed by the All part. The Cantor part then repeats the phrase, and the All part follows. The Cantor part ends with a final phrase, and the All part follows.

A community growing to maturity in Christ

The responses of the people in the first two exchanges repeat exactly the text and melody sung by the cantor. However, at the final ‘Lord, have mercy’ the people are given their own melody (bars 29-33), given more to learn, offered their own voice rather than be dependent on others. It is a refreshing touch in a movement where it would normally be the case that the cantor laid down the pattern of the response.

A diaconal community

The earlier discussion reviewed the role of music in respect of text, ritual and liturgy as a whole. Here the choice of mode, the sonorous, almost abrasive, harmonies (e.g. bars 11-12, 21-24) which suggest the struggle and difficulty of fallen human life, and the unexpected C sharp in the bass at the second response which intensifies the cry (bar 23), clothe this text in such a way as to provoke further reflection as it is sung.

A diverse community

Already referred to are those touches which site the music in the Scottish cultural context, the ornamentation typical of bagpipe music in bar 5, the 'Scotch snaps' (bars 11, 15, etc.) and the characteristic resting on the key whose tonic is a tone below the home key (bars 12 etc.). In this particular movement, the characteristic drop of a seventh or sixth of many Scottish melodies is not so prominent as other movements in this and the *St. Anne's Mass*, but this may be detected at bars 6 and 38. These cultural distinctions may communicate the 'local' within the more-than-local; elsewhere they may signal the 'diverse' community of the church at large, as a church outside Scotland sings 'someone else's' music – a sharing in that diversity.

These brief observations indicate ways in which a discourse based in ecclesiology, and therefore in the church which offers worship, might assist in the discussion, discernment, choice and evaluation of the music in which it is clothed.

3 CONCLUSION

As was noted at the end of chapter 4, the use of *koinonia* in relation to the nature, understanding and use of music in liturgy (including creation, selection and performance) transcends many of the surface realities which can beset music in church, instead reaching to the core of what it is to be part of church – and of church singing to and with the Godhead. Yet much of the available writings about music in worship (including reports

and documents as well as articles and books) is preoccupied with issues of style, taste and practicality. There is, therefore, a gap between the potential development and application of new criteria derived from the fusion of theological (and more specifically, ecclesiological) and musicological thinking and the current literature. This chapter has only gone part of the way to address this gap. Furthermore, in referring to only a small sample of liturgical song in which all might participate, it is only too apparent how much further work there is to undertake in order to provide a workable toolkit to enable local churches to evaluate the musical repertory they already have, and to discern what they might introduce, in the context of their life and worship together as church informed by the dimensions of *koinonia*. The final example from MacMillan's *Galloway Mass* points the way such a local church discussion might proceed (albeit with less technical language).

Since the intention of this thesis is to work towards such an applied and practicable end, it is important to recognise these difficulties, and the consequent limitations of what can be achieved here, but not to be bowed down by them. By working with what we have and where we are, rather than simply idealising where we might be, it is possible to work towards a rootedness which does not ignore the constraints of the present condition of church, liturgy and music for liturgy, but seeks to discern the signs of *koinonia* in recent and current projects and practice. This is the principal intention of the next two chapters.

PART THREE

Chapters 7 - 9

THE CONTEXT OF PART THREE

In Part One of this thesis, there was a full examination of recent and current writing about music in worship, and of relevant theological, ecclesiological and musicological literature and thinking. Central to this was the exposition of five dimensions of *koinonia* in Chapter 4, section 4. The core of the thesis was found in Part Two, consisting of Chapter 6, in which the five dimensions of *koinonia* were explored and applied to liturgical music. As intellectual investigation, it could be argued that the thesis is now complete. However, that would be to miss the connection with *praxis*, which is central to the purpose of this research project and underpins Part Three which follows here.

Part Three is therefore concerned with the application of the thesis. This is pursued in three ways. First, there is reflection on the past, and specifically on three different situations in which the author was directly or indirectly involved, and where the significant relationship of *koinonia* and music can be discerned. This reflective process is followed by investigation and observation of the potential for the application of the outcomes of the thesis in the present, in relation to two contrasting local churches. Finally, there is a preliminary outline for a resource which would allow all the members of the church (whatever their musical or theological strengths or weaknesses) to have a mature, shared discourse about music and worship based not on taste or stylistic preference but on a sound foundation of ecclesiology and *koinonia*.

7

THREE CASE STUDIES

I

The Church Hymnary: Third and Fourth Editions
A comparison of editorial principles

1. CHURCH HYMNARY: THIRD EDITION

1.1 Antecedents

The *Church Hymnary: Third Edition* (CH3)¹ was published in 1973 and the *Fourth Edition* (CH4)² in 2005. These were part of a sequence of publications of the same name dating back to 1898. The first acted as the official hymn book of Presbyterianism in Scotland and Ireland, while the second expanded to include the Presbyterian denominations in England, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. As time has gone on, however, some of these churches have brought out their own books. By the time of CH4, only the Assemblies of the Church of Scotland and of the smaller continuing United Free Church, which did not join in the major union of 1929,³ appointed representatives to serve on the Revision Committee.

Notable was the second in the series, the *Revised Church Hymnary* of 1927.⁴ This book itself represented a considerable advance on what had gone before and was very influential in the Presbyterian Churches at a time of buoyancy. Thomas Marjoribanks notes certain features that distinguished this collection from its predecessors. One was the revived emphasis on hymns of pure praise and adoration (as opposed to introspective, subjective explorations of the individual soul). There was an enrichment of provision for the Christmas and the Easter seasons (Scotland was then still moving from a position in which the Christian Year had not been developed in liturgical practice in spite of the fact that scholarly leadership in the English-speaking world

¹ *Church Hymnary: Third Edition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

² *Church Hymnary Fourth Edition* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2005). This was republished in 2008 under the title, *Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise*.

³ Of the then two 'halves' of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, one of these being the Established Church, the other representing the result of unions following earlier schisms.

⁴ *Revised Church Hymnary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927).

was about to be given by an Edinburgh minister),⁵ including a hymn to accompany each of the seven last words from the Cross. There was a new emphasis on the social mission of the church (George Matheson⁶ is quoted as saying that hymns will never be what they ought to be 'until we get them inspired by a sense of the enthusiasm of, and for, humanity'). Some thirty hymns based on psalms had been included (in addition to the complete psalter which was used alongside it). The book was expressive of the wideness of Christian tradition, with only three centuries not represented (the tenth, eleventh and fourteenth). Finally, the book avoided the segregation of children's hymns into one section, partly in acknowledgement of the fact that the line between children's and adults' hymns was very difficult to draw and partly as a result of the view that it was important to familiarise children with hymns likely to be of value to them in later years.⁷

The General Assembly of 1963 heard of a 'growing desire' in the Church for a new hymn book to replace the *Revised Church Hymnary*. In its report, the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion gave its opinion that 'some sections of the book are in need of revision, both because they are weak in themselves and also because it is necessary to bring them more in touch with current liturgical and devotional thinking in the Church'.⁸ The Committee also expressed a desire to survey any available new hymns and to review the music. The suggestion that a supplement might be issued containing a selection of hymns designed to strengthen the weaker sections of the existing book did not commend itself, since it would merely postpone the preparation of a new hymnary. Throughout the process, the Committee reported each year to the Assemblies involved, listing the proposed content and receiving comments.⁹

Work on the projected new edition began that year. The forty-eight member revision committee was made up of appointees from the Irish, English and Welsh Presbyterian

⁵ Allan McArthur, *The Evolution of the Christian Year* (London: SCM Press, 1953).

⁶ The Scottish author of 'O Love that wilt not let me go'.

⁷ Thomas Marjoribanks, 'The Revised Church Hymnary', *Church Service Society Annual* No. 1, 1928-9, 67-74.

⁸ Reports to the General Assembly 1963, page 571. Report of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion.

⁹ A. S. Todd reports that one year the title 'Go, happy soul' by a printer's error appeared not as the first item in the list of funeral hymns but as the last of the wedding hymns.

Churches, the United Free Church of Scotland, and the Church of Scotland. The Convener was a Church of Scotland minister and musician, the Rev. Dr. Tom Keir. One member, Rev. Dr. Archie Craig, had served on the *RCH* revision committee.¹⁰ The main committee was divided into smaller groups, including a music committee, and it is relevant to note that these came from situations where music was most developed. It consisted of Stewart Todd, subsequently minister of St. Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen,¹¹ Ian Pitt-Watson, minister of Scotland's largest congregation (located in Bearsden, a well-to-do suburb of Glasgow) and later Professor of Practical Theology in the University of Aberdeen, Stuart Loudon, minister of the historic city centre Greyfriars' Kirk in Edinburgh, the Convener (to whom reference has been made), Ian Barrie, organist of the Barony of Glasgow, and Davidson Kelly, a lawyer and secretary of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion. All of these were from the Church of Scotland. Of these, Keir, Loudon and Pitt-Watson regularly delivered a course of ten lectures to candidates for the ministry (examined) in each of the four divinity faculties.

Whereas the *Revised Church Hymnary* had one music editor who, it was felt, had included too many of his own tunes and arrangements, the music editing of the new book was assisted by a panel of music consultants notable in the fields of both secular and sacred music-making. The music editor of *RCH* had been a Welsh Presbyterian and therefore part of the constituency for the book, but the music editors of most of the earlier books in all three denominations had been English and, usually, Anglican. By contrast, the new panel were all active in Scottish music, and marked a new confidence in national culture. They were Kenneth Leighton, later Reid Professor of Music in the University of Edinburgh, Herrick Bunney, director of music at St. Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh and of national (including English) choirs, John Currie of the music department of the University of Glasgow and subsequently director of the John Currie Singers, David Murray, director of music at St. Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen,

¹⁰ Craig was a noted ecumenist (Secretary of the British Council of Churches), university chaplain and lecturer, and a former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland - and the first Moderator to visit the Pope. His biography was written by Scottish theologian, Elizabeth Templeton, *God's February: A Life of Archie Craig 1888-1985* (London: British Council of Churches/Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, 1991). When a member would say, 'People will never sing this', Craig was able to counter this with, 'Ah, but that's what some on the *RCH* committee said about *Sine Nomine*'.

¹¹ Todd had been instrumental in mounting an early performance of Noye's Fludde while minister of the historic North Leith parish church in Edinburgh.

and an educationalist, and Guthrie Foote of Oxford University Press, their publishers. These drew on other leading church musicians as arrangers, such as George McPhee of Paisley Abbey and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Kenneth Elliott, a scholar of early Scottish music, of the University of Glasgow, and Peter Naylor, also of the of the RSAMD. This list reflected another characteristic of the contemporary scene in Scotland, the resurgence of study of Scotland's own earlier music. Prominent scholars were Elliott himself, Helena Mennie Shire, and Isobel Woods Preece.¹² Occasionally, the book had the appearance of a scholarly edition, when for example Elliott's editing of the Scottish composer David Peebles' setting of the Genevan Psalter's 'Psalm 3' showed the melody as descending below the second part.¹³ The members of the music panel did not meet together, policy being left to the music committee.

1.2 Editorial principles of *CH3*

A liturgical approach

It would be true to say that the Committee was dominated by the 'high church party'. Some were engaged in revising the Church of Scotland's orders for Sunday worship, culminating in *The Divine Service* (1973), continuing with the preparation for the next *Book of Common Order*, which was published in 1979, notable for its emphasis on the desirability of a weekly celebration of Communion.¹⁴ This emphasis on a strong and Catholic liturgical shape (evident also in the Church of Scotland's original enthusiastic participation in the newly-formed Joint Liturgical Group) bore fruit in the unique shape of the subsequent book, which was ordered according to the form of Sunday worship: Approach to God, The Word of God, Response to the Word of God, Sacraments etc., facilitating the appropriate choice of hymns for each part in the

¹² Two publications which enshrine this scholarship are Isobel Woods Preece, ed. Sally Harper, *Our awin Scotis use: Music in the Scottish Church up to 1603* (Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen, 2000), and *The Music of Scotland*, ed. Kenneth Elliott, Musica Britannica 15 (London: Stainer and Bell, 1957, rev. 1975).

¹³ This in itself was one of several examples of the distrust of Victorian hymn tunes. *RCH* had offered both this melody and Barnby's 'Laudes Domini' to 'When morning gilds the skies'. *CH3* kept only 'Psalm 3', now in its Scottish guise.

¹⁴ For this reason it was not well liked in all parts of the Church and dissatisfaction resulted in the publication in 1994 of the current *Common Order*, which has been accorded the same status at home and abroad as its famous 1940 predecessor, said to have influenced the liturgy of the Church of South India: *Book of Common Order* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940); *Book of Common Order* (1979) (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1979); *Common Order* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1994, rev. 1996, 2005).

service.¹⁵ This secure lodging of hymnody and psalmody within the liturgical structure was in contradistinction to the more random use of hymns that has been dubbed the ‘hymn sandwich’, and was evidence of a view of church music which saw it as an inalienable part of the act of worshipping rather than as an embellishment.

This arrangement was extended to include the psalms. Research had shown that many ministers were using some dozen psalms only, and that as the first item in worship. The Committee’s placing of a smaller selection of psalms throughout the book in their liturgical place was intended to encourage a greater and more thoughtful use of the psalms. This was a controversial decision, given that the psalter had until now always been published as a separate unit, albeit often bound with the hymnary, and there was later a successful move, notwithstanding the presence of many psalms within the book, to have the metrical psalter again bound with the new book for those who wished it. This was largely a symbolic gesture since it had always been the case that a selection of the psalms had been used, a selection which had been printed at the back of the 1929 psalter. While the provision of psalm ‘portions’ in *CH3* was less (almost 80) than in the 1929 selection (about 120, although there more than one portion might be taken from the same psalm), it was believed by the Committee to correspond to the number that the most adventurous congregations were in practice using. Another feature was that some were in prose settings. In the 1900s all three main denominations had published complete (except in one case when 100 psalms only were provided) prose psalms with Anglican chants. By the time of the publication of *CH3* it was believed that only about 15 congregations throughout Scotland were still making use of these.¹⁶ In an attempt to increase the variety of setting, the editorial committee incorporated six styles of psalm singing: traditional metrical, metrical versions based on the language of the New English Bible, Gelineau settings, Anglican chant, plainsong, and a very simple form of setting (by John Currie) making use of four chords only with an indication in the text as to when the melody/chord was to change. Through this last type of setting it was hoped that congregations who had not been in the habit of singing prose psalms would find a simple way to begin. However,

¹⁵ This had been proposed by Stewart Todd and worked out in detail during lunch at one of the meetings of the Committee.

¹⁶ These are likely to be fewer now. Currently, Paisley Abbey sings prose psalms weekly, except for the first Sunday in the month when responsorial settings are used. St. Giles’ Cathedral in Edinburgh also sings prose settings each week.

even taking these different opportunities together, it cannot be said that the practice of using prose settings has increased.

Questions of quality

The intention of the two Assemblies and their joint Committee was that this publication should be in use for some thirty years. For this reason, there was reticence against including music which might not, it was feared, have the 'stamina' to last. Against those who might say that the church needs to make use of popular music to make its mark today, the Committee took the view that it is impossible to pin down popular music because it changes so rapidly and is therefore unsuitable for hymnody. Further, the questions had to be asked whether such music was part of the art of music or a junior partner to the personality-cult and the commercial. If it were argued that the music of the great American musicals had lasting value, it could still be criticised as having too much of an air of 'particularity', too much of its time and place, to be assimilated to the special nature of worship.¹⁷ Such styles had the added disadvantage of happening on the six days of the week whereas what was required was music which would correspond with the mystery of worship when we step out of the secular in which we are the rest of the time submerged.

This standpoint militated against the inclusion of more popular styles, whose quality and lasting ability could not be proven, as well as against newer versions of traditional patterns of hymnody which were becoming now more common. The results of this policy was most obvious in the non-inclusion of any material (words or music) which had emerged through the Dunblane Music Consultation,¹⁸ many items of which are now included in mainstream books throughout the world. There were no examples of Sydney Carter, nor of the world church songs which were just arriving through the Iona Community. Three Gelineau psalm settings, however, were included, since it was judged that, in spite of popular overtones, this music had, in a sense, undergone 'baptism'. Another notable exception was the inclusion of the Border folk melody 'Bonnie George Campbell'¹⁹ which turned out to be one of the 'finds' of the book in

¹⁷ These views are developed in A. Stewart Todd, 'Music in the Service of the Church' (The Lee Lecture 1964), *Church Service Society Annual*, No. 35, May 1965.

¹⁸ The Consultation's work was taking place at the same time as the work of the revision committee.

¹⁹ Suggested by Ian Pitt-Watson, who also contributed three new metrical settings of the psalms taking as starting point the New English Bible rather than the Authorised Version.

that it made perfect marriage with the Scottish writer Horatius Bonar's 'Blessing and honour and glory and power'. Memorable is the way that the rise of the tune in the last line of every verse corresponds with the sense and direction of the text. Another exception was a tune by Donald Swann in a more accessible style, in the event more difficult to sing, with its alternation between 4/4 and 6/4 time, than some of those by 'concert' composers.²⁰

By contrast, a bold decision was taken in respect of contemporary Scottish concert composers, who, through the Ferguson Bequest at the University of Glasgow, the policy of the Scottish BBC, and the Edinburgh Festival and other encouragements, were now emerging in a kind of renaissance of Scottish music. Many of these composers had little experience of writing hymn tunes and some of the results were too difficult for congregations and rarely sung. Others represented important additions to the repertoire, such as 'Dunoon' by Kenneth Leighton. Leighton's Communion settings were also striking but tended to be tackled mostly by advanced choirs. Some of these thirty or so commissioned tunes were seen in retrospect as falling into the category of being 'too musical' and therefore not fully effective in worship.²¹

The role of music in worship

Influential on the Committee was the German journal *Leitourgia*, which at the time had published material which developed Calvin's approach to music. The emphasis was on gravitas and a belief that music should not intrude into worship. We have already given some account of the view that music should have only a servant role, as developed in the writings of Stewart Todd,²² one of the members of the Committee. Such an intrusion occurs when, as was felt in some modern hymn tunes, the music 'takes over'. Music does not serve the church, but instead the opposite takes place. When there is too much of the art of music in music intended for the church, it attracts too much attention to itself, 'beguiling us and making it more difficult to see the beauty or glory which is characteristic of worship'. The music which renders the most appropriate service is that which is so transparent, which lets the light and beauty of God shine through, 'music which does not just sing itself, but permits of being

²⁰ This was 'Jordan', set to 'Come, thou Holy Paraclete', *CH3* no. 105.

²¹ This was another criticism developed in Stewart Todd's Lee Lecture. See also subsection 3 below.

²² See above, page 92.

interpreted in ever new ways by the Choirmaster under whom we do our best singing – Jesus Christ’. If this servant role sounds too utilitarian, it should be remembered that it is not the dignity of the task that enobles but the dignity of the Lord the servant serves.²³

Questions of style emerged as allied to questions of quality, but they re-emerge in discussion of the role of music in worship. This close alliance means that if it is the glory of God which sparks off our glorification of God in worship then at base there must be struck in church music the note of joy. Even though there exists in the worshipping community the awareness of sin and a feeling of penitence or despair, the basic characteristic of the Lord’s Day must be praise and thanksgiving. Always there are the overtones of jubilation. This, however, is not human beings subjectively expressing uplifting feelings. There is a robustness and objectivity about this expression of joy. There should be nothing ‘too frothy’.²⁴ Worship begins with and ends in God. The church, and especially its music, has been invaded by subjectivism. The hymns of the various evangelical revivals of the past two centuries have tended to move the emphasis in worship away from God in his glory towards the spiritual condition of the believer’s soul. Stuart Loudon, a member of the Committee, earlier had expressed regret that, when hymns began to replace the metrical psalms in Scotland, which had helped to ensure for worship a robust and objective basis, so many hymns of a subjective type became popular, rather than the more objective hymns of the early church, the ancient canticles and the stronger or doctrinally sounder modern hymns.²⁵ For this reason, many Victorian hymn tunes or mission hall melodies were replaced by the editors with ‘stronger’ settings²⁶ and others were consigned to a section at the end entitled ‘Personal Faith and Devotion’.

The topical and the timeless

Many hymns were disposed of, of course, because of their texts as much as their tunes, and here a fourth principle emerges. The Committee were profoundly uncomfortable about hymn texts which ‘descended’ into the expression of human

²³ Stewart Todd, ‘Music in the Service of the Church’, page 65.

²⁴ Phrase used by Stewart Todd in interview.

²⁵ Stuart Loudon, *The True Face of the Kirk* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 57.

²⁶ For example, ‘To God be the glory’ was included but to St. Denio (Joanna) [‘Immortal, invisible’], which meant excising the refrain, ‘Praise the Lord’ (CH3 no. 374). Another example was the ‘demotion’ of ‘Crimond’ to third place for Psalm 23.

problems and discontent. Todd characterised worship not as a commemoration of a dead hero but communion with the living Lord.²⁷ This meant that there had to be a transcendence in the texts which did not linger among the issues of the day. A hymn like ‘God of concrete, God of steel’ was considered too topical and even Walter Russell Bowie’s moving reflection on St. John’s vision in Revelation 21 (set to Howells’ ‘Sancta Civitas’) was seen as borderline, although included.²⁸ There was wariness on the Committee about the church being seen (in the Convener’s words) to ‘wash its dirty linen in public’. The Reformed Swiss theologian Von Allmen had said that ‘the Church is a banqueting house rather than a laundry’ and worship was not the place to be wringing the hands over the failures of society. Again, the kind of hymn that was emerging through the Dunblane Music Group and elsewhere, which might incorporate ecological, social justice or ecumenical themes, was not seen as suitable. In beginning their work, the Committee had called for new material to be sent to them, but reported that there was not much response.²⁹ This may be saying that very little was received which fitted within the parameters adopted by the Committee.

