

**Bangor University**

## **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

### **Enabling ministers and musicians to develop music in parish worship : addressing the shortfall in ministerial support and training in the Church of England**

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# Enabling Ministers and Musicians to Develop Music in Parish Worship

Addressing the Shortfall  
in Ministerial Support and Training  
in the Church of England

Stuart Thomas

# Table of Contents

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## ABSTRACT

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## PREAMBLE

Uncovering the Need for Ministerial Formation in Music.....	10
Frequently Asked Questions .....	12
The Core Questions.....	13
The Investigation Process.....	14
<b>1 - THE CONTEXTS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, ITS WORSHIP AND MUSIC .....</b>	<b>15</b>
1.1 The current pattern of parish ministry .....	15
1.2 Five perspectives.....	16
1.3 Problems of terminology .....	19
1.4 Music in the Worship, Liturgy and Life of the Church of England.....	20
1.5 Specific contexts of the Church of England .....	25
1.6 The context of hymnody and other congregational music for worship in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century .....	34
1.7 Music and ‘Alternative Worship’ .....	35
1.8 The context of Ecclesiastical Law .....	39
1.9 The status and role of musicians.....	41
1.10 Identifying clergy and other worship leaders’ needs .....	42
1.11 The perceived needs of clergy and other ministers.....	43
<b>2 – REFLECTION, EXPLORATION &amp; INVESTIGATION.....</b>	<b>45</b>
2.1 EXPERIENCE OF MUSICAL TRAINING, MINISTERIAL FORMATION AND WORK AS A LITURGICAL TRAINER.....	45
2.2 Identifying issues and questions .....	49
2.3 Key issues for investigation .....	50
2.4 The Dialogues .....	51
2.5 The Responses .....	53
2.6 A wider group of clergy .....	59
2.7 The questionnaires and responses.....	60
2.8 Responses from Two European Lutheran Churches.....	65
2.9 Dialogue with an Experienced Liturgy Trainer .....	69
2.10 Reflections on process .....	71
<b>3 - CLERGY AND MUSICIAN TRAINING, FORMATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES..</b>	<b>73</b>
3.1 Existing provision for liturgical formation of clergy .....	73
3.2 Current studies, research and resources – liturgy .....	86

3.3	Current studies, research and resources – music & liturgical formation .....	93
3.4	Aspects of current liturgical and musical scholarship useful to ministers consulting a Toolkit...	103
<b>4</b>	<b>- TOWARDS THE PREPARATION OF THE TOOLKIT .....</b>	<b>105</b>
4.1	Outcomes from the investigations contributing to the Toolkit .....	105
4.2	Specific areas to address .....	106
4.3	Addressing the formational need .....	108
4.4	Shaping a Toolkit in the light of the investigations .....	109

## **THE TOOLKIT**

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>113</b>
Using the Toolkit.....	113
Basic Definitions.....	115
<b>THE STORY OF MUSIC AS PART OF CHURCH WORSHIP .....</b>	<b>117</b>
Time Zone 1: the first 1500 years .....	117
Time Zone 2: Liturgical Music and the English Reformation .....	119
Time Zone 3: From the 17 <sup>th</sup> to the 19 <sup>th</sup> century.....	121
Time Zone 4: The 19 <sup>th</sup> and early 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries.....	123
Time Zone 5: The 20 <sup>th</sup> century .....	124
Time Zone 6: Contemporary Concerns.....	127
<b>BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MINISTERS AND MUSICIANS.....</b>	<b>129</b>
Making decisions – who’s involved? .....	131
Making music – who does what? .....	132
Making theology and music co-exist – can there be a level playing-field?.....	133
Making the best of resources – how to manage experts and volunteers .....	134
Making peace - how to handle conflict and disagreement? .....	135
Making allowances - how to deal with contracts and pay?.....	136
Making conversation – how to open up and maintain communication?.....	137
Making Music - how to work with a choir or instrumental group? .....	137
Making changes – how to introduce new material?.....	139
<b>KNOWING HOW TO CHOOSE MUSIC FOR WORSHIP .....</b>	<b>140</b>
Part 1. Eucharistic Texts.....	140
Part 2. Non-Eucharistic Worship .....	142
Part 3. Words and music .....	143
Part 4. Data Projection .....	143
Part 5. Style and Accompaniments .....	144