1.3 Reception in the Churches

The new book was cautiously welcomed, although it subsequently became established. The present writer, reviewing it on publication in *The Scotsman*,³⁰ welcomed the stringency of the editorial approach which attempted to break the church’s dependence on a small range of musical styles, the recovery of some popular items such as ‘Will your anchor hold?’, the rescue of texts which had not been used because of unsuitable tunes, the commissioned tunes, the greater provision of Easter and Communion hymns, and the variety of psalm settings. However, it also criticised the lack of contemporary material in both words and music, quoting Albert van den Heuvel when he said that in the worship of the church modern civilisation stands implicitly judged in that it is not considered good enough to provide the metaphors of liturgical language. Another criticism levelled at the book was that which formed the main thrust of the review by Erik Routley, who was critical of the ‘didactic’ stance

²⁷ In interview.

²⁸ CH3 no. 509.

²⁹ Interview with Stewart Todd.

³⁰ Douglas Galbraith, ‘Tunes of Glory’, *Scotsman*, June 21, 1973.

taken by the editors, finding that they were inclined to tell the church what it ought to sing.³¹ There was a pedagogic, even hectoring, feel about the book.

2. CHURCH HYMNARY: FOURTH EDITION

2.1 The intervening years

Prior to the publication of *CH3*, the suggestion had been made, and rejected, that a supplement to the existing hymn book be prepared. The reason for the rejection was not just the one presented, that this would simply postpone a full revision: there was also suspicion of the idea as such. In the Sixties, a measure of authority was given to the official hymn book, as indeed to the service book and ancillary prayer collections. A supplementary or alternative collection was considered by the bulk of churchgoers as somewhat anarchic and dangerous. Nevertheless, in the lifespan of *CH3*, the idea of a supplementary collection came to be accepted. Helpful in bringing acceptance was the growing realisation that a hymn need not be of the idiom or the quality which merited recognition among the great hymns of the church, but could contribute in a limited and time-bound way. The first was *Songs of the Seventies*,³² followed in 1980 by *Hymns for a Day*, which was distinguished by its offering a single new hymn for each Sunday of the Christian Year.³³ *Songs of God's People* was published at the optimum time in the sense that the church had fully embraced the idea of an alternative or additional publication and was actively looking, now that *Dunblane Praises*, the African collections, and the *Faith, Folk and Clarity/Nativity/Festivity* series, had broadened the choice, for material in a greater variety of idiom.³⁴ This publication sold nearly a quarter of a million copies. Finally, in 1998, the earlier proposal for an ecumenical hymn book for Scotland was realised in the publication of *Common Ground*, prepared by representatives from seven Churches. Both the latter were prepared under the Convenership of John L. Bell. Bell was also to be Convener of the revision committee for *CH4*.

³¹ George McPhee, director of music at Paisley Abbey then and now, remarked in an interview that the Committee was mistaken in not inviting Routley, by then resident in Scotland, to be a consultant.

³² *Songs for the Seventies* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press and Great Yarmouth: Galliard, 1972).

³³ The title, suggested by the present author, was to embrace both the idea that the material had a short life (until proven otherwise) and that each item was particularly attached to a given Sunday.

³⁴ *Songs of God's People*, The Church of Scotland Supplement to the Church Hymnary Third Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

The circumstance which forced the General Assemblies of the two remaining Presbyterian churches³⁵ towards decision was that the publisher reported that stocks of *CH3* were running low (1992). Instead of deciding between reprinting and replacing at that juncture, it was resolved to consult widely concerning various courses of action (for example, an ecumenical book for Scotland). In 1993, the Panel on Worship, who had brought forward the matter the previous year, mounted a strong argument for the replacement of the book (although consultations had not been completed). Their argument was that much had changed since 1973 when the existing collection was published, which, in any case, had been just too early to capitalise on the burgeoning of texts and tunes which characterised these decades. The book thus missed the theological and semantic controversies of the 1970s (the 'location' of God, inclusiveness in religious language, the science-religion debate). No reference was to be found in its texts to such issues of the time as space travel, environmental and population concerns, ecumenical dialogue, multi-cultural societies, the arms race. New 'spiritualities' had become established, interest was being shown in the song of the world church, the woman's movement had gathered momentum. Further, only 62 of the book's authors were alive when *CH3* was published.³⁶

The following year, it was reported that the only approach made to another denomination (the Roman Catholic Church – it being felt that the position it took would influence the rest) had not indicated that it would be practicable to proceed with an ecumenical collection, the situation in that Church at the moment meaning that the spread of musical style was too wide to encompass in a single volume along with the requirements of the other Churches. That year (1994), both Assemblies set up a revision committee which reported in 1996 with a provocative 'exclusion list' (of items in *CH3*), inviting people to give good reasons for the restoration of particular items (reasons which 'rise above personal sentiment').³⁷ In subsequent years, reports revealed echoes of healthy debate which had been started by the 'exclusion list' while also listing the contents of sections which were becoming complete. Throughout this time, presbyteries, kirk sessions and individuals were encouraged to respond with

³⁵ The United Free Church and the Church of Scotland. The Irish Presbyterians had decided to bring out their own book while the Welsh Presbyterians withdrew from the project not long after it was begun for similar reasons.

³⁶ Church of Scotland. *Reports to the General Assembly*, 1993, 273-276.

³⁷ Church of Scotland. *Reports to the General Assembly*, 1996, 29/1.

comments and suggestions, and of course with new material. The book was published, later than promised, in 2005.

2.2 Editorial principles of *CH4*

Where the preface to *CH3* took the nature of worship as its starting point, the introduction to *CH4* underlined the changes that had taken place in society in the intervening period, showing that these had been considerably more radical and more varied than those which had prompted the revision of earlier books. Indeed, it was suggested, the world was in some ways a quite different world. Moreover, while society had changed, so had the church (new translations of Scripture, the ordination of women, increased frequency of Communion, the deepening interest in the Christian Year and the Lectionary, the greater use of non-ordained leaders in worship, are all mentioned). ‘A book intended to be used for the worship of God in the twenty-first century should reflect the contemporary experience of humanity and the contemporary fruits of God’s creative spirit’.³⁸ One might conclude that the overriding motive of the editors was to enable to be reflected and expressed in worship the world from which the worshippers came and which was being offered to God in thanksgiving and in intercession.

If one were to ask whether this as a central principle was borne out by the policy discussions of the Committee, one would have to admit that the Committee did not explicitly set out to arrive at a set of principles that would govern their choices. This circumstance was admitted by the Secretary to the Committee, the Rev. Charles Robertson³⁹ who remarked that the methodology was quite different and that it was ‘out of the melée’ that decisions were made. The bulk of the Committee’s time was spent assessing actual hymns and, partly because of the volume of material being looked at, little time was given to debate either on single items or on principles of selection. A quick consensus was called for and without that a hymn was not included. There was some unrest from time to time by members of the Committee at what they saw as an authoritarian approach by the office bearers. In reality, there were principles being applied, but these were in the main those of the Convener (about which, it has to be said, there was broad agreement through the Committee) and were

³⁸ *Church Hymnary: Fourth Edition*, Preface, vii.

³⁹ In interview.

unstated. It is only possible to deduce what some of these principles were by examining the resulting content.

A re-emphasis on the congregation

A number of features suggest that whereas the earlier book saw music as mediated through an establishment of organist and choir, the new book was intended to ‘go straight to the congregation’. One was that a prime factor in deciding which items in the former book would be retained into the new was whether they had been used in churches. Of the 695 items in CH3, only 272 were transferred. Only 230 of the 527 tunes were used. Overall, pitches are lower and there is a far higher proportion of unison settings (a frequent complaint made by choirs about the book). In addition, the recoveries of what were previously popular tunes (be they Victorian or mission hall in origin) suggest that congregations are being ‘given what they want’. These factors add up to an affirmation of the ‘ordinary’ participant in worship who may not consider him/herself a singer.⁴⁰

Scottish context affirmed

As has been noted, the previous book had made a brave gesture in favour of contemporary Scottish culture in commissioning some thirty tunes from prominent composers. The new book has affirmed the culture in a different way, emphasising folk rather than composed music. John Bell notes that *CH3* had only three identifiable Scottish folk melodies while containing four Welsh, 15 Irish and 29 English folk tunes. *CH4* now has some 30 tunes, of Highland and Lowland origin.⁴¹ The Scottish context is thus affirmed, but that experienced by the broadest part of the church rather than those knowledgeable and experienced in music. Of the new texts, over 100 originated from Scottish authors. A different kind of example is the inclusion of material peculiar to the Scottish church itself, such as the early forms of psalm singing (melody in the tenor, psalms in ‘reports’), and the use of contrafacta in the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis*.

⁴⁰ This has been a frequent theme of writings by John Bell, in such volumes as *The Singing Thing Too* (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2007).

⁴¹ John L. Bell, ‘Scottish Hymnody: An Ecumenical and Personal Perspective’, in Duncan B. Forrester and Doug Gay, eds., *Worship and Liturgy in Context: Studies and Case Studies in Theology and Practice* (London: SCM Press, 2009), 273–4.

Inclusiveness of idiom

Apart from folk music, an attempt has been made to select what might be considered the potentially more long-lasting of worship songs, insofar as this can be guessed. Thus is acknowledged the mass culture which forms the background to the lives of many, especially younger, people. It also accepts, and does not try to filter out, the greater variety of idiom now considered acceptable in worship. This reflects a pastoral sensitivity and a readiness to receive all comers. That such songs were all considered critically on their merits, and advice taken from those who worked with these idioms, indicates nevertheless that the Committee felt that a level of musicality and suitability should be attained.

Greater participation

Today's general call for greater participation is answered in this book not just by the accessibility of much of the music but by the provision of short, easily learned items which give the whole worshipping body a voice in the liturgy. Some hundred prayer chants and liturgical settings form the final section of the book while in the Communion section one of James MacMillan's popular mass settings is included.⁴² Evidence is also the number of items in which harmony and texture is achieved by simple means, such as canons, and where the feeling of participation is enhanced by singing in dialogue or in responsorial settings or refrains.

The return to unaccompanied singing

There is an encouragement towards the full-bodied unaccompanied singing that once characterised Scottish church music. This is not so much explicit in the psalm settings as in the use of material from the world church where dialogue songs are unaccompanied (or accompanied by non pitched instruments) or where harmonies are easily learned or may be improvised.

The place for lament

The inclusion of more psalms which voice complaint or express despair, and the provision of hymns which reflect disaster, tragedy and loss, are not the only examples of a belief that in worship people must be enabled to articulate the worst that they

⁴² At one point, MacMillan studied with Kenneth Leighton who had produced the Communion settings in the earlier book.

experience. Other hymns address pastoral crises such as Alzheimer's Disease, the death of a child, stillbirth, abuse.⁴³

Singing with the world church

The missionary movement had 'taken' Christianity to other countries. In the present day, there is an awareness that the faith can be illuminated for those in the West by younger churches. There is also an acknowledgement that in singing the songs of other Christians in other places a congregation is, at some level, entering into their experience and offering prayer for them in situations which are different from, and often more difficult than, those of the worshippers. One tenth of the items in the book come from Asia-Pacific, Africa, Central/South America and the Caribbean. There are also around 70 twentieth-century texts and as many tunes which come from the USA and Canada. John Bell notes wryly that in the *Handbook to the Church Hymnary Third Edition* the editor had commented that 'the new book has been enriched by the introduction of hymns from India (1), China (1), Ceylon (1), Africa (1) and elsewhere'.⁴⁴

The world in worship

Finally, where *CH3* were wary of hymns which were too redolent of the world, the new book sets out to bring in penitence and intercession the needs of the world and the mistreatment of creation. Bell draws attention to the 'explicit incarnational theology' of the book, a feature underlined by a new emphasis on Christ's life and ministry. Texts with themes around commitment and spirituality have been placed in the body of the book where in the previous these had been placed in a section at the end,⁴⁵ but a spirituality that is more focused through living in the world. Writers such as Shirley Erena Murray (with the largest number of texts in the book after John Bell and Graham Maule), Brian Wren, Fred Kaan, Fred Pratt Green, Ruth Duck, and Bell and Maule themselves, have provided texts which explore matters of faith in respect of justice, peace, ecology, race and other themes of this kind. Implicit in the choice of texts for inclusion is the understanding that the world in worship is the contemporary

⁴³ John Bell addresses this matter in his contribution to Stephen Darlington and Alan Kreider, eds., *Composing Music for Worship* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2003), 104-116, 'The Lost Tradition of Lament'.

⁴⁴ John L. Bell, 'Scottish Hymnody', 275. The book quoted is John M Barkley, *Handbook to the Church Hymnary Third Edition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 275-6.

world. Close on two-thirds of both texts and tunes come from the twentieth century, with a substantial number coming from authors and composers alive at the time of publication.

3. RESONANCES WITH THE CRITERIA

With the setting out of the contents of *CH3* in accord with the eucharistic shape of worship, and with the greater provision of Communion hymns to go with the more frequent celebrations of Holy Communion that the Church's Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion hoped would gradually become the case (many of the editorial committee were simultaneously preparing what became the 1979 edition of the *Book of Common Order* which made Holy Communion the norm for Sunday morning worship), this collection could be said to affirm koinoinia as *eucharistic community*. Further, the detectable move (noted by Marjoribanks) from the more subjective texts which were common in earlier collections to an emphasis on praise and adoration indicated a desire to lead the worshipping community into the mystery in which God dwells.

This approach and the method of stating it⁴⁶ was very much to the fore at the time. Central was the idea of Christ as the one true worshipper, the one mediator, and high priest, which enabled the recovery of the role of the assembly as active participant, possible because no intermediary now stood in the way.⁴⁷ It is fundamentally sacramental when the Son 'lifts us up out of ourselves to participate in the very life and communion of the Godhead ... The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is the grammar of this participatory understanding of worship and prayer'.⁴⁸ A twofold relationship is established between the triune God and ourselves, through the Spirit. It is a relationship between God and humanity realised vicariously for us in Christ, and at the same time a relationship between Christ and the church. A 'unitarian' model reduces the Lord's Supper to being merely a memorial and the church simply a gathering of true believers with a common experience 'and less than a royal

⁴⁶ This is not to suggest that views have changed but that different emphases and terms dominate at different times. This theology of worship claims Reformation credentials.

⁴⁷ *Reports to the General Assembly*, 1970, 190ff.

⁴⁸ James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 9.

priesthood sharing in Christ's priesthood'.⁴⁹ We may see this emphasis as acknowledgement of the dual nature of the eucharistic community. If there is felt to be a focus on transcendence to the detriment of the everyday, the key place nevertheless given to the participation of the assembly might reassure us that the Pauline conflation of the body in the world and the body of Christ was being carried through. The use of Trinitarian language and the affirmation of the people of God at worship also reflects *koinoinia* as *relational community*.

Nevertheless, examination of the principles detected behind the successor to *CH3* might suggest that a greater richness than is evidenced here belongs to the community of the church visible. *CH4*'s 'recovery' of the congregation, not as a theological entity so much as a group of real people with tastes and understandings, anxieties and hopes, was expressed both in the high proportion of contemporary texts on themes which are to the fore at the present time but also in the range of musical styles which reflects the variety which is among every group of worshippers and between different assemblies. *CH4* may be said to be reminding the congregations it serves and the church as a whole that the group of Christians at Corinth, and all who follow in their place, were not only members of the mystic body of Christ but called to live the faith amid the compromises of the time and amid the issues of the day.

The *diaconal* dimension of *koinoinia* is present in the new emphasis, as noted by Marjoribanks, on the social mission of the church detectable in *CH3*. Although some might say that this was little more than a gesture, it would have been difficult for the editors to overlook the 'church and world' emphasis of the time. What one might say is that while there is a proper awareness of the context from which worship rises, there is a care not to be too specific so that there is not an undue dwelling on the problems and issues of the day at the expense of the true focus of worship. Study of the section 'Intercession: for the world', which contains thirteen hymns, finds that three were by living authors and four others by writers who had died in the two decades leading up to publication. There was a tendency for the themes to have been those which have always dogged human society and which were expressed in a 'timeless' way.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 20-22.

The preface to *CH4*, as we have noted, makes special reference to the changes in society that had taken place since the previous hymn book was published and the implication is that the hymns within will reflect these changes. One noticeable difference is the high proportion of living writers and composers,⁵⁰ and these have not balked at naming the issues within which Christian witness to the servant Christ is to be expressed. The conscious inclusion of texts which share the note of lament that appears in many of the psalms is another indication of the servant ministry which shares in the struggle of the world while at the same time imaging the Kingdom. This of course is not simply a thematic matter but a question of language and imagery. Texts in *CH4* were often successful in not only illuminating the Gospel with fresh language but making connections between Gospel and life today by the use of metaphors and images which closed the historical gap. In *CH4*, there was a greater willingness to countenance music which drew from the rhythms of the world a vocabulary for liturgical music, thus affirming the realities of the context from which the assembly emerged and to which they would return.

Awareness of the church as *growing to maturity in Christ* may be seen negatively in the charge that the editors of *CH3* were on a mission to improve, that there was a didactic motive underlying their choice of texts and tunes. Thus, they could be accused of paternalism, of treating worshippers as requiring magisterial direction rather than as able to make choices of their own. In response, it could be convincingly argued that, in the commissioning of tunes from those who were currently making the running in the concert halls of the country, the editors wished to lead people towards a higher standard of musical expression, concomitant with a striving for a deeper apprehension of the world and God. A question might be wherein maturity lies. Ian Mackenzie, Baird lecturer for 1990, in his characteristic way chastised the compilers for adopting too narrow an approach. People, he claimed, need the whole range of emotions music can offer. 'It was because the editors of *CH3* ... had swallowed whole the implication that to have come of age is to boast hygienic good taste that they were programmed to be suspicious of hymns that were too subjective, and that is why favourite tunes and hymns were left out. As a result the church had a hymn book

⁵⁰ So much so that the compilers of the collection, the Church Hymnary Trust, have made a considerably reduced profit compared with previous volumes.

which was in some respects deeply untrue to the reality of people's emotional situation.'⁵¹

However, as noted above, the much greater use made in *CH4* of traditional melodies from the same culture not only affirmed the worship context but could be said to have contributed to growth in maturity. Folk melodies, although surviving because of their wide appeal, tended to have a maturity which came from a strength of composition and an embeddedness in the lessons learned from life and from experience. Faith does not only grow in 'religious' ways but is forged in life situations and experiences. Along with other features of the book, like the setting of the pitch which favoured congregations more than choirs, and the inclusion of music which involved interaction between musical forces, this also affirmed and offered to develop the *relational* aspect of the assembly, emphasising the congregation as a musical force alongside others. This use of folk music (from other countries as well) coupled with 'world church' songs and settings was also an acknowledgement of the *diversity* of the Christian community. When Annie Small in 1910 published her ground-breaking collection of hymns in the Women's Missionary College (St. Colm's) in Edinburgh,⁵² the aim was to familiarise students in training with the idioms of the countries to which they would go but also as illustrative in talks in this country, to add flavour to the accounts of returning missionaries in raising awareness of the work of mission. There was no reference in the preface to their straightforward use within worship in Scotland. Now, in *CH4*, world church songs take their place alongside Western hymns, affirming the diversity among the people of God.

In terms of music, the editors of *CH3* were not insensible of the breadth of idiom available to the church and perhaps appropriate to the church, but their selection of folk melody was careful and the forms in which it was imported bore some resemblance to the approach of Ralph Vaughan Williams.⁵³ We have already noted that the unique foray into a more 'music hall' style was a rather complex tune by

⁵¹ Ian Mackenzie, *Tunes of Glory: What Music is Good Enough for God?* (Carberry: The Handsel Press, 1993) 129-130.

⁵² *Missionary College Hymns*, compiled and arranged by Annie H. Small (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1910).

⁵³ Two remarkable examples were 'Searching for Lambs' set as the first tune to 'The Lord's my shepherd' and 'Bonnie George Campbell' set to Bonar's 'Blessing and honour', nos. 387 and 299 respectively.

Donald Swann, and it may have been its complexity that recommended itself to the editors! Diversity was expressed too through the recovery of ‘Will your anchor hold?’ and the retention of some mission hall favourites, a gesture offset, some would say, by the attempt to make others more ‘respectable’ – by the omission of the chorus of ‘To God be the glory’ and its setting to ‘St. Denio’. Aside from whether the results of the bold manoeuvre of commissioning tunes from ‘serious’ Scottish composers were able to carry this goal to a conclusion, the policy itself was admirable, not least in its affirmation of the culture. The successor volume’s exclusion of all but one of these thirty tunes⁵⁴ was based on a criterion which could be, and was, questioned – that is, had these tunes caught on in the church? Some of these might well have become part of the repertoire had policies at the time led to their being promoted and taught. Thus a truly modern Scottish dimension to the former book was lost to the new.

One of the remarkable outcomes of the publication of *CH4* is its popularity beyond Scotland, so much so that the publishers (Canterbury Press) have reissued it (entirely unchanged) in an edition entitled *Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise*. If it has been possible to discern in the discussion above aspects of *koinonia* in this volume, the wider appeal of this book to a more diverse cultural, liturgical and theological community offers another dimension of *koinonia*: what was conceived as ‘local’ (in the context of the present Church of Scotland and United Free Church) has proved to have an appeal that is ‘more-than-local’. While *CH4* has respected the customs and traditions of these two presbyterian churches in Scotland (not least in the large body of psalmody gathered together at the front portion of the book – restoring a tradition lost in *CH3*) and included more generically and idiomatically Scottish music, it has proved to have wider resonances in other denominations: in other words, out of a single denomination has come a book which has ecumenical (or at least trans-denominational) potential, revealing quite unintentionally an additional dimension to its *koinonia*. One may question whether such ecumenical appeal could have been achieved without the model of the Iona Community, an ecumenical initiative rooted in Scotland and in the traditions of the Church of Scotland. It is to this Community and its Wild Goose Worship Group that we now turn.

⁵⁴ The present writer successfully argued for the retention of Kenneth Leighton’s ‘Dunoon’.

II

Last Night Out and The Wild Goose Worship Group

1. THE PROJECT

The second case study describes the origins of the Wild Goose Worship Group of the Iona Community and records the importance of themes of community in its formation. The writer being absent in Australia throughout most of the 1980s, this account has been compiled from interviews with those involved.

Few contemporary hymn books lack examples of the hymns, songs, liturgical settings and psalm versions from this arm of the Iona Community, and John Bell, its principal writer and composer,⁵⁵ is now well known internationally as a conference speaker and song leader. The group's own publications are used widely, consisting not only of song collections but worship resources, and members of the wider Wild Goose Worship Group visit congregations to explore with them the renewal of their worship practice. This movement of the renewal of the church's song and of its worship has attracted considerable commentary in books and journals, to which reference will be made in this account. In its inception, it was partnered by a phenomenon which was given the name of 'Last Night Out', a monthly gathering in a Church of Scotland parish church in Anderston (an area of urban deprivation contiguous to Glasgow's city centre), which could attract anything from 150-500 young people.

Any examination of renewal movements may show that not only has there to be a 'local' trigger but also a broader backcloth which provides support for the taking of a new step. In the case of the establishment of the Wild Goose Worship Group, the latter was in the form of the Iona Community – a reform movement in the Church of Scotland (later ecumenical) which dated back to 1938, while the immediate cause was a sense in Scotland of rediscovering important aspects of its culture, and a move towards devolution. A contributory factor was what has been dubbed 'Thatcherism', seen as going against the flow of Scottish radicalism and threatening a growing sense of national identity. Issues of unemployment, questions of justice, and the restriction

⁵⁵ A volume of songs from other Iona Community authors is in preparation, commissioned by Wild Goose Publications, and of which the present writer is editor.

of ‘the voice of the people’ added to the mix. With this, there was a strengthening consciousness in the church of certain issues in world politics, particularly anti-apartheid activity, and the growth of movements towards action for peace.

This was also a time when postmodernism, if it was not widely identified at the time, was unsettling patterns which had not been questioned for decades or centuries. The first postmodern Scottish novel, *Lanark* by Alasdair Gray, might be taken as a symbol of what was happening in more ordinary ways. Different styles were juxtaposed, the deep and the trivial were blended together, the author himself enters into the book as a ‘character’ (as distinct from a character in the book being based on the author), and an experimentation with narrative forms. The fact that the author was also a known artist linked aspects of Scottish culture at the time. Another aspect of the *zeitgeist* of the times was an openness to other cultures, seen in popular music as world rhythms were built into what had been heretofore a more unified style. People were looking at native art and taking it seriously, recognising that it was no longer correct to think of a stable Western culture with other cultures being primitive and aspiring; all had equal value.⁵⁶

In the church itself, there was a certain ‘freeing up’ of patterns which, although they had been called in question two decades previously, had now increased from being a trickle into a flood. Young people, although many were still members of ‘youth fellowships’, of which there was a group in any congregation of any size, were now recognising a feeling of alienation from the church. Many of those who came regularly to ‘Last Night Out’ were young people who were effectively on the way out of the church, or who were just hanging on. Although held in a particular local parish, and at first intended principally for that parish, the event attracted people from all over the city, with a few also who came from further afield. The aim was to provide an alternative to the all-too-frequent experience of the church, in terms of levels of participation and engagement, content relevant to young people’s ‘take’ on contemporary society, and more immediate styles of music and song. Equally significant was the formation at the same time⁵⁷ of the Wild Goose Worship Group itself, an initiative which remained in place until 2000. It was this group that drove the

⁵⁶ These observations were made by Graham Maule, one of the founders of Last Night Out and the Wild Goose Worship Group and co-author with John Bell of many hymns.

⁵⁷ Some remember this as November 1983, others as January 1984.

worship at the event, the four founding members being Christine Reid, Chris Hoon, Graham Maule and John Bell.

The first half of the event each evening consisted of workshops on social issues and biblical perspectives on the issues of the day, led by young ministers and others who were members of or connected with the Iona Community. These were on topics such as unemployment, sexuality, nuclear weapons, approached in a variety of ways which might include a forum based round an international visitor, a creative, hands-on workshop ('Art and Soul'), or looking at the theme from a personal angle ('Personal Effects'). The second half was worship but of a pattern which did not conform to the standard acts of worship common in most parishes. Standing behind the founders of the event was the already established 'alternative' style of worship which had prevailed at Iona Abbey for some decades, characterised by the use of common material from the whole church, by a high level of participation, by directness of language, and by the care to embrace the life of the world. However, the leaders of the new venture felt the need to develop these characteristics still further, since on Iona the forms of worship had evolved to suit the place and, in its monastic style, fitted in with the pattern of pilgrimage to a remote place for a week spent in community.

What the organisers found was that there was a dearth of material to resource their event. While the Bible was now available in contemporary language, there were few attempts to contextualise it in situations known to urban young people. Some scripts had been published, like those of the Riding Lights, and there had been attempts to recreate biblical content in a contemporary setting, such as that of Ernest Marvin in Bristol who produced the famous musical play, 'A Man Dies', enacted by local young people. (Marvin also was a member of the Iona Community.)

The same was true of music, although the leaders made use of what there was. The Dunblane Music Consultation had produced their two volumes⁵⁸ and the Iona Community itself had published two volumes of hymns set to African tunes transcribed from audio tapes brought by Iona Community member and Church of

⁵⁸ See above, pages 25 ff.

Scotland missionary Tom Colvin from Ghana and Malawi.⁵⁹ A hymn book supplement called *Sing!* was published by the Youth Department of the Church of Scotland, possibly the first in a long list of such 'supplementary' publications in the UK and North America. A long playing record, *Coming and Going*, had also been produced by the Iona Community, on one side the 'traditional' Abbey morning service, on the other a version of the same using new hymns and songs. An audio tape, *Songs for the Seventies and Beyond*, made by the Emmaus Road Band had been published by the Church of Scotland,⁶⁰ its starting point a hymn book supplement authorised by the General Assembly in view of the fact that the third edition of the *Church Hymnary* (1973) contained no hymn texts written after 1950. This was followed by a second hymn book supplement, *Hymns for a Day*.⁶¹ Outside Scotland, the World Council of Churches held its Sixth Assembly at Vancouver in 1983 and had published all the material used there in a worship-book.⁶² Sydney Carter's songs had first become known to a wider audience at a Student Christian Movement conference at Bristol in 1963 and were now published.⁶³ The series *Faith, Folk and Clarity* had been published by Galliard, Carter's publisher, who were to go on to provide innovative service scripts and songs.⁶⁴ A significant contribution to what was to follow came when an Iona Community member, Mitchell Bunting, organising a conference for the Fellowship of Reconciliation at Mansfield College, Oxford, in the early 1980s, was given an audio tape of some anti-apartheid South African songs by the Swedish delegation, called *Freedom is Coming*. This was passed to John Bell and the material was brought quickly into use and led to the incorporation of other 'world songs' in the repertoire.⁶⁵ Graham Maule, himself an artist, adds that there was also at that time an interest in images of God and Christ from other cultures. In a style which turned out to be entirely different from what was soon to be identified with the Wild

⁵⁹ Details of these and other publications noted in this section are found on pages 5 and 6, above.

⁶⁰ The present writer was engaged in all these projects, including the founding of the Emmaus Road Band, of which Ian and Kathy Galloway, the latter subsequently becoming Leader of the Iona Community, were members.

⁶¹ This was unusual in that the material was arranged in accordance with the Christian Calendar. The present writer was on the editorial committee. This was published in 1981 but was replaced in 1988 with the Wild Goose inspired *Songs of God's People*, showing the speed with which the new repertoire had spread.

⁶² *Jesus Christ – The Life of the World*, a Worship Book for the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Geneva: WCC, 1983).

⁶³ *Songs of Sydney Carter: In the Present Tense*, Vols. 1 & 2 (Great Yarmouth: Galliard Ltd., 1969).

⁶⁴ Peter D. Smith (ed.), *Faith, Folk and Clarity; Faith, Folk and Nativity; Faith, Folk and Festivity* (London: Galliard Ltd., 1967, 1968, 1969).

⁶⁵ Graham Maule, himself an artist, commented separately that there was at that time an interest in images of God and Christ from other cultures.

Goose group, Graham Kendrick had begun his career as song leader and recording artist, but the difference in idiom was compounded by the performance-oriented nature of his material, whereas Last Night Out and the music that developed with it was highly participative.

While these various initiatives added up to a lot, there was a need for material that was more focussed and sustained than that provided even by the aggregate of these collections. Up until then, John Bell, although having graduated with a degree that included music, had not himself engaged in composition, although he is remembered as someone who in the early days frequently improvised at a piano or led informal singing with those among whom he lived and worked.⁶⁶ As Last Night Out became established, songs began to be written with the co-operation of Graham Maule and dramatic sketches devised, often imaginative reconstructions of biblical narratives realised in recognisable contexts and in the West Coast of Scotland patois, a shared language which provoked trust in both the material and the performers/devisers on the part of the young people who came to the events. Much of the music was original but was in a readily accessible idiom which owed a lot to the recent revival of Scottish folk song, whose melodies were often borrowed. However, this was also the post-punk era when there was a recognition that anyone could make music and not only ‘musicians’.⁶⁷ Ian Galloway expressed the view that ‘pivotal’ were British Council of Churches’ gatherings at the time, where some liturgical experimentation took place.

What was different for the participants from their normal church experience, if they had one, was not just the content but the coming together in large numbers to sing. Indeed this experience may have connected with people more than the content of the workshops. The monthly cycle was important, not overloading participants’ timetables and giving planners time to originate fresh material. There was also the feeling that this was a ‘night off’ and not a church duty. Maule felt that it was important that it was an evening. There are certain things you are not used to doing in churches on a Sunday morning. Coming on an evening, to a place apart, people had no expectations and were much freer.

⁶⁶ Mitchell Bunting remarked that for John Bell at that time music was ‘secondary’ to what he was doing as a youth worker.

⁶⁷ A comment by Graham Maule.

2. INTERPRETATIONS

2.1 Renewing community

It is clear from the details of the founding of Last Night Out in Anderston that this was not first and foremost an experiment in alternative worship. The reason that Anderston was chosen derived from the fact that Graham Maule had been appointed youth worker in that parish. Two other key people in the development of the event and what surrounded it held similar roles: Ian Galloway as Church of Scotland national youth adviser from 1978 and John Bell as youth specialist for the same Church's Presbytery of Glasgow.⁶⁸ All three workers shared a single approach to their work, that to work with young people from a church base was not to 'groom' them for membership but to enable them both to derive support from the wider community (the church of course was an important contributor to this) and to be able to make their own unique contribution to the community. In other words, a main goal of these workers was the creation of healthy and reconciled human community.

These, and the greater number of their many assistants, were members of, or associated with, the Iona Community, where the founding of a modern religious community in the site and ruined buildings of the former Celtic and Benedictine communities was intended as a symbol of the promise of recreation and renewal brought by the Gospel to life together in church and society. At the same time as Last Night Out, new and to a certain extent parallel events were taking place on the island of Iona. In that year (1983), Ian and Kathy Galloway had gone to the Abbey as joint Wardens. Together with John Bell, they organised events for young people in accord with the other work with young people on the Scottish mainland. One of these, Experiencing Easter, now a standard event in the Abbey calendar, began as a Church of Scotland programme in the youth camps. Another significant event was Feisd (Gaelic for 'festival') – the idea for which had also come from a British Council of Churches event. Significant was the part played by worship during these events. A 'monastic' pattern of worship was part of life in the Abbey and associated camps and centres, and all groups participated. However, the approach taken by the Galloways, rather than using set liturgies, was that of the workshop, where an attempt was made

⁶⁸ Not long afterwards Bell was employed by the Iona Community in a similar capacity. In 1984, he was joined by Graham Maule.

to rework the content of Abbey worship in accord with the themes and events taking place with those resident there in any particular week. This had always been part of the approach on Iona but it could be said that a greater variety and experimentation took place at this time. Ian Galloway comments that the impulse behind these worship workshops was not so much the worship itself but the creation of a community for which creating worship was its essence.

The passage between Anderston and the Abbey was significant for the development of the mainland event. Ian Galloway recalls it as a time of 'enormous energy'. John Bell's contribution was particularly notable, having the capacity to produce energetic results, 'deep and incisive'. There was throughout the Iona Community at this time a sense of the importance of what was happening. 'It felt integrated, that somehow it was connected with the whole of life. Different energies were working together, and there was a feeling of enormous trust and appreciation of what others were able to give. There was a sense too of people being willing to go wherever it led.'⁶⁹

Thus the theme of community was crucial. This was not just narrowly based in that particular religious community but rested in the realisation that a lot of answers to the social and political situation lay in creating healthy community at large. This was not to do with self-fulfilment, Galloway avers, but was locked in with the matter of poverty and the importance of celebrating what could be celebrated. In this, there were parallels with liberation theology, with which members of the Iona Community were in touch. Ian Fraser, for example, earlier referred to as Secretary of the Dunblane Music Consultation, following his time as Warden of Scottish Churches House, Dunblane, was attached for a time to the World Council of Churches to explore basic Christian communities and their relevance to the church as a whole. At that time also, the Iona Community, conscious that there were many models of good community other than the quasi-monastic community on Iona, established 'Columban houses' in areas of urban deprivation. The Galloways had previously been the centre of such a 'stair' community in West Pilton, an area which was a byword for poverty in the city

⁶⁹ Ian Galloway interviewed.

of Edinburgh, where there was daily worship and a depth of relationship discovered in this communal living in adjacent houses.⁷⁰

This concern was expressed also in a project which was developed at the same time as, and to a certain extent in conjunction with, these initiatives in Anderston and Iona. As an extension of the work with young people by those mentioned above, a network of youth volunteers was established. These, who were often intending ministers taking a 'gap year', lived 'on the dole' – that is, received unemployment benefit – and were given accommodation in urban parishes where usually the minister was a member of the Iona Community. Significantly, it was they who were the main helpers for Last Night Out, preparing worship and leading the workshops during the first part of the evening. Graham Maule notes that there could sometimes be tension between the emergent Wild Goose Worship Group and these volunteers, possibly because the creative energies running in different directions could clash with each other. It would be true to say, therefore, that the phenomenon of Last Night Out and the Wild Goose Worship Group were saying less about liturgical renewal and more about the renewal of community, the quality of whose intercession and whose impulse towards doxology had an effect on the sound and content of worship.

Another example of this belief in the importance of community for the identity of the individual was the way in which the Wild Goose songs were composed. Rather than being a solitary act of composition (albeit by two collaborators), these were born out of a process involving not just the Wild Goose Worship Group but a wider constituency. Ideas were born out of the Group's discussion, rough drafts were made by Bell and reworked or commented on by Maule. These were brought to the Group, either with a borrowed or an original melody, where they would be tried out and criticised. A version would then be ready for use in Last Night Out or in another context, after which a text or setting might be revised again.⁷¹ In a process that Hawn compares to Bible study in a Latin American base community, John Bell is thus, as well as an artist, a facilitator of a group creative process. As Bell himself notes, the Worship Group became the 'anvil on which text, melody, and harmony were

⁷⁰ These houses were based on the traditional Scottish 'tenement' building where a number of houses are accessed from a common central stair.

⁷¹ This is described in C. Michael Hawn, 'The Wild Goose Sings: Themes in the Worship and Music of the Iona Community', *Worship* Vol. 74 (2000), No.6, 508.

pummelled into shape'.⁷² Although the Worship Group is now disbanded,⁷³ there is an attempt to continue this process since, as Bell believes, songs written for worship should have their worth attested by the worshipping community.⁷⁴

2.2 'Secondary orality' as an interpretive tool

C. Michael Hawn has included the oeuvre of the Wild Goose Group in his survey of significant contributors to contemporary liturgical music, a list which also includes Patrick Matsikenyeri of Zimbabwe, I-to Loh from the Philippines, David Dargie from South Africa and Pablo Sosa from Latin America.⁷⁵ Hawn recognises in the work of Bell and Maule an orality which is also present in the work of the other authors and composers studied, in spite of the fact that the latter worked in cultures of which this was primary. However, Hawn appeals not directly to the orally transmitted character of the musical idiom developed by such as Loh and Matsinyeri but borrows from Walter Ong the concept of 'secondary orality' which encapsulates ways of reception and of dealing with material which have much in common with creative expression in purely oral cultures.⁷⁶ Hawn sees this, first, in the use of folk music to clothe the new texts, melodies which in their original form transmitted cultural stories. Already other churches had drawn on their folk traditions, and in the hymn collections used in Scotland one might find English, Irish and Welsh melodies, but rarely were Scottish tunes included. In using both Highland and Lowland melodies Bell and Maule had not simply accessed a handy source of functional melodies but had made a statement about life in community as it had been experienced down the years in the culture for which they were now writing.

Hawn finds that other characteristics of the Wild Goose material and its transmission may be interpreted using the concept of secondary orality. New songs are communicated with a minimum of teaching and explanation, often using spatial gestures to indicate pitch. Singing is often unaccompanied, with encouragement

⁷² John L. Bell, 'Flight of the Wild Goose', *Reformed Liturgy and Music*, Vol. 24.2, 2000, 16.

⁷³ Due to the international way in which the work has developed.

⁷⁴ In the description of the earlier Dunblane Music Consultation, above pages 53ff, it was noted that the principle of 'trying out' texts and tunes, risking the critique of others, was considered important by the group.

⁷⁵ C. Michael Hawn, *Gathered into One: Praying and Singing Globally* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

⁷⁶ Ong's 'primary reality' refers to a culture without a written language, now rare, while a culture which has the characteristic of 'secondary orality' preserves much of the mind-set of primary orality.

towards singing in harmony even where most might not be able to read music. This, Hawn observes, can often make for a stronger commitment to the process and this last consideration leads him to Ong's assertion that the oral mind totalises rather than analyses an experience, leading to an identification with the whole process in which one is engaged. Some suggest that this characteristic, as expressed in the present case, has continued from the earlier Scottish Celtic legacy 'that faith should be sung as well as spoken, expressed in poetry rather than prose and communicated through symbol, image and metaphor as much as through concept, reason and argument'.⁷⁷ Hawn contrasts the worship of Iona Abbey with the more content-dominated Reformed worship, noting the way that music, colour, movement and symbol reduces the profile of the spoken word and minimises didactic linear analysis. Later examples of this are the 'short songs', liturgical settings or other simple chants, which free worshippers from 'following a list' of liturgical activities and allow them to enter into a fuller participation. Hawn finds such worship lyrical in approach, emphasising metaphor and mystery over fact and dogma and comments that this would appeal to many who are alienated from traditional forms of liturgy and who may be in search of mystery and community more than doctrine. Citing Ong's further observation that oral communication unites people into groups, Hawn sees that the outcome may be that liturgically disenchanted individuals find *communitas* in this process.

In making this critique, Hawn is assisted by Turner's exploration of 'liminality',⁷⁸ who uses the term *communitas* to indicate the solidarity of a community which experiences such 'moments in and out of time', the blending of lowliness and sacredness, homogeneity and comradeship, and notes that this is natural to a Celtic perspective that blends the sacred and secular and views incarnation as an act of redemption for all the material world. Liminality may result from praying, singing, moving to songs that symbolise the struggle of those who suffer. Wild Goose songs and the liturgies that accompany them do not, in his summing up, enable people to 'feel good' but to 'feel again'.

⁷⁷ Ian Bradley, *Columba: Pilgrim and Penitent* (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 1988), 99.

⁷⁸ Hawn, 'The Wild Goose Sings', 512.

2.3. Incarnation

A dominant theme in the writings, prayers and preaching of George MacLeod, the founder of the Iona Community, was that of the Incarnation. His desire was to integrate worship and work within a renewed experience of community living, seeing the Gospel as transformative in the arenas of politics and economics. Separation of the 'sacred' from the 'secular' did not reflect the central salvific action of Word becoming flesh in Jesus Christ. Bell describes the conjunction of themes of social justice with personal spirituality in Iona Abbey worship as arising from a Community committed to 'rebuilding the common life, integrating work and worship, prayer and politics, the sacred and the secular in ways that reflect its strong incarnational theology'.⁷⁹ Bell describes the Iona songs as Scottish, incarnational, and biblical. They were not general expressions of Christian faith but written for a specific situation. This is in accord with a Gospel which is wedded to time, place and people. In this interpretation, God forsook his majesty in order that people might relate to Jesus both as 'enthroned Saviour and as one who wants to wash our feet and call us by name'.⁸⁰

Judith Kubicki finds this incarnational motif running not just through the Advent and Christmas texts which make up the composite work *God Comes Tomorrow*, which she is analysing, but in the way that the music relates both to text and singer.⁸¹ Her critique draws on sacramental theology and the theme of 'bodiliness' which has been the recent subject of writings of such theologians as Schillebeeckx, Rahner and Chauvet. She cites Bruce Morrill in *Bodies of Worship* saying that such writings have 'opened the field of inquiry concerning sacramental liturgy to the profound range and depth of human experience, including the embodied, symbolic ways in which we meet God now through our relating with one another in the world'. Others have welcomed 'the retrieval of the principle of sacramentality as key to understanding that it is through materiality, the human, the fragile and things of this earth that we experience the divine'.⁸² Such observations recall George MacLeod's oft-repeated remark that Iona was a 'thin place', the material and the spiritual hardly separated.

⁷⁹ John L. Bell, *The Singing Thing: A Case for Congregational Song* (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2000), 160. A sequel, *The Singing Thing too*, was published in May 2007, recording the Wild Goose Worship and Resource Groups' experience in enabling congregations to sing.

⁸⁰ Bell, 'Flight of the Wild Goose', 18.

⁸¹ Judith M. Kubicki, 'Celebrating the Incarnation through John Bell's *God Comes Tomorrow*', *Worship* Vol. 76 (2002), No. 6, 536ff.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 539.