Part 6. Listening .....	145
Part 7. Hymn-singing and non-churchgoers.....	146
Part 8. Space and environment.....	147
Part 9. Singing the Faith.....	147
Part 10 Tunes and Metres.....	148
<b>TOOLKIT RESOURCES.....</b>	<b>149</b>
Part 1. Hymnbooks for the Church of England.....	150
Part 2. Hymnbooks for the rest of the UK.....	151
Part 3. Hymnbooks for the worldwide Anglican Church.....	152
Part 4. Hymnbooks from other Christian traditions .....	153
Part 5. Non-denominational and Ecumenical hymnbooks.....	154
Part 6. Music for Worship from the Taizé Community .....	157
Part 7. Singing the Psalms.....	157
Part 8. Downloads and Digital Technology .....	158
Part 9. Other sources of help .....	159
Part 10. Music for the Choir.....	160
Part 11. Liturgical Texts.....	161
Part 12. Useful Reading .....	162
Part 13. Formational Possibilities.....	163
<b>APPENDIX A - QUESTIONNAIRE ON WORSHIP AND MUSIC .....</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>166</b>
PRINTED MATERIALS .....	166
UNPUBLISHED THESES AND OTHER MATERIALS.....	176
ONLINE MATERIALS .....	177
LITURGICAL RESOURCES.....	179

# ABSTRACT

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Church ministers often lack confidence in making musical choices, negotiating with musicians, or knowing how to make best use of often limited musical resources. Building on my experience as a part-time liturgy tutor for a diocesan ministry course, as training incumbent, and leader of workshop and seminars, and on investigations into the current provision of ministerial training, available resources, and the responses of new and experienced ministers from the Church of England and from the Lutheran Church, the outcome is a Musical Toolkit intended to support ministers.

There are three chapters, preceded by an introduction which highlights the roots of this investigation in the everyday practice of public ministry, leading up to a Toolkit which ultimately as a web-based resource will offer ordained and licensed ministers of the Church of England readily accessible help and advice, as and when they need it, with options to pursue certain avenues of enquiry further. The Introduction sets the scene and introduces the context of the research and the questions to be addressed. Chapter 1 then addresses the ecclesiastical and social context of the study, covering how music has developed and is currently practised in the Church of England, aiming to identify what are the perceived and actual needs. Chapter 2 moves from personal experience to the research itself with new and experienced Church of England clergy, leading to chapter 3 which investigates current provision for liturgical training for ministers in the Church of England, and current literature available. Chapter 4 summarises the conclusions and outcomes of the investigations leading to the final outcome: the Musical Toolkit, which is now being adapted for online use, where it will be of most use to clergy and other ministers.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The help and co-operation of many people in conducting this investigation must be acknowledged. It would not have been possible at all without the generous financial help of The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group and Mr Iain Hearn, and especially The Ministerial Training Department of the Diocese of Guildford and their Director Canon Dr Hazel Whitehead.

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# PREAMBLE

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This thesis is rooted in the practice of the daily parish life of the Church of England, and specifically that of the parish clergy. The investigation has been carried out with the support of the Diocese of Guildford, which has served as sponsor, and encouraged me to undertake further study as part of my continuing development. It grows from and is related to four specific facets of my responsibilities:

- parish priest,
- training incumbent,
- rural dean (with oversight for clergy and other ministers in a group of parishes),
- part-time tutor for clergy and lay minister training.

The research questions and process emanate directly from these contexts, but are also informed by my musical practice as keyboard player in an eclectic but very able worship band. While there is reference to secondary literature, the prime focus of the thesis is local: it is a study in parish ministry. It falls into two parts. The first part addresses the day-to-day needs of clergy and leaders of worship in handling the music and musicians of worship. Through personal reflection, dialogue with trainee clergy, and interrogation of experienced clergy, three problems are uncovered:

- the gap between resources, information and advice available to assist and support clergy and worship leaders and their awareness of them and knowledge of how to use them;
- the gap between personal musical experience and knowledge, and the demands of choosing music for worship and working effectively with church musicians of diverse backgrounds, experience and ability;
- the lack of attention to addressing these gaps in either initial ministerial training or continuing ministerial education, and the lack of time and scope either within such training and education programmes or within the daily working pattern of ministers to do so.