Kubicki notes that this incarnational theology is reflected not only in Bell's texts but also in the way he shapes the music and enables it potentially to shape a worshipping assembly. In the 'Christology from below' that informs worship on Iona, the intention is to celebrate the union of divinity and humanity in the person of Jesus Christ so as to remind us to expect the manifestation of God in ordinary human experience. She finds that embodiment, alluded to in the texts she is examining, is expressed even more tangibly in the way these songs rely on the human voice. Some require the vocal leadership of cantor, some are *a cappella* or have minimal accompaniment, sometimes parts for choir are provided almost in lieu of instruments. Such devices outline the human voice as an instrument of prayer and praise and enable the text to prevail over any instrumental accompaniment. Kubicki here refers to Kramer and his 'hermeneutical windows'⁸³ in the form of structural tropes, units of doing rather than saying; the author sees these in the way that the music structures the singing assembly in such a way as to highlight participants' own experience of bodiliness in the very act of singing the songs.⁸⁴ Another well-established practice of the Wild Goose Worship Group is illustrative of this point, in that it is common for members to position themselves among the people in order to facilitate participation. Teaching is also done with the human voice, in all its frailty, in the belief not only that people can imitate another person better than an instrument, and that to hear the imperfect voice of the teacher is an encouragement to risk their own voices.

3. RESONANCES WITH THE CRITERIA

Although factors which relate to all five of the criteria may be found, this section highlights three in particular. The 'home' of the Wild Goose project being Iona Abbey, where visitors, from a combination of landscape, history, the building, and the sense of instantly becoming part of a living community where work and worship are one, readily attest to an awareness of transcendence, and one nourished by a weekly image-rich celebration of Holy Communion, it is possible to identify the dimension of *eucharistic community*. Although the case that we are recording is active away from the island, it is to be noted that the music written and made by the Wild Goose group

⁸³ See above, page 160.

⁸⁴ Kubicki, 'Celebrating the Incarnation', 541.

is the selfsame music that over the years has been recognised as growing out of and effectively serving the community and the worship on Iona. Both the texts, often strongly Christological (and evoking the Gospel narrative) in content and incarnational/sacramental in imagery, and the music (the folk song strand evocative of a culture strongly aware of the presence and providence of God, and the self-composed material which is not strongly coloured by particular idioms) ‘leave room’ for an experience of something more than the joy of singing together. This is near to what Judith Kubicki may mean when she talks of ‘the way the music relates to both text and singer’ and the sacramentality which is embedded in bodiliness and the material. Related perhaps is the same author’s identification of the specialness in being human that the incarnational union of the divine and human brings, and the discovery of this within the unaccompanied singing voice.

The *diaconal* dimension of the body of Christ, present in the host community whose members would characteristically serve in areas of urban deprivation, was also seen in the current case. As part of a youth project which sought to heal the alienation many young people experienced amidst unemployment and poverty, Last Night Out sought to image a serving Christ whose life and work was towards reconciliation. The young ministers in training, by eschewing work with a salary and accepting ‘dole money’, were identifying with the situation being experienced by so many young people, a new and ‘suffering’ experience for many of them. Another aspect was the relationship of the songs to the worship of Last Night Out, in that the writing of these was an attempt to match and enable the fullness of engagement that contemporary worship needed to have with the life of the world and to serve and express the desires and longings, as well as the thanksgivings, of those who participated. As such, they captured the realities of life in the world as well as the conflicts in the Gospel narrative. Hawn, in this regard, finds helpful the concept of liminality which brings people to the threshold of other situations of struggle and suffering through ‘praying, singing, moving to songs’ which reflect this, suggesting that the Wild Goose songs were of this type.

Characteristic of the ‘template’ of the project, the Iona Community itself, was the *relational* dimension whereby members sought in the common disciplines they followed and their answerability to each other the image and reality of the

relationships that would colour creation when it became reconciled to the Creator. In the project itself, where in the normal parish there was leadership, often unchallengeable, from the minister who also had the final word as to how worship would be conducted, there was a strong feeling of teamwork in the planning of the monthly event, a relationality which also admitted of conflict and resolution. This was present also in the way the songs were written, in trial and discussion – albeit there was typically a prime mover. Above all, there was a conscious attempt to capture and restore young people who were ‘on their way out’, who had found that the church was not offering them enough. In this, those who had not found a voice or felt accepted were offered a place in relation both to church and community. It is in this connection that Hawn draws on the concept of ‘secondary orality’ where there is a direct incorporation in the process, giving rise, he suggests, to a stronger commitment with what one is engaging with, seeking as they were community more than doctrine.⁸⁵

Sally Harper also notes this quality of accessibility for young people in Wild Goose music and finds it confirmed in an interview with John Bell: ‘I think it’s quite wrong to visit on a people who have a kind of Country and Western mentality as regards music the finer depths of Gabrieli or even Samuel Sebastian Wesley, and I don’t know that you can make any bridge from what you might perceive as being second-rate music to that which is better, unless you take seriously the popular.’ In Harper’s estimation, this bridging is achieved by the Wild Goose group without compromising musical and textual quality.⁸⁶

While these three dimensions of *koinonia* are the most evident for those who encounter and are touched (in some cases transformed) by the work of the Iona Community in general and the Wild Goose Worship Group in particular, it is important to observe another dimension at work: growing in maturity in Christ. Neither Community nor Wild Goose Group has been static; while there may have been strong, even charismatic, individuals, the initiatives have been those of a group; what has emerged over the decades was developed through questioning, testing, exploring, experimenting with text, with music, with patterns and styles of worship.

⁸⁵ Hawn, ‘The Wild Goose Sings’, 509.

⁸⁶ Sally Harper, ‘The Church Always Needs New Songs Because the World Changes’: Music from the Iona Community I, *Church Music Quarterly*, September 2001, 9. A second article, ‘Enemies of Apathy: Music from the Iona Community II’, appeared in *CMQ* in December 2001, 14-17.

These processes have been central to growing in maturity in Christ. This model is a telling one for a local worshipping community, not least for its ministers and other leaders. A small nucleus of people growing in Christ by weeks, months and years has had a far larger influence (perhaps larger than they could ever have conceived), well beyond the local to the international.

III

The Craigmillar Festival Society 1971-77

1. Reasons for including this case study

The district of Craigmillar within the city of Edinburgh was established in the 1930s during local implementation of new national government housing policies. This ‘slum clearance’ initiative was seen at the time as an enlightened remedy for inner city (social) congestion and its accompanying social problems, but disadvantages soon became apparent. Living on the periphery of the city, the new residents in these ‘housing schemes’ found themselves far from services, facilities and jobs, and, with the priority seen as the provision of housing, there was little attempt on the part of the authorities to build in the kind of social support that would naturally be found in an older established town of similar size. Thirty years later, the district was characterised in a health report as one of ‘severe personal and social disorder’ while another survey found it to be ‘the most deprived in the Lothian region’⁸⁷. For many years, unemployment had been around 25% among adult males and even higher among women and teenagers. The original industries (earlier, coal-mining, more recently, brewing) had long since closed down.

The churches had moved with the population. Three Church of Scotland parishes had been established, while the Roman Catholic Church, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Edinburgh City Mission and the Salvation Army were also represented. Between the years of 1970 and 1977, the Church of Scotland, concerned about the pressures on succeeding ministers, departed from the customary pattern of one-minister-one-parish and established a team ministry for an experimental period. As well as to offer better

⁸⁷ The Lothian Region comprises the city of Edinburgh and a substantial area to the east, south and west.

support for those who would minister in the area,⁸⁸ the intention was to enable a more flexible response in a district where traditional church-going habits were not the norm and where social needs were clamant. Two ordained ministers, of which the writer was one, formed the core of the team and remained for the duration of the experiment, while others, numbering up to four, and with varied briefs, came and went. It was decided to include an analysis of this experience in the present study for two reasons, both drawing on the development in the area of a residents' association known as the Craigmillar Festival Society. One reason relates to this Society's successful initiatives towards the building of community, which have been widely noted and much imitated. Its approach may have relevance to a theological exploration of *koinoinia*, not just in offering examples in practice but, more importantly, in pressing home the enquiry into the true nature of the community which is at the heart of Christian understanding.

The second reason has a bearing on the musical thrust of the study. Central to the activities of the Festival Society were the arts, seen as a catalyst for community regeneration, and in particular music, in which the student became particularly involved. Members of the ministry team had not seen the division of labour as deriving from the fact that some were ordained and some not. It was believed that the function of each should derive from his/her particular expertise or experience. The writer had just completed a Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Glasgow, which as well as the traditional components had included the study of composition under the tutelage of the composer Hugh Wood. When the Festival Society sought a musical director in 1972, it was agreed by the team that this could be seen as a legitimate exercise of ministry, serving the community but also bringing the church into contact with sections of the population to which it would not normally have ready access.

In terms of this study, the relationship between music and community building could yield insight into the nature of the relationship between church music and its role in the building of and expression of *koinoinia*. Again, this would not be merely illustrative but, it might be hoped, serve to drive the discussion deeper.

⁸⁸ That is, the two ministers which were appointed were 'of equal status', both with experience, rather than a senior minister and 'apprentice'.

2. The Craigmillar Festival Society

The origin of this organisation was in the 1960s when a local mother and housewife, Helen Crummy, who had a son with some talent for music, became frustrated by the lack of provision for instrumental teaching in the local school, which was considered an unnecessary luxury in such a district. Her response, with other mothers, was to promote summer festival activities at which local talent was given a platform. By the 1970s, this had grown into an annual, week-long festival of music and drama, pageants and banquets, fairs and street events. While the festival remained the defining feature of what became known as the Craigmillar Festival Society, however, the organisation found itself drawn into the matter of community regeneration in the widest possible way.

Funds obtained from an urban aid scheme enabled the establishment of a locally-initiated and informal 'pastoral' structure of neighbourhood workers, local residents who lived in the district and who, after some training by professionals, undertook a wide variety of caring tasks, rendered especially effective by their being trusted members of the same community. In comparison with other areas, it was shown that by this means expensive hospitalisation of the elderly was reduced, as was the incidence of depressive illnesses. Work with young people led to an increase in school attendance, and reduced both functional illiteracy and the rate of juvenile crime.⁸⁹ Workshops were also established (all groups, including the monthly official meetings of the Society, were open to all comers) in planning, housing, environmental improvement, education, employment, communications, recreation, and the arts. Through these means, a number of significant improvements and provisions were secured for the community.

From early in its life, the Society sought partnership with decision-makers in both local and national government, and with those who controlled resources. This partnership was one which arose spontaneously as the Society formed, when the city's social work department established in Craigmillar a more flexible provision for the meeting of clamant local needs. The two initiatives might be said to have 'recognised

⁸⁹ Eric Trist, 'Intervention Strategies for Interorganizational Domains', in Robert Tannenbaum, Newton Margulies, Fred Massarik and Associates, *Human Systems Development: New Perspectives on People and Organizations* (San Francisco and London: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1985), 184.

each other' and this partnership led to relationships, which could sometimes be stormy, with other levels of government. Part of the social work initiative was to listen, through a consultant-researcher, to the community, and this researcher remained informally as an adviser to the Society beyond the end of the social work project.

Within this partnership, the Society developed skill in identifying special grants and making effective application for these. As knowledge of its work spread, the Society successfully competed, in 1976, for a major three-year grant from the Anti-Poverty Programme of the European Economic Community, which was then further extended for two years. This funded an 'action-research' project which took the form of pilot schemes to combat common problems that could not be dealt with by conventional methods, enabling the Society greatly to extend the scope and raise the quality of its services and to secure more professional assistance, as well as seeking answers to the question as to what continuing factors kept the level of deprivation so high. It led to a 'comprehensive plan for action', containing a 'vision of life in the years ahead'. The vision required partnership between the people of Craigmillar and both local and national authorities and agencies. The aim was to be no less than 'the achievement of a viable community with all the necessary ingredients of amenities, facilities and services'. The document outlining this vision continues: '[The action plan's] basic importance lies in the fact that it advocates and signifies a change in politics and economics to yield a more fulfilling society'.⁹⁰

This multi-faceted initiative has by now been recognised internationally as a model that could be applied in many other contexts. One outside assessment defines its success as deriving from its genuinely local character, the comprehensiveness of its approach and the achievement of workable patterns of partnership with other agencies.

Attempts to transform deprived communities into going concerns solely from the outside by increasing publicly provided services have by and large failed. So have attempts from the inside relying simply on voluntary personnel, untrained and working intermittently in their free time. So also have restricted attempts addressed only to one or two rather than to the many interrelated aspects of community life. By contrast the Craigmillar

⁹⁰ Craigmillar Festival Society programme 1978, contents page.

Festival Society, initiated 14 years ago, has now a proven record of considerable success. The very different model it represents merits closer attention ... A team of local residents knows the needs and potential capabilities of their area better than those outside. They can suggest more realistic priorities. They can also get all the various aspects of multiple deprivation together at the local level. ... The statutory agencies work each in its own special sphere. The level of government at which they are combined is too distant to match local requirements. But the Festival Society, working in partnership with external agencies, enables them to deploy their scarce professional and administrative resources more effectively. This process may be called "liaison government". It opens up a new prospect in community development.⁹¹

3. Community arts in Craigmillar

There is always a danger that a successful enterprise will grow away from its origins, particularly when it becomes absorbed, by necessity, in political power struggles. In the case of Craigmillar, care was taken to avoid this danger. The originating event in the Society's life had been a festival and this had grown year by year into a colourful, hilarious and indigenous annual week of activities in the streets and halls and open spaces of the district. However important and all-consuming political and social action became, the festival was always seen at the heart. It 'remains the touchstone of the Society and is still the generative force that keeps the organisation alive, open to new ideas and forward looking', said organising secretary Helen Crummy. This arose from the recognition that only the arts had the ability to express and focus the local vision and, further, that to recreate community it was necessary to awaken the individual talents of its members. Community and personal identity were closely linked. This development was one which was particularly noted by observers:

The human creativity discovered continually in the practice of various arts is the fundamentally significant difference between the Society and countless other organisations. For, in the manifestation through the arts in a local festival of a vision and a process which has now spread into many walks of local life, and indeed, much further afield, the Craigmillar Festival Society has taken a whole community on a trip into the future. This fact has been expressed directly in the Society's community musicals. It is not only what the Society does, but especially how it does it, that, I believe, has taken all those on board into a realm where people can see and taste that which is yet to come.⁹²

⁹¹ Eric Trist and Steve Burgess, 'Multiple Deprivation: a Human and Economic Approach', *Linkage* no. 3, July 1978, 8-9.

⁹² Stephen Burgess, 'The Significance of the Arts for the Craigmillar Festival Society', *Leisure Studies Association Quarterly*, Jan. 1981, Vol. 2, No 1.

The number of people touched by the Festival was large. In one typical year it was estimated that about three-quarters of the population of the district had taken part either as spectators or in mounting the various events.⁹³ It was the 'arts factor' that led subsequent commentators to single out the Society as a possible model for wider application.

The Craigmillar Festival Society provides without a doubt one of the most optimistic illustrations of the use of festivity as an agent of social change and because it offers practical answers to some of the questions highlighted ... It is perhaps no co-incidence that the model of the Craigmillar society has become a legend and inspiration to other community groups seeking ways of resisting social dereliction.⁹⁴

During the period described, one particular genre came to the fore, the community musical. Each year, this incorporated the social/political issue which was most dominant at the time, be it housing, unemployment, or an environmental matter like the proposed city ring route that would isolate one half of the district, and therefore different family generations, from the other. For want of a local theatre or other space large enough to be adapted as such, use was made of the central of the three Church of Scotland churches, the one in which the team ministry was based. This spacious and handsome stone building, although traditionally designed, dated from the 1930s. It was furnished with chairs rather than pews and provided the flexibility required. Invariably, a large cast was involved, from local primary schools to pipe bands and pensioners' choirs. Each year the Organising Secretary would put forward an idea which would then be developed by others. The plot and dialogue would be fleshed out by a local group or groups, and individual scenes given to other bodies (e.g. schools) to work up. Professional actors and an outside director would assist in translating this into a script and in bringing it to the stage. This was another example of the principle of partnership espoused by the Society, the free exchange between outside professionals and local people on an equal basis. The local community benefitted from the involvement of actors, some now well-known (such as Bill Paterson, Kenny Ireland – until recently director of the Edinburgh's Lyceum Theatre, Sandy Neilson), and these in turn acknowledge their early years in Craigmillar.

⁹³ Trist, 'Intervention Strategies', 183.

⁹⁴ Helen Wood, 'Festivity and Social Change', in *Leisure in the '80s*, Research Unit, Dept. of Social Sciences, Polytechnic of the South Bank, 1982.

Of particular interest was the way that the plots of the musicals drew on the history of the area. Dominating the locality was a striking outcrop of rock (some derive the district's name from the Gaelic 'craig-moil-ord', 'high bare rock') on which in 1374 the now partially-ruined Craigmillar Castle, sister to the more famous Edinburgh Castle a few miles to the north west, was built. This castle played its part in most periods of history, hosting for example Edward I during his depredations, Mary Queen of Scots in planning the murder of Darnley, and many other intrigues and events through the centuries. The aspect it commanded, instead of the current concrete and tarmac, would have been of green, well-watered, gently-rolling fields reaching south-east ultimately to become what is now known as the 'garden of Scotland' (the district of East Lothian), an aspect not much changed by the time the novelist Sir Walter Scott looked across it from the nearby manse of Duddingston as he wrote *The Heart of Midlothian* – the house of Dumbiedykes in that novel modelled on Craigmillar's still well-preserved Peffermill House.

Later, this rural landscape of small scattered hamlets would show the evidence of the coal fields which were opened up in the eighteenth century. From this period comes the folk memory of the practice of 'arling', when a child at baptism would be arled to the mine owner, rendering it virtually impossible to break away from a life of oppression and misery (a circumstance which made more than one appearance in musicals). The facial disfigurement known as the 'Niddrie lip', common to women who pulled the coal carts under ground, was widespread in this period. Coal mining survived into the twentieth century, the last mines to be closed being in the village of Newcraighall, part of the community of Craigmillar. It was life in this village which formed the basis of the first two films in Bill Douglas's trilogy which began with *My Childhood* and which won an award at the Cannes Film Festival, but also first in a recent list of favourite films by Scottish film makers.

Rather than consisting of polemic and propaganda, the plots of the musicals generally involved passage from the present to the historical past and, sometimes, to the future. Various devices would be used to trigger the release of historical narrative relevant to the issue in hand. A homeless family temporarily housed in the largely ruined Craigmillar Castle encountered key incidents from different periods, as did the bulldozer crew demolishing the nearby eighteenth-century house (threatened by the

same ring route) known as Hermits and Termites, the name of the house becoming the title of the musical. Aspects of the culture of the present – football, the Edinburgh Festival, rock bands, etc. – were also incorporated. The ability of historical awareness to release and empower extended also to additional productions in the Castle itself, where the drama and audience would move round the various rooms, ‘matching’ incidents and conditions with the challenges and opportunities in the present day. Some of these productions were revived for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe later in the year and, in one or two cases after the writer had left the area, taken to continental Europe in relation to the EEC (as it then was) grant referred to above. These productions were invariably reviewed each year in the arts pages of *The Scotsman*, one of two national broadsheets.

4. The role of the music director

Until my appointment as (honorary) music director of the Society, the music used in the pageants and presentations was already in the public domain. The main concern of whoever was responsible for the music in any year was its performance and the arranging that was required. The change which took place in 1972-3, which culminated in the first full length, locally-written staged musical, came from two directions. One was the strengthening conviction on the part of the Society about the importance of increasing the involvement of local people in pursuit of the transformation of the neighbourhood.

The second owed something to the opportunity of my being free to invest time (unlike predecessors who, for example, were full time local music teachers) in such a venture, and to the musical experience I had been able to access. I was part of the generation for whom the folk music revival was significant, where there was an emphasis on participation as well as listening to others. One of the earliest projects supported by the team ministry was the Folk Workshop where a large number of guitars were acquired from round the city and young people were taught how to play. This took place in the public coffee house that was established in part of the church building. While there was an interest in folk music amongst some who came to learn guitar chords, a greater motive by the early Seventies was to be able to emulate those who played in rock bands, also a very democratic pursuit which brought music-making (and possible fame) within the scope of those without technical musical training.

During the period in question more than one band of this kind was formed, to be subsequently included in the community musicals.

Folk music, by its nature, as well as dealing with timeless themes, also encompassed everyday matters and concerns, in celebration, lament or humour. This prompted an understanding of the role of musical director as not necessarily confined to the annual performances but as relating also to the day-to-day unfolding issues and events in the life of the community. One of the songs still sung, 'Craigmillar now – fine place to be', although it figured in musicals later, was written at and in response to a significant conference in the district involving local people, representatives from local government, the planning department of the University of Edinburgh, and others.

Work took place with groups and individuals as part of the development of the scripts for each musical, with the existing Folk Workshop as base. This might consist of the music director as facilitator identifying incidents which would be enhanced by song and working on a one-to-one basis with a local (usually) young composer – or with someone who saw him/herself as a potential composer. Another pattern was for someone to write a song or the bones of a song, which would then be the basis for discussion between the facilitator and the composer. Again, songs would be written by the music director in response to discussion with those developing the script. In this case, the participative activity would be on preparing and mounting the song with the group or the soloist who was to perform it. In the course of this, modification would take place and suggestions made by the singer would be incorporated. For the purpose of this study, interviews with some of the writers and composers with which the Festival Society was still in contact, took place and are reported below.

5. Music and the Craigmillar Festival Society

While the Society and those facilitating its arts projects were making a unique response to the situation, it was noted in retrospect that this approach was by no means an isolated one. The 1960s had seen the rise of the arts centre movement, most typically initiated by educational organisations, which sought to 'democratise' the arts. Many felt that this attempt to 'bring the arts to the people' was based on a

middle-class misunderstanding⁹⁵ and purpose-built centres were soon joined by community-based workshops with a different focus. Community artists working in this latter context did not see their role as taking ‘their’ art to the people, the relationship between the professional and the amateur, but as placing their talent at the disposal of others and collaborating with them on a basis of equality. The writer had been in touch with this discussion and had written a pamphlet suggesting that a new arts centre planned by the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh’s Royal Mile was tending to take its cue from the earlier concept of formalised art activity and should rather have the latter emphasis.⁹⁶ Influential had been the work of such as Brian Way and his book, *Development through Drama*,⁹⁷ which had alerted educators to the need to move beyond formal works of art to include improvisation and to place value on what people themselves created, the title itself suggesting that the focus should move from ‘creating art works’ to the individual and the release of his/her talents and individuality.

While it is true that the community musical’s purpose was to entertain audiences, and by this means to engage them in the process of change, the reasons for involving people in creating the music went beyond this. One motive focused on the individual participants. The Festival had originated round the failure of the educational system to enable the development of an individual musical talent, and the need to unlock the talent and potential of each individual for it to flourish in the context of the community and to contribute to the community’s health. This had become one of the central tenets of the Festival Society. It assumed that the ability to make music was a human attribute rather than the possession of certain particularly gifted people. This view was not only ideological but may be defended physiologically. Everitt⁹⁸ recounts neurological research which shows that rhythms and the formal behavioural patterns we associate with music can be traced back to the reptilian stem. Very young babies display sophisticated ability to recognise musical structures. It is now recognised that musical experience in childhood has long-lasting effects. The right temporal lobe apparently contains a complete record of all the music heard between the ages of 8

⁹⁵ Anthony Everitt, *Joining In: An Investigation into Participatory Music* (London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1997).

⁹⁶ *Programme for an Arts Centre*.

⁹⁷ Brian Way, *Development Through Drama*, (London: Longmans, 1967).

⁹⁸ Everitt, *Joining In*.

and 11 years. His conclusion is that science is telling us that to be human is to be intrinsically musical. (John Bell⁹⁹ records many examples he has encountered when discouragement at an early age has left members of congregations believing that ‘they are not singers’.) Everitt¹⁰⁰ cites the UN Declaration of Cultural Rights Covenant 15 which states that in a democracy culture should belong to everybody.

Indeed, the plot of the community musical in 1976 took this as its theme. That year, a National Children’s Bureau report had published disturbing statistics to show that in Scotland one in every ten children was disadvantaged. The plot concerned ‘Willie Wynn’, one of those ‘born to fail’ (the title of the report). At 17, he has no job, no prospects, and no expectations of himself. However, what he does have is a vivid imagination, a quick wit and a sense of fun. He is able to conjure up a different world, involving his family and friends, and the musical portrays this. He stands for the possibility that the cycle of deprivation can be broken, carried through by people’s belief in themselves and their visions for the future. The message to the community was that its most precious asset was its high proportion of children and young people, and that to realise this asset there was a need for bolder educational provision with the important addition of local community encouragement and nurture. However, if this approach through the arts enabled individual development, it also, through individuals, was to have an effect on the community as a whole. The community was the way it was because of deprivation, experienced by individuals and dictating how they related to others.

Everitt¹⁰¹ notes that participation in cultural activities is a way that people can assert and enjoy membership of an identifiable community. In particular, music is a ‘storage depot of emotion’, for feelings of community as well as of individual identity. He quotes a Council of Europe report on culture and development which notes how postmodernism’s rejection of ‘grand narratives’ goes hand in hand with a new prominence for the arts. ‘Post-modern culture has embraced simulation, spectacle, pastiche and stylistic bricolage. The result has been a wider acceptance of, and aesthetic interest in, popular entertainments, advertising, electronic and commercial

⁹⁹ John L. Bell, *The Singing Thing*.

¹⁰⁰ Everitt, *Joining In*.

¹⁰¹ Everitt, *Joining In*, chapter 1.

culture, ethnic cultural expressions and vernacular culture forms. This has been taken to the point where the kitsch and the banal have become the (sometimes ironic and playful) object of aesthetic display. Hierarchies of value, in sum, have become fluid and contested'.¹⁰² The report also sees such participation as a way in which people can 'come out from under' a state which, deliberately or not, threatens individual freedoms, a remark which finds resonance in the Craigmillar context.

In the present case, the way that the Society had evolved had the arts lodged at its core, as the spring of its activity, and music had pride of place. Some may see a discrepancy between a medium usually associated with relaxation from active concerns and the struggle for fairer and more just structures. However, this medium may instinctively have been embraced for its powerful role in effecting change. Mention has already been made of the appeal, in the plots of dramatic productions at Craigmillar, to history and in particular to the history of dissent. Eyerman and Jamison,¹⁰³ in their discussion of its place in social movements, suggest that music is a carrier of the memory of traditions of resistance and critique.¹⁰⁴ The style and cast of the music itself convey memories of its original context and culture. They see any social movement not just as making political adjustments but as providing spaces for cultural growth and experimentation, central moments in the reconstitution of a culture when for brief, intensive moments, habitual behaviour and its underlying values are thrown open for debate and reflection. As each movement becomes spent, its music remains in the memory and represents a potential way of inspiring new waves of mobilisation. They cite the American rights movement as an example. 'In the civil rights movement black music brought a new kind of truth into American society – redemptive, visionary, emancipative.'¹⁰⁵ Reference is made to Marcuse for the emphasis he put on the aesthetic dimension of movements of the time saying that it was primarily in art and music that social movements were 're-membered'. Reviewing the folk music revival of the 1960s, they affirm that it was by no means apolitical, arising from a nostalgia for a better and more innocent time 'when we were

¹⁰² Quoted Everitt, *Joining In*, 23.

¹⁰³ Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, *Musical and Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Kerman makes a similar point when he remarks that folksong and folk culture is often associated with anti-establishment attitudes. Joseph Kerman, *Ethnomusicology* (Fontana, 1985), chapter 5.

¹⁰⁵ Eyerman and Jamison, *Musical and Social Movements*, 44.

good'. A major movement has three central components: context, process and knowledge, the latter when the ideas which undergird the movement are worked out and become common property. It is in the last in particular that they suggest the arts come into their own.

In the work of the Craigmillar Festival Society, there was a subversive element, a dimension of defiance, and music was seen as serving this. This element was also present in the popular annual Old Time Music Hall, held in the Miners' Welfare Institute, traditionally a form which snubs noses at the establishment.

The plot of the community musical *Willie Wynn* set out to show what happens when the fantasies of a good future of a talented young member of the community can be encouraged into being and captured for the power they have to bring change. This nourishment of the imagination through music and the arts spilled over to affect the way that the Society went about its work. Eric Trist, Professor of Organisational Behavior and Social Ecology at York University, Toronto, was one who came to observe the workings of the Society and wrote of the place of the imagination in its work. He wrote that

the creation of art in any of its forms is perhaps the most profound and powerful affirmation of life against death that we as humans can make, of harnessing the constructive and positive forces against the constraining and destructive forces. The cultivation of the imagination develops a resourcefulness which enables reality, however grim, more innovatively to be contended with. The Craigmillar folk had not much else than their imagination to fall back on. Their imagination was their open road to greater self-reliance. They have used it to the full.¹⁰⁶

His co-researcher, M. Stephen Burgess, having lived with the Society for several years, attests to the effect community arts had on the way meetings and workshops on subjects other than the arts functioned. Noting the openness of all workshops and the equal access to the discussions and resultant activities on the part of outside professionals and local people, he observes that

such extensive and intensive networking went far beyond the bureaucratic or hierarchical patterns of most learning institutions. Based on linking across any boundaries and not ranking within or between bounded organisations, as the wider society's formal organisation is, the

¹⁰⁶ Eric Trist, 'New Directions of Hope', in *Human Futures*, Autumn, 1979, 8.

participants were able to creatively engender new and relevant approaches to meet the needs and further the aspirations of the community's people. Taking action together out of the overall or specific creative vision, the culture which the Festival and its Society continued to make, expanded still further the creative energy and well being of the people so engaged.¹⁰⁷

In describing his feelings in taking part in such encounters, he writes: 'Often it was as if the room became illumined. In attempting to describe the phenomenon in which we all participated, I had to let my own unconscious generate spontaneously a new and open working concept'.

6. A parallel initiative

An interest of the music director in his earlier musical studies had been early Christian drama with music – for example, the mediaeval dramatisations of key biblical incidents which began with Easter and expanded into other festivals and narratives. Of equal interest had been the many examples of song being used to convey biblical material, such as the carol and the *contrafacta*. As well as service within the community, there was an obligation on the local church to make people aware of the founding events and the offer at the heart of the Gospel. Two projects were undertaken in pursuit of this.

One was the writing of songs in a folk style which recounted biblical incidents in a dramatic way. These were taken from both the Old and the New Testaments, from the prophet Micaiah, son of Imlah ('Micaiah McImlah'), to stories Jesus told – such as the Pharisee and the Publican – and incidents such as the encounter on the road to Emmaus. These were used in services and in schools but also might be sung in the music workshop and other gatherings which took place within the programme of the public coffee house which had been established in part of the church halls. Concurrently they were used on the Scottish Home Service in programmes produced by the religious department, although one also appeared in a current affairs programme when it came to be used as a playground skipping song.

The second project consisted of two productions on religious themes in the same mould as the community musicals. One retold the story of the book of Ruth but so

¹⁰⁷ Unpublished paper.

handled that its original purpose – polemic against what the author saw as the racially-exclusive policies current in the time of Ezra-Nehemiah – was evident and was allowed to comment on equivalent contemporary attitudes. The title, after the two main participants Ruth and Boaz, was *R & B*,¹⁰⁸ which was also a play on the musical style used, being suitable for setting a narrative about people who were dispossessed. Although a few members of the congregation were involved in staging this musical, the main roles were taken by members of the Craigmillar Festival Society community musical casts. While the music director was responsible for the final script and the songs, this was built from initial Bible study with the potential performers followed by discussion of the dramatic potential and handling of the material.

This formula was later applied to a production celebrating the life of St. Francis of Assisi on the 750th anniversary of his death (*The Laughtermakers*, being a translation of the contemporary epithet applied to Francis' followers, *Ioculatores Dei*). This was not a through-composed musical but an episodic production told as if by troubadours, largely using the styles and instrumentation appropriate to the time, separated by spoken and enacted material. Again, attention was paid to the relevance of the story of Francis for our own times, and featured the themes of 'living simply' (very much in vogue at the time), peace, and respect for creation and the environment. There was an attempt to capture the celebratory 'flavour' of the life of Francis, which was well echoed in a current best seller by John Vincent Taylor where he called on Christians to become a 'joyful resistance movement'.¹⁰⁹ This production also made use of actors and musicians who were participating year by year in the community musicals. Both productions were, like some of the Festival productions, performed both locally and on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.¹¹⁰

By the time these musical productions were mounted, the music director had worked with local people for a year or two but had some anxiety that cast members other than those representative of the local congregation might feel that they were being unfairly targetted in an attempt at evangelism. This fear turned out to be groundless and cast members freely participated in the productions.

¹⁰⁸ Rhythm and Blues.

¹⁰⁹ John V. Taylor, *Enough is Enough* (London: SCM Press, 1975).

¹¹⁰ In the Netherbow, the Church of Scotland's arts centre and theatre on the Royal Mile, recently reborn as the Scottish Storytelling Centre.

7. Resonances with the criteria

The image of koinoinia is reflected both in general and in terms of the dimensions extracted in chapter 4. In general, to have been 'seconded' to work within the Festival Society was not, for the writer, experienced as an exile from the church but as a continuation of it, and the reflection now undertaken upon this has an 'ecclesiological' feel, albeit undertaken in a secular context. The concept of 'community' was to the fore, there was an investment in and affirmation of individual persons-in-community, there was the fact that the work of the Society came to be experienced as a model for other situations, a 'sign' and even a 'foretaste' of a quality of communal life possible in spite of destructive forces. There was the pastoral dimension expressed in the neighbourhood workers. There was also the common ground of music which functions in the same way whatever the context. Four of the dimensions within koinoinia are seen as particularly relevant.

A diaconal community

The eschatological 'reach' of koinoinia was reflected in the language used in Craigmillar about the goal of the initiative, expressed both by the local people and commentators. This spoke of the achievement of a viable community, of a process which would yield a more fulfilling society, undertaken by a local community which was on a trip to the future, feeling towards a very different model of community: all these descriptions were used. Within this was also the echo of an ecclesiological understanding of service which was not akin to the giving of a helping hand but a losing of oneself in the plight of the other so that in solidarity reconciliation might be found as the cycle of deprivation was confronted and attempts made to break this. Clearest expression of this was in the neighbourhood worker scheme, seen both as enabling people connect to and live healthily within the community as it was and as a dimension of the whole vision. These were not isolated in their tasks but at the core of the planning, each given responsibility for renewing one aspect of community, and each fully a member of the Festival Society central committee. The diaconal dimension was also seen in the involvement in some measure of most of the team in this work (and not just the musical director).

There was, however, another echo, and one that spoke from community to church. Erik Trist begins a paper by noting:¹¹¹

Complex societies in fast-changing environments give rise to sets or systems of problems (meta-problems) rather than discrete problems. These are beyond the capacity of single organisations to meet. Inter-organisational collaboration is required by groups of organisations at what is called the 'domain' level. The required capability at this level is mediated by 'referent organisations'.

Trist is examining societies which have spawned such meta-problems, typical of which is the advanced industrial Western society, and addresses the question as to how to strengthen their inter-organisational competence. The answer for him is in the 'referent organisation'. Such groups emerge in the conditions of 'turbulence' caused by the operation of large competing concerns. When turbulence arises in or between 'domains', be they industrial, or social welfare, or food provision, two reactions are possible, both inhibiting: increased bureaucracy resulting in stagnation, or a laissez-faire approach which leads to disintegration. It is only the referent organisation, it is suggested, that is capable of linking 'domains' to the end of solving the meta-problem. 'Neither can provide the organisational means likely to lead towards a desirable human future.'¹¹² What is necessary is a central interdependence, some surrender of sovereignty and considerable diffusion of power. A reticular structure must be developed which is self-regulating but which is built by the stakeholders themselves.

Trist sees the Craigmillar Festival Society as one such referent organisation,¹¹³ with its aim to find a way acceptable, both to groups in the community and to local and national government, of sharing the limited resources of a common environment. The conditions of the Society's emergence, the way it has operated and what it has achieved brings together the following components found in parallel situations: a critical situation exists but there is an organisational vacuum; a local problem mirrors a major societal one so that local action has a symbolic as well as actual power; separate 'higher level' agencies interact in local setting; the community has a negative image but the independence of the group from statutory bodies and local power

¹¹¹ Eric Trist, 'Referent Organizations and the Development of Inter-organizational Domains', *Human Relations*, Vol.36, No.3, 1983, 269.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 271.

¹¹³ Eric Trist, 'Intervention Strategies', 183.

groups enables this to be reversed; the group is able to secure the collaboration of key interest groups; the group engineers the transference of resources from public funds; the group shows itself to have developed a distinctive competence so that power can be accepted as complementary.¹¹⁴

The model of the referent organisation may cast light on the nature and purpose of the church. For the church, the 'domain level' is both the local parish and the national/global community. Not only does the 'brokenness' of society have complex causes and multifaceted expressions (and which cannot be tackled by simple approaches – a call, say, to embrace 'family values') but also the means of addressing the situation with any effect – through proclamation, service and healing – no longer lie easily to hand within the church as they once did and require a reach, a technological expertise and a content dispersed across many bodies and networks. The positive factor is that the church is well placed to act like a referent organisation. It is not beholden to any human structure and is thus able to interact with bodies who may be in tension with each other on an equal basis. It does not, at its best, understand its goal as that of increasing its own material influence or power but sees itself as a servant body, sharing the ministry of Christ and working towards the Kingdom of God.

The Craigmillar model thus presents a challenge to a diaconal church in general terms, but it also addresses questions to its music-making, and in three ways. One is the opportunity that resides in the local church to offer its expertise more widely, partnering (or leading the way towards) initiatives of community building which either originate in the church or are supported by the church. Church music has for centuries been part of the building of community (often in a general societal sense) and there is experience there to share. Secondly, the church can 'import' music and musicians from other sectors for the enrichment of public worship, often by this strengthening the hand of those working musically in other sectors.¹¹⁵ There are other kinds of co-operation and partnership which can advance the music of the church, like commissioning from 'secular' composers or promoting joint projects with schools.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 186.

¹¹⁵ This is explored in respect of the National Youth Choir of Scotland in Susan Wilson and Douglas Galbraith, 'Nine Lessons for the Church', *Different Voices*, Issue 4, Pentecost, 2009.

Thirdly, the Craigmillar project is a reminder of the power of the music of the culture(s) represented and the messages carried within music which, judiciously used, might helpfully 'gloss' music being prepared to carry the liturgical action.

Growing to maturity in Christ

A concept which has surfaced in a number of analyses of the Festival Society is that of 'action learning'. This is not understood in the sense of a formalised pattern of learning, a means of doing better or differently what might otherwise be done in traditional ways. Its subject matter is as much the learner as what is learned, and the curriculum is not so much a body of material as something more indefinable, that might be described perhaps as 'being-in-community'.

In the papers just cited, Trist concludes that the effectiveness of the initiative under study 'depends on widespread experiential learning in a very considerable number of people', when change is owned by the 'stakeholders'.¹¹⁶ The discussion of action learning is taken up by Morgan and Ramirez who see it not just in a limited way as a process of acquiring knowledge but as a characteristic mode of making community with others.¹¹⁷ The mechanistic structure of social institutions is seen as not conducive to the adaptability that is essential in contemporary life. Institutions are designed so that discrete parts may complement each other, and are hedged about by rules and controls, regulated by supervision. The structure of management is hierarchical and bureaucratic. This structure works for the tasks to hand but does not adapt to the unexpected. This is contrasted with the image of the hologram, when the whole is represented in all the parts. They note that the brain functions in this way; memory is distributed throughout the brain and can be reconstituted from any of its parts. This metaphor suggests the possibility of social structures where there is a redundancy *within* parts rather than *of* parts. Each element is designed to perform a range of tasks, not all of which will be needed at any one time. The area of responsibility of any one person is to be defined by the problems facing the whole. An important difference between the two models is that mechanical design is organised, whereas a holographic design is self-organising.

¹¹⁶ Trist, 'Intervention Strategies', 188.

¹¹⁷ Gareth Morgan and Rafael Ramirez, 'Action Learning: A Holographic Metaphor for Guiding Social Change', given at the York University (Ontario) Action Learning Group, April 1983.

It is here that the concept of action learning is developed. A self-organising system is one which can learn from its own experience, so that its structure is modified and redesigned to reflect what has been learned. Although Morgan and Ramirez do not refer in their paper to the Craigmillar Festival Society, the organisation corresponds to many of the conditions they outline. Redundancy within the structure (that is, leaving room within a person's immediate responsibilities for other less defined responsibilities) makes for increased flexibility as many people 'own' the same problem. The Craigmillar Festival Society's decision to make all workshops and committee meetings open to all and the doubling up of tasks (e.g. a person is made a neighbourhood worker, but is also given charge of youth clubs) was an example of this. This in itself does not suggest inefficiency; the distinction between efficiency and effectiveness is important. *Efficient* organisations can eliminate ones that would be *effective* at, say, responding to questions of polluting the environment. Thus is built in a 'richness' of a multi-skilled, interchangeable system which allows response to errors in other parts of the system. It is also more likely to ask wider questions about what its operatives are engaged in and allows the system to monitor how well it works and whether the guidelines need changing. Finally, what is specified should be no more than is necessary for the system to begin operating; roles can be left open.

This structure of operating/learning combines things often regarded as separate and transcends the usual dichotomies between subject and object, individual and social, order and change, theory and practice, knowledge and action. It empowers people to be critically conscious of values, assumptions, actions, and thus be active partners in producing their reality. The underlying idea here is that learning comes through action. The dichotomies referred to are artificial because we can only live and know insofar as we engage with life. This cuts across the usual approach by which knowledge is gained from the standpoint of the external observer, which does not give insight into how people can be empowered to act differently.

This holographic image is one which described well the workings of the Craigmillar Festival Society. Burgess brackets the action-learning process with the creative process. The way workshops and meetings proceeded was similar to the processes by which plots were worked out and music written. This networking crossed the boundaries of the usual departmentalisms and 'drew together in more subtle and

complex combinations the contributions from those who had come from an important variety of the paths of learning and walks of life'. He finds this less typical of learning at university and more of something which might be called 'communiversity'. It is this concept that is now being followed up by the 'descendants' of the Craigmillar Festival Society.

A strong parallel may be found between the paper's description of the 'richness' that is contained within the system they describe, deriving from its multi-skilled nature, and the Pauline concept of the gifts of the Spirit.¹¹⁸ This concept is often only partially understood as referring to different roles which people are offered and for which they are equipped, in other words the model being countered by Morgan and Ramirez. Their picture is not of individuals interacting at the edges of their personalities but rather that of the community being placed within each person. This is very close to the Pauline teaching that it is the community that is given gifts, that the giftedness of each person is not to resource that person so much as to 'enrich' the whole. Indeed, there is overlap between gifts, and no suggestion that there should only be one gift per person. Both the study in question and biblical teaching therefore challenge any idea that community is a conglomerate of individuals. Rigid distinctions by which each has his/her place are questioned. 'Redundancy' allows more room within the personality to embrace more of the reality of being in community and allows an adaptability towards dealing with problems, with 'turbulence'.