The second part of this thesis addresses these three problems, beginning with the third – the lack of provision, time or scope within ministerial training or working patterns. It consists of a non-



specialist ‘toolkit’ for busy clergy and worship leaders to dip into, where they can find ready support, guidance and practical pointers to understanding the issues of music in worship and addressing them. In preparing a user-friendly resource of this kind, there is an inevitable tension between the precision of thought and professional language expected of a research submission, and the need to provide an accessible, user-friendly resource for practical use, in due course to be available as an updatable website.

The public awareness of music in the local church is commonly informed by reports of conflict. Disruption to the musical life of the church as the result of local conflict may not be a staple of the mass media’s diet, but media reports suggest it still forms a regular and popular side dish. Lurid headlines tell of sacked organists, disbanded choirs and ‘trendy vicars’<sup>1</sup> who want to dismember all vestiges of musical tradition in favour of being accessible to a twenty-first century congregation. From village church to cathedral come sad tales of musicians and clergy whose relationships end in acrimonious parting. The media, ever mindful of the sales value of conflict, often caricature musicians as dedicated experts who understand their calling as maintaining the provision of music for worship of the highest quality. For them, we are told, ordained and other authorised ministers are at best an unavoidable obstruction to the fulfilment of this calling, most clergy being culturally philistine, obsessed with congregation size and fund-raising, and interested in church or parish only as a vehicle for advancing career aspirations. In the same narrative, on the other hand, clergy are portrayed as having a similarly jaundiced view of church musicians - preening primadonnas without any understanding of worshipping God, interested only in self-congratulation and probably in need of immediate conversion.

The supposedly terminal decline of the Christian church has been a journalistic assumption for many years, with any crisis or conflict viewed as one part of this bigger picture. But however modern or post-modern the social context, arguments about music in worship are hardly of recent origin, all being situated on a continuum of disputes between ‘traditionalists’ and ‘modernisers’ which arise within the Church as among other faith communities. Even Westminster Abbey endures controversy and fallout over its organists and musicians, most recently in 1998 regarding

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Vicar’ being the term used by much of the mass media to describe any ordained church leader or officer, regardless of denomination

the dismissal of the organist, Dr Martin Neary<sup>2</sup>. It is a burden they share with countless other churches of every conceivable liturgical tradition, and apparently across the world. A brief investigation via the Internet soon uncovers accounts of conflict between musicians and clergy<sup>3</sup>. From media descriptions a non-partisan observer would probably conclude that the ways and mindsets of clergy and musicians are too divergent for any rapprochement to be possible over the role of music in Christian worship and liturgy.

Conflict over worship has undoubtedly caused some congregations to endure regrettable, even damaging breakdowns in worship and fellowship, but the experience of many more is rarely as bleak and rather different. A significant proportion of local churches aim to encompass both traditional and contemporary styles of music within their worshipping life, and do so without relationships between different interest groups breaking down<sup>4</sup>. Anecdotal evidence suggests that differences over musical choices and preferences are more likely to centre on style or practice than on theology or liturgical tradition. For most clergy and ministers, worship and the music which expresses it are aspects of a much wider range of ministry, including pastoral and community relationships. In contrast, musicians have a more focused role, dedicated to one aspect of liturgy, extending this beyond the local congregation only occasionally to promote specific projects.

Many clergy therefore feel at a marked disadvantage when discussing matters of liturgy and music with church musicians whose skill or knowledge base they fear may be greater. Rather than take up valuable and limited time with negotiation, or risk potential confrontation, they will readily delegate tasks such as choosing hymns to the ‘experts’ as the least complicated option. For their part, musicians are usually content to let the minister deal with preaching and pastoral care, which demand little or no musical input, provided they are left to tackle the musical requirements in their preferred style without interference.

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<sup>2</sup> Only a year after worldwide acclaim following the funeral of Princess Diana, Westminster Abbey found itself on the receiving end of severe criticism over the manner in which Dr Neary was dismissed. At a judicial review, the judge concerned described official handling of the affair as “gamma minus on the scale of natural justice” <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/dean-censured-for-callous-sacking-1190429.html>

<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, many of the cases reported ostensibly have less connection with musical taste, more with policy decisions. Financial irregularities, inappropriate relationships and personality clashes feature far more regularly than attempts to modernise, as in the case of Dr Neary.