A musical talent is often considered to be a personal possession, one that marks someone out as 'gifted'. The Craigmillar experience was that the making of music is a human attribute, one of the conditions of being human (and one supported by neurology), and that to work as broadly as possible across the groups in the community was both to serve the individual and the community at one and the same time. Church music stands out against an overemphasis on the individual, seeing both music and the individual musician in a servant role, serving both the ensemble and the liturgy. Relevant also is the idea that music is a gift given to the church as a body. This may be seen to challenge a church music structure which makes a distinction between choir and congregation, when the latter are allowed to join in as they can. It

¹¹⁸ For example in Ephesians chapter 4.

may be that we need to widen our approach to embrace music in which more categories of people have a dedicated part. The growth of interactive music already in churches goes some way towards this.

A relational community

Although the Craigmillar Festival Society began by seeking ways of solving the problems experienced by a community such as theirs, a principle soon emerged which came to be described as 'liaison government'. From the beginning, partnership had been established with the planning department of the University of Edinburgh and with the Social Work department of the local authority. It became clear that ways forward could only be established when the principle of working with government was enshrined at the heart of the initiative, a partnership that involved action and research as twin arms of the project.

This 'relational' mode of working stretched into all corners of the work. In the Festival, it was grasped early on by the organisers that if and when professionals were applied to, the condition of their involvement should be in equality with local people. The musicals were based on ideas in nearly every case originating from the organising secretary but these only became a reality when different groups took different scenes and put flesh on the bones. Young Scottish actors gave their time free and took the stage with local would-be actors, and looked back on this time as formative in their careers. My own involvement as music director was to work with persons and groups, assisting in the writing of songs and musical events where the other party was a local composer or music group. It is true that the task often fell to a person like myself (another example was the professional director who might also work up parts of the script)¹¹⁹ but that did not at all erode the principle. This approach was very much that of the community arts movement, currently in vogue, where collaboration was considered a better way of tapping into people's own creativity.

A final example of 'relationality' mirrors that developed in the ecclesiological context, when it was noted that one aspect of this is when a group which is meant to relate to the others who make up the network of relationships is absent or voiceless. In

¹¹⁹ One of these was Sandy Neilson, at the time of writing playing at Stratford. Another actor was Bill Paterson, now a well-known film and television actor.

the Craigmillar Festival Society context was present the conviction that there were swathes of the population that needed awakening to the fact that they had a role in the community. The small group of activists would themselves be unable to create the viable community that was sought. It was only when the visions and hopes that resided in people themselves were touched and brought to expression that the fulfilling society would be achievable. When an influential report spoke of the work of the Craigmillar Festival Society as ‘a new voice in the Scottish consciousness’, it may or may not have been aware that one aspect of this was the activation of many more voices than had heretofore been heard.

A eucharistic community

The discussion of the function of music in social movements by such musicologists as Eyerman and Jamison has suggested that music is able to capture and release into a current situation of ferment the power of earlier movements which addressed parallel issues. In the musical kernel is found the flavours of, and the knowledge discovered in relation to, that movement so that it activates and teaches the new context. The past inhabits and shapes the present, and even when the music dies the components of the new context have shifted and settled round this memory and change is enabled to take place.

For the liturgist and the worshipper, the word used by Marcuse in this connection resonates, when he remarks that it was primarily through art and music that traditions of resistance and critique were ‘re-membered’ in the context of contemporary social movements. This word is at the heart of the Communion liturgy at the point in the anaphora which begins ‘Remembering his work and passion ...’ Here is the liturgical expression of the event that we know as *anamnesis* where Christ’s act of redemption is recalled and replayed in the contemporary setting and we are placed within this alternative reality. This is more than remembering in the sense of recalling to memory, but indicates something more like ‘renewing an experience’, an experience that the first disciples had of the presence of Christ after the Resurrection and which is now vouchsafed to his latest disciples again and again as they in gratitude repeat the story, reaching towards Christ and each other.

The position of the Festival, always seen as at the heart of the work of the Society and not an adjunct, corresponds with the place of the celebration of Communion in the church. It was festivity that was seen as the agent of social change because of the way it lifted the participants into a new dimension. Part and parcel of this was a strong awareness of those who had gone before, the historical events that had revolved round the castle, the social conditions of those who had laboured in the coal mines or fields. These were made accessible, almost contemporary, with those who staged and participated in the musicals, whether as actors or audiences. This ‘communion of local saints’ were at once a strength and a challenge as their stories illuminated and challenged life in community today. In these ways, the Festival and all that flowered from it recalled the community of the Church that was at once bodied in Christ and a sign, instrument and foretaste of the new community where all would have dignity as reconciled children of the Creator.

THREE CASE STUDIES: CONCLUSION

There is a striking difference between the first of these case studies and the other two. In the first case study we observe the conventional processes of an institutional church seeking to provide musical resources for its members. There is the authority and oversight of the General Assembly, and the responsibility of the Committee. While the criteria and *modus operandi* of each Editorial Committee observed in the third and fourth editions of Church Hymnary are distinct, the processes are comparable: they operate distant from the local church, and they themselves are not either church or community. Nevertheless, from their experience of church, community and wider culture and society, they produced volumes in which aspects of *koinonia* and fostering of *koinonia* can be observed, drawn out and (with awareness and understanding of the user) employed in worship.

In the second and third cases we followed a narrative of the fostering and nurturing of fellowship, albeit often in secular or non-liturgical contexts, which demonstrated the praxis of dimensions of *koinonia*. In both cases existing music (or musical conventions) and existing text (or textual conventions) were used as well as newly written materials. What mattered as much as the content of that material were the

processes in which the material was shaped in order for it to become owned by the makers (or shapers) and those who experienced it. Text and music were a part of assembly, an outcome of the work and experience of assembly, and inseparable from it; they were not only relational but integral – in theological terms and in a Christian context they revealed God-with-us.

The earliest editions of what has come to be known as the Church of Scotland's *Book of Common Order* (largely adopted from the practices of the mid-sixteenth-century Genevan Church of John Calvin) include 'The Catechism or manner to teach children the Christian religion'.¹²⁰ In the 1564 edition it runs to 148 pages of theology, in the traditional form of question and answer. Apart from the assumptions about the literacy and understanding of the children it is a demonstration of the intention to underpin the pattern of Sunday worship of the faithful (which occupies 15 pages in the 1565 edition) and the Lord's Supper (which occupies 11 pages) with sound learning about the faith. Our culture and expectations of church are significantly different, but the principles demonstrated in the second and third case studies are, in their attention to preparation and engagement, akin to the Reformed model set by our ancestors.

¹²⁰ The edition available through Early English Books Online is *The forme of prayers and ministration of the sacraments &c. used in the English Church at Geneua, approued & receiued by the church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Robert Lekprevk, 1565), STC (2nd ed.) 16577a. The volume also includes the English metrical psalter and Calvin's catechism for children.

8

TWO CONGREGATIONS

Before making proposals which would lead to the structuring of a resource to facilitate local evaluation of church music practice, it seemed desirable to consult with potential users. In the first place, it was hoped that this would indicate the level of value that might be assigned to such a project by congregations. Further, such a consultation might lead to clarification of both shape and content of the resource which might otherwise not occur to a compiler. To ensure the broadest possible outcome of what was a very restricted survey, two congregations in the city of Edinburgh were approached which were different in three respects: the resources available to them, the volume of debate that had taken place up to this point, and the level at which the governing bodies of each had addressed these matters. Although this study has acknowledged from the start the broadest ecumenical dimensions of this debate, in this case both congregations were from the established Church of Scotland. This was not considered a restriction for this exercise since the size of this Church means that the spectrum of liturgical practice has comparable breadth and variety to that represented by the spread of denominations.

The two congregations were London Road Parish Church, near to the centre of the city, and Colinton Parish Church, lying just within the city boundary to the south west. In each case, the researcher sought to interview the minister, the director(s) of music, and a representative person in the congregation who did not have a musical role, in both cases the Session Clerk, the elder who acts as clerk to the Kirk Session.¹ The first approach was through the ministers, when it was made clear that the object of the exercise was not the health or otherwise of the music of that congregation but to ascertain the potential usefulness to the congregation of the proposed resource. The minister then furnished contact details of the other interviewees, to which (except in one case) the researcher himself made application – again emphasising that the purpose of the interview was not to put the congregation under test but to seek help in identifying the best outcome from

¹ With the minister, the ordained body of oversight of the congregation.

the research project that was now nearing completion.

1. LONDON ROAD PARISH CHURCH

1.1 History

The United Presbyterian Church was formed in 1847 when there came together the two elements from the first (1733) and the second (1761) Secessions from the Church of Scotland, sizeable groups who had left the established church over matters of civil and religious liberty. The new Presbyterian landscape now consisted of three major bodies, the Established, the Free, and the United Presbyterian Churches. The 'UP' Church, like the others, subscribed to the Westminster Confession but added three riders: a) departing from anything in the document which taught 'persecuting and intolerant principles', b) that all might be freely admitted to Communion, and c) emphasising the importance of generosity in giving. The Church was active in overseas mission and was characterised by an openness to 'enlightened' theological opinions. It was the first of the Presbyterian Churches to allow the reintroduction of organs for worship (1872). It was also the first of the three to publish an official hymn book, *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (1851). The United Presbyterian Church united with the Free Church in 1900 to form the United Free Church, which ultimately linked with the Established Church in 1929. London Road did not unite with other congregations at either of these points, there being no nearby congregations of the other two denominations. It thus became a United Free Church and then a congregation of the Church of Scotland.

The London Road congregation was founded in 1871 and the church now in use was opened in 1875. It stands at the corner of Easter Road and London Road, just east of the centre of the city on the A1. Easter Road is an important thoroughfare, parallel to Leith Walk, which leads to the port of Leith. The building is rectangular with a gallery on three sides. The building is oriented to the north, with a central pulpit on that wall. The building stands directly on the pavements of the two streets named, and there is an impressive steeple on the street corner. The organ is a Hammond installed in 1963, replacing a two manual and pedal instrument built by the Edinburgh firm of C & F

Hamilton (1903). In 1930, just after union with the Free Church, the congregation is listed as having 1325 members. The current membership is 330, with 29 elders. The minister is the Rev. Sigrid Marten, of German origin, who was recently inducted from Crown Court Church of Scotland, London. The following interviews were held:

1.2 The Revd Sigrid Marten

Sigrid Marten trained for the ministry in Germany as a Lutheran. This is her third charge since coming to Scotland. She is a member of the Iona Community. Recently she has been a 'pundit' on the BBC television programme that has commented each day on the General Assembly. She is interested in the music of the church and tries to make careful musical choices in worship. During earlier ministries, she had contacted me in the Office for Worship for specific advice on handling musical issues. During the discussion, she recalled her first charge on Clydeside which provided an example not just of the need to assist organists in developing skills but in the widening of their musical horizons. There, when she wished to introduce new material, she found that the way this was handled by her organist alienated the congregation from the material and that in the end she used her own untaught voice to communicate what she wished them to try. In her London congregation, she met a different kind of barrier, albeit from the same source, when her organist at the time had little interest in the development of congregational song and approached its accompaniment in a perfunctory way, while at the same time delivering excellent performances of organ music at the beginning and the close of worship.

It was a particular experience in London that summed up for her the difficulties in breaking through existing practice and introducing new possibilities. For Lutherans, as for Anglicans, the unfolding drama of the Christian Year is of the utmost significance. There is also a strong awareness, and a valuing of, the movement through a liturgy. Since these are 'officially' acknowledged in Church of Scotland practice, she felt supported in attempting to enrich the liturgical provision in her congregation and promote the devotional and spiritual resource of the Calendar. However, she was to find not only an ignorance of these aspects but a dismissive attitude towards them. This came to a head when she resisted the singing of Christmas carols during Advent, which had been the

congregation's practice. This caused much criticism. Her analysis of the situation in general was that the historical suspicion of things 'papist' lingered among her people. The insight which she shared from this experience was the power of innate knowledge (and prejudice) and the difficulty of working against this, should that be deemed desirable to achieve a stronger good. In her former Lutheran context, people had an innate, first-hand, knowledge of the movement of the liturgy and the importance of the Christian Calendar, because they were in almost physical contact with it. Her Church of Scotland congregation did not have this benefit, as she would see it. Her conclusion was that there are 'knowledge gaps' that cannot be quickly and easily filled, and that this might be a factor in seeking to move congregations, in musical terms, from one place to another.

Ms Marten had moved to the present congregation a year ago. She had found a welcome and relations are good (she is wise and open in her dealings with people). Nevertheless, she experienced obstacles in trying to broaden the hymn repertoire, not just in widening the idiom in the direction of the greater variety in *CH4*, including Wild Goose material, but even in using more widely the existing repertoire. There was a prevailing view that music in church should be uplifting and positive. Modal tunes like Martyrs or tunes in the minor key were always met with comment. The view of the choir and others was, 'We are a happy church, we don't want to sing sad songs', or, 'You come to church to be cheered up'. There were two possible factors working behind these attitudes, she felt. One was that there is a strand in some forms of the Christian religion that considers it important to behave always as if everything is fine. We are saved, so it must be; anything less is to betray the faith. Therefore, the stiff upper lip prevails, and church life and worship must serve to validate that belief, and the effort in following it. A second factor was already hinted at in the prevailing repertoire of the choral and organ music of the congregation. The organist had a passionate interest in music hall, and he was supported by choir members in this. Voluntaries were largely music hall items, mostly from recent musicals, such as those by Andrew Lloyd Webber. The choral repertoire was also of the upbeat kind which reflected these idioms. Was it possible, the minister asked, that choir members, who tended to be of an older age group, understood music in terms more of entertainment – to dance to and to relax to. Music was meant to cheer one up. This was

mirrored in another experience Ms Marten had while she was serving her probationary period, when in a Leith church the organist proposed to have the choir sing the Hallelujah Chorus on Good Friday and had to be dissuaded. His protest was that from any service of worship 'We have to go out on a high!'

Some further general points remained from this conversation. One was the question as to how much training organists have in liturgy? This was a question formed by the minister's German experience where organists do have thorough training. In Scotland, however, this aspect is very much left to chance. It would be most unusual, for example, to find topics more broadly concerned with worship on an organist society programme. The minister welcomed the idea of a resource to help a congregation move towards a greater awareness of the purpose of, and the possibilities for, music in worship. In conversation, it was noted that it might be better for such a resource to be task oriented rather than aimed purely at discussion and study. It should contain a practical element, such as the selection of music for an actual service of worship.

1.3 Mrs. Janet McKenzie

Janet McKenzie is part of the team of Session Clerks. This unusual arrangement arose from a situation in which the then Session Clerk had tended to undertake the bulk of the tasks in the running of the congregation (by choice) and, while this was welcomed and valued, opportunities for others to participate were limited. The team was an 'action-research' project, which aimed both to find out what duties needed to be done by a Session Clerk as well as carrying out the function of Session Clerk in the interim. It could be that the arrangement become permanent. Mrs. McKenzie is also studying to become a Reader in the Church of Scotland, authorised to take services. She is a keen member of more than one choir. Apart from the church choir she sings in the Edinburgh Festival Chorus, who tackle works as far apart in idiom as *Judas Maccabeus* and *Moses und Aaron*, and in the Heriot Watt University Chamber Choir. She also formed part of a local choir raised up for the Graham Kendrick tour, 'Rumours of Angels'.

The congregation use *CH4* mainly. *Mission Praise*, *Junior Praise*, and *The Source*, are

occasionally used, and were used more before the broader choice represented in *CH4* was available. Attempts are made to explore the latter book and the congregation are not averse to learning new hymns. Other music comes from a number of sources, including the 'old' *Anthem Book* from earlier last century, which emanated from the United Free Church. The *Oxford Book of Carols* was used at Christmas. Congregational singing as a rule was good.

Mrs. McKenzie affirmed that there was a certain level of discussion about music already in the congregation, particularly in the choir where members had 'strong opinions'. This arose partly from the encouragement given to members to bring music for the choir to try (a recent debate had grown up through a younger member bringing a song from *Godspell*). A plus, as she saw it, was that a wide variety of music was encouraged, largely due to the catholic taste of the organist but also to the musical preferences of the choir members. In the matter of saying what they felt about music in church, since music was a part of being human and because it spoke directly to people, opinions tended to be based on gut reactions. A discussion resource might help broaden the terms of these reactions. It may be that some information should be included about musical styles, but assistance in understanding the course of the liturgy and of the Christian Year might also be included. Mrs. McKenzie noted that until she undertook Reader training, she had not been aware of the shape of the liturgy.

A resource to promote a more focused discussion about music for worship would, in Mrs. McKenzie's view, need to be practically oriented. It should contain tasks, such as the choice of music for worship. This should not be just for the special occasion but for the ordinary Sunday. As a Reader in training, she had become more conscious of the role, and the power, of music in worship. 'Music' should not just be confined to hymns. She recalled a funeral service where the daughter of the deceased had been a professional clarinet player and where during the service a movement from Mozart's Clarinet Concerto had been played by one of the daughter's friends. At that same service, other wind instruments joined the soloist to play, as mourners left, in the style of a Southern funeral procession. She felt that this upbeat ending was expressive of the message of hope

carried by the funeral liturgy. She also recalled an occasion when she had preached as a guest in another congregation where the organist had responded to her sermon by spontaneously playing a popular melody which happened to reflect the theme of the sermon. The resource, therefore, should encompass music in its widest sense.

A helpful suggestion was made that part of the making available of such a resource might include a 'road show' such as had recently been mounted by the Worship and Doctrine Task Group of the Church of Scotland on the theme of Holy Communion. Here, preparatory to the launch of a full study-commentary which followed the course of the eucharistic liturgy, road shows were taken to various parts of the country. The purpose of these was not only to draw attention to the new resource but to listen to the experience of participating in Communion on the part of members of the church. Allied with a church music resource, such a pattern would not only draw attention to what was being offered but also create a forum by which people could share their experience of church music.

1.4 Mr. Bill Bryden (organist and choirmaster)

Mr Bryden, a retired lawyer, opted to telephone the researcher himself. He made it clear that he did not consider himself an organist and does not use the pedals. Thirty years ago, when no suitable candidate applied for the vacant post of organist and choirmaster, he offered to take on the role in an honorary capacity. He is shortly to retire and there is anxiety that the ageing Hammond organ will not attract candidates. He invests a lot of time on the choir. There are four sopranos, three altos, two basses and one tenor. None of the men read music and the tenor, who has a fine voice, cannot keep to his part even when thoroughly prepared, migrating always to the melody. When a tenor part is required, one of the altos (Mrs. Janet McKenzie, above) sings. The choir offer a range of music, from Mozart's 'Ave Verum' to (what may be the majority) popular religious pieces. These may be from what is known in Scotland as the 'old' Anthem Book, mostly Victorian pieces, or from shows like *Godspell*. The music of John Rutter is also popular. Mr. Bryden finds much of the choir's music in the Edinburgh City Music Library. He has made a point of encouraging as many of the choir as possible to sing solo and in duet, and finds that this has increased the confidence of these singers. He particularly mentioned

the tenor, who was fond of the kind of songs that Elvis Presley used to sing in religious contexts. Once a month on Thursday evenings, the choir comes together jointly to prepare their repertoire for the next month, but their main practice is on Sunday morning. Members of the congregation come early to hear the choir practice.

Mr. Bryden's own formative musical years were in a dance band where most items were played without written scores. He also accompanies an Edinburgh choral group called the 'Telephone Choir', originally one group of employees but now mixed. They sing popular classics and show tunes. This last is Mr. Bryden's favourite repertoire and it forms a substantial part of the music he plays before and after services and for the offering. He cited Gershwin, Lloyd Webber and Claude-Michel Schönberg (*Les Misérables*) in particular. This music is very popular with the congregation and gives rise to many conversations and requests. He himself raised the question as to whether this kind of music was out of place, which suggests an element of doubt – on his own part or expressed by others – about this policy, but believes it is not. This music is a part of the make up of a considerable proportion of the people who come and 'comes with them', so to speak. That said, he did recognise that *CH4* contained accessible material, although he had not himself got to know the collection intimately. He reported that the minister had introduced many hymns from the book and had taught them before the service when the people had gathered. Although this continues, Mr. Bryden says that it is unpopular with the people and they feel 'patronised', although he does not know what was meant by that. Possible they felt that the mode of teaching, demonstrating then asking for response, was too much like the classroom. Mr. Bryden prefers that the choir sing a verse before the congregation try to join in.

At the end of the interview, Mr. Bryden offered three principles by which he operates. One is that the organist should not inflict his choice of music on everyone; otherwise, people will not be enabled to speak with their own voice. Second, the organist has to show leadership to the choir, but what he means by this is making room for members to participate actively in the decisions. Third, he should encourage people individually to find their own voice and sing solo or in duet with others if they can.

2. COLINTON PARISH CHURCH

2.1 History

The first church of the parish was founded c.1095 by the Earl of Fife, son of (King) Malcolm Canmore and Margaret. It was one of the large number of churches in the east of the country dedicated (in this case re-dedicated) by Bishop David de Bernham of St. Andrews, whose diocese then embraced the Edinburgh area. The present church is one of several to succeed the original building and is on a different site, beside the Water of Leith in the old village of Colinton, now a desirable and well-off suburb of the city of Edinburgh. It was opened in 1908 and now exercises an innovative ministry to its parish. There is a minister (male) and an associate minister (female), the latter specialising in work with young people and children.

The direction of the music is shared by a husband and wife team, both musical professionals. There are two services on a Sunday. The first has families in mind and is billed as 'with a praise band', to which 150-200 come each week. The second, described as 'with choir and organ', is said to appeal mainly to people over 60 years of age, and attracts some 30-50. This is an interesting reversal of the common pattern of a few years ago, still prevailing in many places, of the second service being the 'main' diet of worship with the early service seen as in some way 'additional' and aimed at a particular clientele. Holy Communion is celebrated each month at both services. Details of the musical establishment are noted in the report of the interview with the directors of music. This double provision of services dates from the ministry of the incumbent who has just left to become Clerk to the Presbytery of Edinburgh. It is likely to represent a considerable departure from the style of his predecessor, who was a Moderator of the General Assembly and an Honorary President of the Edinburgh Society of Organists.

2.2 The Revd Rolf Billes

Mr. Billes, born within a German minority community in Ceausescu's Romania, has served in one other parish in Scotland and was 'called' to Colinton in May of this year. Proficient in the guitar and 'cello, he has an interest in and considerable knowledge of the

hymn repertory. When *CH4* was being launched, he was one of the ‘network of precentors’ available to go to congregations to teach new material. The conversation began round the question of relationships between organists and ministers, as being one circumstance where the proposed resource might have relevance. He cited the experience of one of his own rota of organists in his previous parish who felt ‘de-skilled’ by the minister of another parish in which she played. By his remarks and by his tardiness in furnishing a choice of hymns in time for an inexperienced executant (as she then was), she felt undervalued and demeaned. This improved when she became part of the Billes rota and he collaborated with her in an essay on the subject she was asked to write as part of a certificate course in church music at the University of St. Andrews.²

Mr. Billes described the situation prior to and following his arrival at Colinton, which was returned to in the interview with the directors of music. This husband and wife team had tendered their resignations on the grounds of age (they have themselves recently retired) but had been persuaded to wait until the new minister was settled in. Mr. Billes realised that some musicians did not like to work with musical ministers, perceiving them as a threat, and set out to show that he valued the musicianship of the directors in place. With sensitivity, he noted two gestures made, one on each side, in the early days, and how this was the beginning of a trust and co-operation which has led to the directors being willing to stay on in the role. Now there is discussion beforehand of the themes of the service, and the musicians will prepare the extra music in line with this. The minister celebrates the way things ‘come together’ on Sunday mornings.

The minister understood and welcomed the possibility that a resource be prepared for use in a local congregation. For him, however, there was an important step to be taken before any direct discussion of the church or its music. In many situations, there were factors quite apart from lack of knowledge which prevented conversation even beginning. It may well be that people can be encouraged to express their views and feelings, and to do so with greater insight, but before that can happen people have to be able to realise why they feel the way they do, or believe what they hold to. Narratives and discourses dictate the

² It so happened that the researcher had read this essay, as a tutor on the course.

attitudes we take and these cannot be modified until we name and decode these. Thus, self-awareness is all-important in an exercise like this. We need not only to know where we stand but why we stand there – otherwise we are locked in our own likes and dislikes. We may be engaged in a silent power struggle with other parties or within ourselves. We may be making assumptions about the other persons involved that are not true. A point needs to be reached so that we respect who the others in the conversation are. For example, if we are musicians, we have to acknowledge the musicality in those even who say they are ‘not musical’, and if someone is a minister he or she needs to acknowledge that others also have a ministry, and indeed that others are potential theologians in that, in their own way, they ‘know God’. The starting point, therefore, for such an exercise as is proposed is that we minister to each other.

2.3 Mr. Stuart McBride, Session Clerk

Mr. McBride is a lawyer, working in financial services. He is possibly in his later forties. He began by saying that his knowledge of music was minimal and that he could not make much comment on how such a resource would work. Nevertheless, in his description of local music practice, he made some remarks which bore relevance to the matter in hand. Mr. McBride spoke of the vacancy (when there was no minister) and how he had observed with pleasure and relief the way in which the new minister and the existing directors of music worked together in what he felt was a productive and friendly way. Indeed, he was able to reflect on eighteen years as a member of the congregation (he has been session clerk for only a year) and find that this had generally been true of their predecessors.

He himself attended both morning services. The first was characterised by the praise band leadership of the worship and he believed that this defined the style of what could be sung. He himself, while affirming this service, noted that he felt more at home with the traditional cast of the second service where, from familiarity (his explanation, but the style of the music may have been a factor), he was able to sing with more confidence. Asked whether the two styles of music were exclusive to each service, he answered that only in the summer, when there was one service, did the two styles come together, albeit

that one month the music was led by the praise band and the other by organ and choir. In fact, in examining the orders of service for the previous Sunday, it was clear that hymns were chosen to go with the theme whether they were 'praise band items' or not. The congregational song at the 9.30am service on that occasion consisted of a hymn by Ruth Duck to 'Regent Square', Shirley Murray's 'For everyone born', as well as a traditional spiritual type song, the worship song 'Behold the Lamb' (by the Gettys and Stuart Townend, and played during Communion), and 'You shall go out with joy' to the Israeli melody. During the prayer, an Iona prayer chant was used; significantly, this was not a chant that continued or deepened the prayer utterance of the people but was an affirmation, as it were, from the mouth of God: 'Don't be afraid. My love is stronger, my love is stronger than your fear'. This 'completed' the prayer dialogue in that God was 'given a voice' in the exchange. (The minister reported, in his own interview, that for a particular member of the congregation this was a decisive moment and a turning point.) At the 11.15am service, there was also a mixture of styles. 'Be still and know that I am God' was sung as an introit; other hymns were 'Praise, my soul, the king of heaven', 'O God, our help in ages past', 'Be thou my vision', and a hymn by John Bell and Graham Maule, 'Among us and before us, Lord, you stand' to 'Sursum Corda'.

Mr. McBride reported that there was amplification at the first service, and that the operator of this was seen as providing a point of access to the church for a young person knowledgeable in these matters. At the first service, an overhead projector was generally used, although the words were also available on the order of service or hymn book. It was when speaking about amplification that the session clerk noted in passing a possible point of discomfort held by some about the music at the first service. This was to do with the volume of the sound, which was felt by some to be too loud. Coupled with this was the remark on at least one person's part that they 'did not understand' the music and that they felt that the time had come for them to 'graduate' to the second service, intimating this sadly, as if accepting the inevitable, a turning point in the ageing process.

In addition to matters of loudness, another uneasy aspect of the first service was that it was not uncommon for the congregation to be introduced to a new hymn before the

service began. He described the ‘nervous laughter’ when such an announcement was made. When pressed, he thought that this came from an anticipated embarrassment at being asked to leave one’s comfort zone. Would I go up when everyone else was going down? Would I be conspicuous in getting it wrong? Although understandable, perhaps, there also lies within this nervousness a residual resistance to new material, and maybe a lack of conviction that such is necessary. These are aspects which might be included in a proposed resource. Mr. McBride, however, was supportive of the music directors in teaching the material, noting how it was done. The suggestion was made in the ensuing conversation that perhaps any resource that was prepared might contain simple practical information about, say, introducing change and enabling development.

A third circumstance of musical unease was the example he gave of the introduction of sung responses. He noted that some people, at either service but particularly the second, did not react well to being invited to pray with their eyes open (so that they could see the words of the response). There was a feeling of ‘I shouldn’t be doing this’, or ‘This is not how one has been taught to pray in church’. This resulted in some people resolutely bowing their heads and keeping their eyes closed, not quite refusing to join in, but not able to do so fully.

2.4 Ian and Ann Rogers (joint Directors of Music)

Ian Rogers was known to the researcher through his studies for the Diploma in Church Musicianship at the University of St. Andrews. He had held several organist posts in Edinburgh and Peebles, in more than one of which he began children’s choirs. His wife Ann had just retired as a primary school teacher and, although not a specialist, had made much use of music in her work. Responsibilities were divided between them, although both were involved with all the groups. The choir (second service) numbered 20; there was a group of 15 young choristers who usually sang separately; there were 14 in the band (first service), including several singers who were considered part of the line-up, the instrumentation being two keyboards, two guitars, and two clarinets. Ian, the main organist, played one of the keyboards, embellishing the sound with alternative improvised accompaniments using instrumental sounds. When hymns in a more traditional style were

used at the first service, the Marshall Pickering publication *Hymns for the People* was used because of its provision of more fluent accompaniments for the use of bands. Unlike in charismatic worship, there was no 'worship leader' among the singers, but they still faced the congregation and were understood to be leading the singing. The band also sang for a quarter of an hour before the service.

A recent initiative had been the founding of a church/community choir, 'Celtic Sounds', in response to a felt demand by people in the community for an opportunity for choral singing. This currently numbered 20, and included people who said they had 'never sung before but wanted to sing'. Repertoire ranged from Iona material (including songs from the world church) to secular items such as an anti-war canticle by Simon and Garfunkel. All the groups mentioned took part in an annual concert. The directors commented that it was a large task to 'keep all the groups happy' with material they liked to sing or play and required a broad knowledge of resources.

The musical structure at Colinton was not the result of deliberate strategy but grew from the previous minister's desire to institute an additional early service. This was to provide for all ages and involved a break for group discussion. In due course, the Sunday School made this the service they attended and it became formalised into a service of worship with distinctive music (although we have already noted the overlap in musical genres between the two services). Ian commented that there was some fluidity between the two services, and some who had instinctively chosen the 'traditional' service had migrated to the earlier one, recognising in the modern material something of the tunefulness and rhythm that they had enjoyed in older 'sacred songs and solos'. It was commented that these changes corresponded with recent changes in the locality, from a relatively discrete village to a sizeable suburb. The changes were not achieved without objections. Just prior to this, an organist had left when asked to play 'Sing to the Lord's goodness', a rhythmic worship song in five-four time in a style made popular by modern religious musicals. Also, choir members were said to have rebelled when the hymn book supplement *Songs of God's People* was introduced (1988). The Rogerses reported little discomfort now but

noted that the current choir became ‘grumpy’ if asked to sing too many unison items,³ which led them to feel they should ‘not bother coming’. Some had given the opinion that a return should be made to a single service, but Ian felt that the reason for that was not so much a concern about ‘splitting the congregation’ as people missing elements that used to be in the single service (presence of children, baptisms, even the ‘children’s address’) but were now in the first. He commented that people mingled between services over coffee and, as noted above, the two services came together in the summer. On the matter of the volume of the band, Ian felt this was now under control and pains were taken to ensure that the band did not dominate but enabled congregational participation.

3. CONCLUSION

Even within the confines of this limited exercise, a range of issues were raised, showing both how important music was for people generally but also that it could be a cause for anxiety, and, in certain circumstances, lead to controversy and misunderstanding. There were also indications that many people questioned their own musical abilities in relation to those who were more ‘talented’ (as is often said). Affirmation of their natural musical ability could help many. A number of useful pointers as to the nature of a resource were made in the conversations, such as the suggestion that it have, at least in part, a practical orientation. There was the valuable reminder that encounters such as the resource might facilitate needed to begin not just with music but on a deeper level of feelings and self-awareness. An interesting suggestion was of a ‘road-show’ to raise a broader awareness of the possible advantages for the health of the local church and its music that such a programme might offer. The most telling conclusion, however, might be that such a resource was significantly different from one which devised ways of encouraging discussion on a particular topic. Given that it was dealing, on the musical front, with an ability and an interest very close to people’s personalities, and on the ecclesiological front with matters of personal belief and discipleship, this could be a project that would not be easy either to devise or to implement.

³ The new *Church Hymnary* has been criticised for the higher proportion of unison hymns.

9

TOWARDS A COMMON DISCOURSE

1. THE AIM OF THE PROCESS

In the foregoing chapters, an attempt has been made to discover an approach to the evaluation of liturgical music which could both be applied by people who plan and preside at worship and be shared by people of different interests and experience. The approach followed was the bringing into dialogue of terms and insights from the fields of musicology and of ecclesiology, in the hope of drawing fully on participants' experience of making and listening to music as well as on the life of prayer, study and discipleship that has formed their experience of being baptised into Christ and into his body, the church. A further step remains to be taken, namely the translation of the results into terms which could enable this discussion to be continued in the local church. It is not the task of this thesis to provide a finished resource for local use, but it may be possible to suggest an approach and to extract some material on which such a resource might be based.

2. FINDINGS FROM INITIAL INTERVIEWS

Neuralgic issues

In chapter 8, conversations were reported with two contrasting congregations typical of those in which the proposed programme might be mounted. It was hoped that by conducting an initial enquiry some pointers might be gained as to the form this might take and what the likely interest might be in participating in such a process. It should be emphasised that the interest was not specifically in these two congregations but in congregations as a whole through two representatives. Any resulting process would be offered to any interested. Several of the interviewees made comments which hinted at factors which blocked progress in the music of their church. Some of the examples related to the knowledge, skill or attitudes of the organist, others to unsympathetic and insensitive ministers. Shortage of human resources and deficiencies in skills were also

cited. It is noted that in most cases, open conversation between parties would be one way of releasing the situation, while sharing in planning might lead to improvement in others.

Causes of difference

The expansion of a congregation's repertoire can cause discomfort. In one of the congregations, two opposing accounts were given of the reactions to this. Another factor is when the innate experience of the worshipper over many years and from within their church tradition (what prayer involves, the Christian Year) militates against moves to deepen the experience of worship. Taste in music and how music has featured in people's lives can clash with its function in worship. The addition of electronic equipment can cause worry, as can the repertoires it makes possible or supports. A choir's sense that it is not valued (for example, when not asked to sing in parts) can lead to dissatisfaction. Idioms and genres which do not seem to fit worship can cause anxiety and discomfort.

Likely interest in participating in such a process

It is clear that there is already conversation about music in many congregations, although not usually at levels at which decision-makers hear them. Opinions can be strong but might be more useful if shared and appropriately adapted. Even when discussion does not take place, there is some evidence that there is a level of awareness which might emerge in a discussion context, like that which realises there could be issues around the use of particular musical genres in organ voluntaries. There may be active interest in finding new music or in exploring the resources of a hymn book which suggests an attentiveness to the interaction between music and liturgy. This is illustrated too when organist and minister work towards the same theme, and also when this is noted by worshippers. Choosing between two different kinds of worship also suggests that people are ready to make choices and may be able to give reasons for these. Instances of music making an impact (for example a prayer chant which was perceived as divine intervention) suggest a readiness to share experiences of music in worship. Evidence of a music policy (variety, participation, outreach) suggests readiness to discuss issues and strategies.

The content

Interviewees agreed that information and/or teaching might be incorporated in such a resource – about worship, musical styles, the Christian Year, the relationship of music to worship, about strategies for introducing change and enabling development. However, these should not change the dynamic of the process which was to enable mutually enriching encounter leading to greater participation in worship.

The process

Given that the issues involved have deep roots in people's personality and self-identity, it was suggested that it was important that people be enabled to understand their own reactions – both to music and to the other people in any dialogue, about whom they may have misconceptions. Otherwise people may remain locked within their own likes and dislikes. It would be necessary to arrive at a point of mutual respect, and reach a sense of ministering to each other. A second insight shared by interviewees was that a task-oriented study would yield more than a discussion group about issues and principles. Finally, the suggestion was made that the process might be launched nationally through a 'road show', not unlike one that was devised by another Church of Scotland group which aimed to initiate dialogue in different parts of the country about attitudes to and the practice of Holy Communion.

3. STARTING POINTS

The construction of a template for conversations in the church about music suffers from some initial difficulties. One was highlighted in one of the interviews recorded in chapter 8 and referred to under 2.5 above. It would seem that what should not be offered is a straightforward study pamphlet which contains material about music and worship with questions for participants to answer. What is required is indeed a process involving more than one step, an initial one being to enable participants to arrive at a point of self-awareness and mutual respect, of a sense of being ministers to one another. It may be, however, that the content of the process is already present in the ecclesiological-based characteristics, supported by musicological and other insights, of chapter 6, which

contained the main conclusions of the study. There were developed the themes of relationality, service, personal growth, the need for an acceptance of diversity, and an understanding of the unique nature of the koinoinia whose quality of sharing was not dependent on the resources of the members but was found in baptism into the body of Christ and nourished in the bread and the wine. If the resource asked people to address and fill out these central expressions of church life and consider their relationship to them, this was already offering people a way to greater self-awareness and to patterns of ministering to each other.

However, in the opening up of these themes, another difficulty could be encountered. That is, that the people of the church, although the doctrines are frequently in their mouths through hymn singing or in their minds as a result of sermons, have not in general been accustomed to discussing with each other, in evaluative mode, matters of the belief and the nature of the church. They are more likely to talk about the most immediate manifestations of church life, those people with whom they come into contact, what tasks are done and not done, what duties are asked of them. The same is true of music. People are not prone to discussing their particular responses to music – for example, after a concert, how the music affected them, what it made them think of, questions of structure, melody or rhythm, or how the sounds were produced, although they may be able to make general responses such as whether or not they ‘enjoyed’ it. It may be that, to encourage the kind of discussion and encounter envisaged, discussion which involves belief and spiritual experience as well as talking about experience of listening to or participating in music, an initial task must be undertaken of enabling people to engage with these areas in general terms. Beginnings might be made by helping people become familiar (through church magazines, orders of service, sermons, or by having people offer their considered views within the act of worship) with terms and concepts relating to the church and our membership of it and to the music we participate in.

4. SHAPING A RESOURCE

At some point, however, the process must move on. While the above preliminary steps might be taken, there is still a need to factor into the opening stages of a resource the encouragement and opportunity of arriving at a greater awareness of ‘who we are’ and who the others in the dialogue are in the community of the church. People should be encouraged not to talk about the five themes in a detached way but about how they relate to these expressions of church. At the same time, participants should be encouraged to identify themselves as musical people (which may be a large step for some) and to acknowledge their likes and dislikes in music. They would be encouraged to be attentive to others when they talk about their likes and dislikes. The five passages from secular writings (below), each of which has some relationship with each of the five themes, might be used in the course of such a discussion. A study leaflet or DVD resource would be used to shape the project but care would be taken not to provide ready-made arguments and positions which put words into people’s mouths. Rather, a ‘template’ could be devised which contains material in which people might recognise their own reactions and responses, likes and dislikes, and be enabled to develop further awareness of these in conversation with others.

It might be that seven sessions (or twelve: see below) are planned, the first and the last perhaps a Saturday (which could be an away day), the others taking place on a weekday evening at the church. The opening session would be entirely focused on music, except for an act of worship. There would be guided listening (live groups or ensembles might be invited to perform), an opportunity to make music together, and a ceilidh or other musical entertainment in the evening (early evening if travelling home was necessary). The seventh, closing day would focus on the local church and possible strategies for development. It would involve the planning of a service of worship for a future Sunday. Each of the five middle sessions would centre round one of the five characteristics of koinoinia. Since the matter is approached both from the ecclesial and the musical side, it may be that each requires two sessions, making a total of twelve in all. The opening session could be for those interested in taking part in the programme, but it could also

form the substantial activity in a congregational weekend away, enabling those who might not have chosen to participate to get a taste of what was in store.

Themes correspond to those explored in Chapter 6, but are presented in a different order.

5. THE CONTENT OF THE RESOURCE

5.1 A relational community

The theme

The Holy Trinity is one of the most difficult of Christian doctrines to explain and understand. The aim at this point would be to give some flavour of the mutuality of the Godhead. One possibility might be to involve participants in a dance like the Eightsome Reel, even teaching this where necessary, or other round dance of which there are examples in most traditions, or even a simple figure of eight. This would lead to reference to the concept of *perichoresis* which captures the idea of permeation without confusion (and also nods in the direction of the similar Greek word which means a dance, a concept which theologians have also used to capture the energy in the Trinitarian relationship).

Another way would be to use 1 Corinthians 12, about the gifts of the spirit and how these are given for mutual exercising for the building up of the unity of the body of Christ. Verses 14-26 might form the focus of the presentation/discussion, with its recurring question, Can you say: I have no need of you?

The parameters of the discussion

Participants might be asked to list the different kinds of active relationship within the church community. They might then be asked to describe what relationships they themselves are in and how closely involved in them, or not, they feel. The following questions or propositions indicate the area such an exploration would encompass.

- God the Holy Trinity understood as a community of persons offers a pattern of relationships in the church. Identify how different groups and interests relate. What about ministry? Can people minister to each other?

- Where does the idea of relating come into singing? The congregation is a musical group, a ministry. How well does it relate to other musical interests (choirs, organists, clergy, children, instrumentalists, hymn book editors)? Are its views heard? Do you ever think of the author or composer and how you can or do relate to them?
- If you are a member of the congregation, what have you in common with the choir or band? How are you different? How well do we incorporate the choir or band into the life of the congregation?
- The gifts referred to in Paul are given to the whole church through you. What are your gifts? How do your gifts help the church?
- If you are one of the congregation's active musicians, how would you describe your relationship to fellow music makers, to clergy, to the director, to the congregation? What is your common ground with the director/conductor/congregation/clergy and what do you share? Should you know as much about the hymn book as the minister or organist?
- Antiphonal music, different voices, express the way people share. Do you have music where different parts are taken by different groups (choir, congregation, cantor, congregation divided into two or more groups)? Do you like this? If not, why?
- Is there a free flow of information between the different interests in the congregation?
- Would the relationships within your church be a good pattern for society?

The musical dimension

This extract from Zoë Heller's *The Believers* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), page 56, expresses the protagonist's sudden discovery of being in relationship with a (Jewish) faith community she had long since given up. It was the music that made this realisation dawn.

At the end of the Torah service, just as the scroll was being replaced in the ark, the congregation began to sing a slow, mournful prayer. Rosa, who rarely, if ever, responded to music without knowing and approving of what it was about, was surprised to find herself moved. Something in the prayer's austere melody was making the hairs on her arms stand up. A thought came to her, as clearly as if it had been spoken in her ear. You are connected to this. This song is your song. When next she glanced down at the siddur lying open in her hands, she was amazed to see the little ragged suns of her own teardrops turning the wafer-thin pages transparent.

For days after this incident, Rosa tried to reassure herself that her response had been an insignificant somatic reflex. She had been tired. She had been feeling vulnerable.

Music, together with certain sorts of majestic landscape, had a well-known tendency to induce such faux-sublime moments: artificial intimations of transcendent truths, grandiose hunches about the nature of the universe. It was all nonsense. Her tears had been no different to the ones people cried at sentimental television commercials. They represented nothing but a momentary and regrettable submission to kitsch.

The next week, however, she found herself drawn back to the synagogue. She was going only, she told herself, in order to prove her previous response an aberration. But the second visit turned out to be no less bizarre and agitating than the first. Once again, she was filled with a mysterious, euphoric sense of belonging; once again, she was borne along on an irresistible current towards foolish weeping. The week after that, she attended two evening services in addition to the Sabbath service. Each time she entered the synagogue, she vowed to remain detached and rational. And each time her composure was conquered by the same disembodied voice whispering gnominically in her ear. She was part of this. She had always been part of this.

Participants could discuss whether their experience of singing in church or listening to other music in church has the same effect on them.

5.2 A diverse community

The theme

This could be presented by using the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman in Mark 7:24-30 or the passage in Acts where the gospel is declared to be for all people, Acts chapters 10 and 11. Both represent a radical ‘conversion’ to an idea that was unfamiliar, in the first instance Jesus, the second Peter. We believe that we are open to the idea that people who are different are welcome in our lives (and our church) but is this the reality? Do we need to experience a conversion also?

The parameters of the discussion

The aim of the discussion would be to appreciate musical diversity and to try to ‘hear’ how others hear the music they preferred.

- What is ‘your kind of music’? (Examples would be played by participants, recorded or live.)
- Is there any relationship between this and the ‘background’ (cultural, class) from which you come? That is, is it inevitable that you should like what you do like? What about the music preferred by others; is it possible to see this as a gift to you, or to the church as a whole, rather than something strange to be avoided?

- Some people suggest that popular music is less ‘thoughtful’ than ‘classical’, which is more discriminating. Is this really the case?
- It is often claimed that young people will prefer rhythmic music of a popular kind? Is this accurate? Indeed, as well as advocating popular music to attract younger people, it is often thought that such accessible music is best because it is the idiom preferred by the majority of the non churchgoers. Again, is this right?
- Listening to music preferred by others, is it possible to say how ‘good’ it might be? Can you even say this about the music you prefer yourself? Is it possible to gauge quality or beauty objectively?
- What ‘ears’ do you listen with? Do we listen best when we see the music as being artistic, or because we recognise a satisfying emotional content, or when it allows a ‘good sing’ and people feel together, or when we recognise it as a well-marketed style that we have grown to like. Should we try to listen with several ears? How would we do that?
- How much diversity is possible in a local church? Is there a point when it can begin to fracture the community? What do you understand by ‘all age’ or ‘blended’ worship, and do you think it ‘works’?

The musical dimension

These are extracts from a speech that the writer, comedian and broadcaster Armando Iannucci gave at the 2006 Royal Philharmonic Society awards. Do any of the snippets ring bells with you?

I can’t sing, can’t even whistle, and, until recently, couldn’t really say I played an instrument. That last omission officially changed two weeks ago when I received a certificate that said I’d managed to persuade a professional in the room for 10 minutes that I had a tiny grasp of the piano, and had passed my Grade 1. I realise that, of course, when it comes to music, it doesn’t matter how much or how little technical expertise one has. It doesn’t matter if the sum total of your involvement in music is just as a listener, for music transcends any limits on ability, nationality, religion, or language. It is the most magical act of communication. ...

Music is not a background noise. It’s something you bring into the foreground of your experience, by engaging with it, by doing some work. ...

We don’t talk about music enough. As someone who’s never felt he’s had the technical language at his fingertips, I feel all I can do is talk about it in whatever English I have at my command. I want to emote about how I feel. After a concert, I want to grab people by the lapels and tell them how lucky we are as a species that, out of all the hundreds of billions of us who ever lived, one of us managed to come up with the *Goldberg Variations*. But I don’t, because that’s not the done thing. So instead I mention that the café downstairs does some fabulous chocolate éclairs. I’m always amazed how quietly people leave a concert hall, or if they talk to each other, it’s chatter about if they can remember where they’ve parked the car, or wasn’t the soprano wearing a nice dress. I

think this is because what music does to us is such a private thing, we feel it's not quite right to voice it. ...

I can't believe I'm about to say this, but I find I can't listen to Mozart. I don't dislike him, I'm just unmoved by him. I realise I'm in a minority and I'm intrigued as to why this is. I broadcast a Radio 3 interval talk about this a few months ago, and the controller, Roger Wright, rather mischievously scheduled it in the middle of a live relay of *The Marriage of Figaro*. I received the biggest response to anything I've ever done. Buckets of letters and emails. None of them hostile. One or two confessing they agreed with me. But many more patiently, movingly, explaining why they loved Mozart. ...

The arts: what are they there for? For me they're not there for any other reason than to remind us that, no matter where we are, whether we're learned, in prison, poor, successful, alone or average, our material circumstances are not all that we have, that we can see beyond ourselves, that we're human and are therefore dignified. That's my answer. I'm sure that each of you has a different one. I just wish we all had more opportunities to express them.

Armando Iannucci, 'Classical music, the love of my life', *Observer*, issue of 14th May, 2006. Review section, 7.

5.3 Growing to maturity in Christ

The theme

Human beings grow physically, in knowledge and in wisdom, but they also grow 'spiritually', but not just in the sense of facility in prayer or spiritual exercises. This aspect of growth involves self-understanding, a sense of how humanity connects with creation and God and fellow human beings, and an ability to love more widely and more keenly. Spiritual growth begins at Baptism and goes on all one's life. This growth (which the Bible calls growth to maturity in Christ) is different from other kinds of growing; these come to a peak and deteriorate, while spiritual growth can continue through and beyond the decline of other abilities. This section starts from the participants' awareness of the process of growth, including spiritual growth, and goes on to suggest that it is possible to grow in one's appreciation and engagement with music and the arts. Participants are invited to notice this already in their own lives, and to consider how the music they like can have an affect on how they worship.

The parameters of the discussion

What in the church enables growth to maturity in Christ? The following would apply:

- Growth in the things of the spirit has many teachers. The study of the Bible, taking part in worship and listening to sermons, acting in accord with Christian teaching (love, service, evangelism), being loved by others, meeting hardship and dealing with setback, praying for oneself and others, our Christian history, spiritual disciplines of various kinds, the oversight offered by the church to its people, the communion of saints, the Christian Year, the awareness of Christ present in the sacraments.
- The arts in the service of the church also invite us to grow spiritually, whether fine buildings or beautiful interiors, or murals and paintings and icons – and music.
- We speak of good taste and bad taste. What are our tastes in music generally? What are the tastes of others in the group? (Remember the first day/weekend away and) Try to say why you like the music you do. Do you remember liking other kinds of music? Would you say you have ‘moved on’? If questions of taste are to do with growing, can the tastes of others help you to grow?
- There are important differences between music and most, or all, of the other arts. Unlike paintings, for example, we don’t stand in front of music and hear it ‘externally’; it happens inside ourselves simultaneously as it rises from its source. Music is part of everyone and what people like is built into their identity. When music we enjoy, or the hymns we prefer, are criticised, do we feel that we ourselves are being criticised? Does this mean we have still some growing to do?
- Can music prevent us from growing? When we find a piece of music – or a particular style of music – easy to listen to, it is possible that this music is not challenging us any more? When we need to make an effort to appreciate a composition or setting, something in us grows to meet it.
- We need to ask ourselves and tell each other what the music we like says to us – and be interested in the answers! Then we need to ask, Is the music I prefer saying anything new to me? Does it make me feel good where I am or ready for adventure, or of course both?
- We also need to ask: What does this music make me think of, and why? Can I hear what it is ‘saying’? Other questions are: Could I listen to this again and again? and: Does this music take me somewhere new?
- Growth takes effort. Does our music ask us to make an effort?
- The Bible suggests that our path to growth is the same path taken by Christ in his death and resurrection. Can our music fail to lead us through these avenues? Is there any hint of suffering and struggle in the melodies and harmonies of the music we know best and like best?

The musical dimension

These four edited extracts are from writings mainly by neurologists. Its reference to music still carrying its meaning through dementia reflects what was said above about spiritual growth, that it continues through the decline of other abilities. However, there is also the understanding that spiritual growth means making connections and growing more and more into a 'whole' person. What these writers are saying is that music profoundly connects the different parts of our personalities as they are expressed in the structure of our brains.

One approach to the question as to how the content of music is received and understood is to study how music is received by the human organism – the work of psychology and physiology. In a review article, the conductor Stephen Pritchard remarks how '(w)e all have music on the brain, to a lesser or greater degree. Not everyone enjoys a total soundscape, but most of us can hold a tune in our head. Music is so much a part of our lives that even those who have never plucked a string or bashed a triangle have an instinct for it'.

[Stephen Pritchard, 'The Keys to Life', *Observer*, Review Section, 2 December 2007, 25]

Evidence for this is adduced by the neurologist Oliver Sacks who gives several instances of the effect of music on mentally disturbed patients, including the ability of music to 'awaken' patients with encephalitis lethargica (sleeping sickness) both to song and to dance, both physically and emotionally.

[Oliver Sacks, *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain* (Picador, 2008)]

Musical activity involves nearly every region of the brain, with analysis carried out by different neural areas before being brought together to form a coherent representation of what we are hearing. Music which moves us deeply stimulates structures in the primitive, reptilian regions of the cerebellar vermis and amygdala – the heart of the emotional processing department of the brain.

[Daniel Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music: Understanding a Human Obsession* (Atlantic Books, 2006)]

It has been noticed that for people in dementia the experience of music outlasts other faculties. Researchers instance the case of a musical scholar and sometime performer who, when severely demented, was still able to improvise fluently. After he stopped playing altogether, immobile, mute, unable to process what he saw, and failing to know his own his wife, he still recognised pieces of music which meant a lot to him. It was reported that he no longer looked vacantly into space, his eyes would widen and would take on a brightness and an appearance of concentration, even looking towards the source of the sound. His wife once witnessed him disco dancing, a pursuit in which he had not indulged in his prime, with the greatest of ease.

[Vernon Pickles and Raya A. Jones, 'The person still comes first: the continuing musical self in dementia', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 13, No. 3, 2006, 73, 88-9.]

5.4 A diaconal community

The theme

The aim is to show that service is not things we do for the church or join with others to do on behalf of the church but is of the essence of the church. Diaconal service does not refer to acts of benevolence but a quality in its whole life. The church continues the costly and sacrificial service that was characteristic of the life and work of Christ, leading to the promise of healing and reconciliation for the world on the way to the Kingdom. This may mean it speaks out about injustice and for the people who are silenced by their circumstances, whether through politics or poverty. In some places the church can do this safely, even if it is uncomfortable at times; in other places it suffers persecution.

This could be approached by, say, two case studies of congregations whose life has come to revolve round an act of service. One could relate to the care and advocacy of asylum seekers in this country, another a local community project (a more up-to-date version of the Craigmillar situation, perhaps). One could be an overseas congregation in a location of some difficulty.

The parameters of the discussion

This could have three parts: the dimension of the Kingdom of God that is already coming into focus in the church; the quality of service as expressed among those who plan, make, and join in the music in the local church; and the choice of music which serves rather than dominates worship, enabling the whole experience to be effective.

- A function of music in the church is to show that the promised Kingdom is still in the future, but that signs of it can be seen in the church. Music that helps to express that idea will have a feeling of 'something still to come' but at the same time will be satisfying to the listener or participant as a 'finished' musical statement. Some music does not have enough of the component that offers to carry us forward, waiting for what is to come. It makes its statement directly and there is nothing more to be said. You might call this music which brings instant satisfaction. This kind of music has its place but the question is, should it be in worship?
- The music of a local church is always in someone's hands, whether a director of music or a clergyperson or a praise band. The question should always be asked, Who holds the power in my congregation and how do they exercise it? This may

not be evident and all might seem well until a careful analysis is done. Are the people who ‘call the tune’ open to the views of others and willing to listen to them? Are they able to lay aside the control they have to give others a voice? Is discussion encouraged in your church or do people simply react to others’ choices after they are made?

- Music as to ‘serve’ worship. It is possible for powerful and attractive music to be used because people like it and enjoy it for its own sake, rather than because it ‘fits in’ with the liturgy. This can mean that the music can be too interesting and mask the true worship that is trying to happen underneath. There will certainly be a place for this music. Ask what function such music has and where it might be used. It may be that your church does not have enough opportunities for music-making, meaning that everything has to happen within worship. However, music that serves the liturgy will certainly not be nondescript but will have an energy that matches the important and far-reaching events that are taking place when God’s people gather to worship.

The musical dimension

The ‘service’ aspect comes out in two ways in this extract from a novel: the ability to ‘give everything you have to others’ and a Kingdom-like world with ‘all conflicts resolved’.

In his novel *Saturday*, Ian McEwan includes a long passage in which his neurosurgeon protagonist drops in on a band rehearsal of a new song written by his son. At first the narrator would ‘prefer to be at home with a Mozart trio on the hi-fi, and a glass of icy white wine’, but then is arrested by what the instruments are doing (‘a simple descending line from the fifth fret, tumbling into a thick chord which oozes into a second and remains hanging there, an unresolved fading seventh ...’) before he lets the sound engulf him:

There are these rare moments when musicians together touch something sweeter than they’ve ever found before in rehearsals or performance, beyond the merely collaborative or technically proficient, when their expression becomes as easy and graceful as friendship or love. This is when they give us a glimpse of what we might be, of our best selves, and of an impossible world in which you give everything you have to others, but lose nothing of yourself. Out in the real world there exist detailed plans, visionary projects for peaceable realms, all conflicts resolved, happiness for everyone, for ever – mirages for which people are prepared to die and kill. Christ’s kingdom on earth, the workers’ paradise, the ideal Islamic state. But only in music, and only on rare occasions, does the curtain actually lift on this dream of community, and it’s tantalisingly conjured, before fading away with the last notes.

Ian McEwan, *Saturday* (Jonathan Cape, 2005), Vintage paperback edition, 171-2.

5.5 A eucharistic community

The theme

Reviewing the first characteristic of koinoinia to be examined, a first step is to help people see worship not merely in terms of the physical realities – who is present and what they did, including the leaders and the musicians, but to understand that it is an event with more than one dimension and involving a unique kind of community.

An imaginative reconstruction is made, in story format, of the emergence of the church at Corinth, the circumstances of the times and the place, including prevailing philosophies and beliefs and how these influenced the formation of the church, the relationship between the church and St Paul and what led to his writing those parts of the letter that define the nature of the church community, and the possible impact of his words.

The parameters of the discussion

Participants would be invited to explore:

- Is the feeling from being at worship and in a space intended for worship different being at a meeting in a village hall? Does the receiving of the eucharistic elements have a different quality from the experience of sharing at table at home? What are these differences, and how could they be characterised? Are words like awe applicable, or having a sense of smallness in relation to things not fully understood (right-sizedness)? In what way might Jesus Christ be said to have been ‘present’ within the gathering?
- Do we, on leaving worship, ever (and let’s be honest: worship doesn’t always have the same impact every time, especially when we have tasks of any kind within it – stewards, choir, Sunday School teachers) feel that we ‘understand’ or feel better or more resolute about life, even though we might not be able to put that into words? Did we feel at any time that Christ might have had a word specially for us?
- As far as music is concerned, do the hymns and settings we sing only have the function of enabling us to join in or keeping us together, or do they sometimes ‘open our hearts’? Do we simply enjoy the singing or does it in any way alter our mood or attitude? Are there ever points at which we picked up on words we had not really thought of before?

- We understand song (hymns, settings) as carrying our praise or our prayers to God: does the fact that these are set to music make them feel more 'full of praise' or take us more deeply into prayer?
- Song is important in making the people of the congregation 'feel together' and become motivated to worship, serve or proclaim, but we also believe that the church's fellowship gathers in the presence of Christ and contains those who have gone before us, the 'communion of saints', those to come, and all in the 'church visible' in our time. Can music help us to think of the 'bigness' and breadth of the church in this sense?
- The church is not to be confused with human groupings who have a common aim and are united under a figurehead but is understood as the actual body of Christ. Is there a difference between music that unites a purely human gathering (like singing on a tour bus or at a football match) and music that reminds us that we gather in the company of Christ?

The musical dimension

There are two possibilities. The first is an extract from an article by the Australian poet, Peter Porter, and captures the sense that music both plays in the real world but 'plays into existence' a world beyond.

The Australian poet and critic, Peter Porter, sees music as inviting us into a new state of being. It comes from the Australian Jesuit magazine *Eureka Street*, now on-line only. It is from Vol.7, No.6 (July/August 1997), pages 27 and 33.

To speak for myself, I experience music as a whole world – not just an alternative universe to the visible and tactile one around me, but as a different and confirming grid in which the bewilderments of existence are straightened out ... a sort of second existence. ...

Music, more than words, does not comment on the universe; it invents it. Its unmatched palette for lamentation, pastoral, ferocity, exhilaration, even equanimity is not commentary but the transformation of secondary states of mind, familiar from verbal annotation, back into primary assertion. We are born knowing music's language and need no special Pentecost to comprehend what it is saying.

A second possibility would be to discuss soundtracks for films, perhaps even playing one or two of these (compilations are now available) and asking what the music adds to the visual images. Then consider what similarities, if any, there might be to liturgical music.

6. CONCLUSION

It will be quite apparent that this outline proposal for a usable resource may be read in two ways: the discussion of music as a means of furthering the formation of the church and the individual Christian; the discussion of the church and the individual Christian as a means of furthering their engagement with and understanding of music and its integral part in the worship of the church, and its connection to the whole of Christian life. That, of course, is to demonstrate the complementarity, indeed the inseparability, of these two elements in this ecclesiological model. Either emphasis can lead to the strengthening of the understanding, practice and expression of church in worship, and in mission.

It will also be observed that the present draft is directed principally to 'ordinary' members of the local church, rather than to ministers or music directors. It might be argued that there is a case (rather as in the manner of the Wild Goose Worship Group) to develop such schemes of dialogue and engagement that are directed to those who lead. These might be integrated into courses of study (including ordination training) or form the focus of local cells of ministers (as part of continuing training).

In the course of outlining her 'method for exploring music as worship and theology within the lived faith experience of worshipping communities',¹ Mary McGann emphasises the importance of sharing such research not only with practitioners in the fields of liturgical or ritual studies but with 'pastoral frameworks', whether they be at district/diocesan or congregational level.² Behind this is her belief in the liturgical competence of those who worship, gained not so much through study or office but through faithful practice.³ 'Because persons acting in community are the subject of liturgical action, they are also its first interpreters. Members of a worshipping community are capacitated by the Spirit in baptism to speak to and about God, i.e. to theologise. ... Yet it is expressed in a different language from the discourse used by professional theologians. It is experiential, far less concerned with precision than with identifying the

¹ Mary McGann, *Exploring Music as Worship and Theology: Research in Liturgical Practice* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 7.

² *Ibid.*, 58.

³ *Ibid.*, 80. Here, McGann is drawing on the work of Mary Collins.

human qualities of what has been touched, felt, heard and tasted.’⁴ This chapter has considered ways of doing this, but it is also hoped that consultations of this kind may lead to further insight or modification of what the present study has found or proposes. In this way, the study continues.

⁴ Ibid., 19.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE THESIS AS A WHOLE

Jeremy Begbie's book, *Resounding Truth*,¹ demonstrates the engagement of theologians and composers in the discussion of the relationship of music and theology from the early Christian centuries to the present day. Here, and in much of his other writing, Begbie deliberately focuses on music outside worship (indeed outside the formal bounds of church life) as a means of approaching, experiencing and beginning to understand the mystery of God in Trinity. Yet, as he freely acknowledges in the introduction to *Resounding Truth*, a majority of the discussion after his public lectures concerns music in worship.² In contrast to Begbie, this thesis has sought a different approach to the discussion of music and theology in which music in worship is central, and in which *koinonia* in both its spiritual and communal dimensions can help us to understand, choose and use music in worship with discernment, and as a part of the process of the growth, development and maturing of a local church.

The starting point for this thesis was the author's attendance at a congress of *Societas Liturgica* in Turku in 1997, one of many such congresses he has attended, but the only one to focus exclusively on music and liturgy. It reflected the growing concern with the theological dimension of music in liturgy, a concern that can be traced back at least to the writings of Erik Routley in the 1950s, and followed through the documents of Vatican II and other reports, directives and advisory documents. In the last forty or fifty years in particular, and in some places for much longer, the nature and function of music in worship has been subject to exceptional scrutiny, and passionate argument. As Begbie writes in *Resounding Truth*, 'Music in worship ... tends to attract prime attention because it provokes such white-hot controversy – no reader of this book will need to be reminded that fights over music can tear a church apart quicker than almost anything else'.³ Such controversy generally includes one or more of three core issues: participation, taste and stylistic preference, and relationship of music and words.

¹ Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (London: SPCK, 2008).

² *Ibid.*, 25.

³ *Ibid.*

It may be reasonably argued that this thesis has ignored these core issues of debate, and therefore failed to address matters which are so common. However, there is a thread followed throughout the thesis (and which can be traced in some of the literature considered) which suggests that the key issue in dispute about music in individual churches (and more widely) is not the understanding of music but the understanding of church. If ‘music can tear a church apart quicker than almost anything else’, that is a demonstration of the fragility of a church rather than anything more narrowly to do with music. It is also a demonstration of the needs (a) for a model for discourse which can enable all members of a church to have a basis for mature and informed discussion that is not dependent on professional musical or theological knowledge and which tempers personal preferences of style and taste, and (b) for a level of ecclesiological understanding which enables a worshipping community, individually and collectively, to see the nurturing potential of music in worship as part of their expression, sharing and building of church in communion with God through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

If churches (locally, regionally, denominationally, internationally and ecumenically) can grasp the potential of aspects of *koinonia* as a means of understanding, choosing and using music in worship (and beyond) effectively, then those controversial issues of participation, taste and style, and relationship of music to words cease to be ‘elephants in the room’ which have been ignored in this discussion, but instead become matters to be taken on board in a broader context founded on ecclesiological understanding and its implementation in the life and worship of a church. This thesis does not pretend to be the catalyst of such a change; rather it seeks to draw out the strands of writing and discussion which already suggest that such change has already begun. It seeks to contribute to that development, and to lay the grounds for a practical tool that local churches can use effectively.

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