<sup>4</sup> The most popular and best-selling hymnals today are based neither on denominational or theological assumptions, nor on being exclusively either ‘traditional’ or ‘modern’ in their selection of material

This bilateral approach, while minimising the risk of a public dispute, has three significant potential disadvantages:

- it leaves resentment and frustration festering below the surface, unexpressed and unacknowledged until a crisis or disagreement brings them to the fore,
- it militates against teamwork being modelled for the wider congregation by all who share in the ministry of the Church,
- it leaves all parties, not least other regular worshippers, defending their own territory rather than mutually enriching each other's experience of worship and broadening horizons.

The provision of a straightforward and usable means of helping clergy to avoid such conflict is one intended outcome of this study, the other being to provide a resource for them to access whenever necessary to deal with questions and problems.

## UNCOVERING THE NEED FOR MINISTERIAL FORMATION IN MUSIC

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Ten years of formal liturgy teaching as part of a diocesan-based ministry course<sup>5</sup> leading to ordination or licensing for public ministry, confirmed the realisation that neither during and after studies do most clergy or Licensed Lay Ministers<sup>6</sup> receive much useful guidance in the role music plays in liturgy. More widely, this reflects a marked decline in liturgy as a component of ministerial formation, a shortfall unlikely to be made up later in ministry. Thus most of what is learned by ordinands and those in the early phase of public ministry will come from experience obtained locally, which may well be experienced as negative or frustrating.

A significant proportion of Church of England clergy and ministers express an awareness and appreciation of great music, gaining spiritual benefit from listening to liturgical or sacred works. A small number may claim publicly to write off music in a classical or traditional idiom as 'no

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<sup>5</sup> The Guildford Diocesan Local Ministry Programme.

<sup>6</sup> Formerly Readers or Lay Readers.

longer relevant' to the twenty-first century worship, preferring contemporary songs accompanied by a well-amplified band. Such statements are at best simplistic and misleading, likely to lead to a noisy collision between minister and musicians, while their congregations will be denied access to the spiritual riches of musical styles beyond those they already know. Few ministers fail to recognise the value in knowing and understanding of the story and context of music in the Church of England, but the root of their problem lies elsewhere.

Early in this investigation it became clear that students and newly authorised ministers were deeply concerned with making good decisions about music in worship, and well-informed choices of hymn, song or psalm. They were also keen to ensure the effective integration of these with other non-musical aspects of an act of worship though often unsure about how to identify or use the resources available to them. Their concerns could be summarised as follows:

- does someone with more limited musical training have either the right or sufficient knowledge to challenge the musical preferences of those who possess greater expertise?
- is the preferred musical style of those with specialist training or knowledge by definition superior?
- how, if at all, might it be possible to bring together music of different traditions, styles and aesthetics into fruitful harmony?

Expressed from a variety of backgrounds, these concerns have recurred consistently in each year-group of students over a ten-year period<sup>7</sup>, frequently leading on to discussion about the nature of music, about expectations surrounding music in worship, and about the extent to which worship and music are distinct from yet influenced by wider culture. Similar concerns continue to be raised during post-ordination Initial Ministerial Education, and these underlying anxieties are carried forward elsewhere into personal responsibility for worship and liturgy, as still relatively inexperienced clergy and ministers prepare to take responsibility for public worship.

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<sup>7</sup> From 1995-2007, over two periods. Although other ministerial duties have taken precedence since then, ongoing training work on an individual or small-group basis has continued, along with one-off consultations.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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The way in which questions and concerns about music in worship are framed by ministers is determined by a number of interrelated factors:

- previous experience and knowledge of music and hymnody, linked with personal musical preferences,
- personal expectations of how music should form part of an act of worship, sometimes related to tradition or churchmanship,
- awareness of contemporary culture and the musical resources currently available for worship,
- issues in worship presently creating tension or controversy.

The following questions, reproduced from discussions during formation events, address consistently recurring areas of concern, so as a foundation for producing an online Toolkit to help ministers think them through, they at least provide a framework:

1. What defines music as ‘traditional’ or ‘modern’?
2. Can musical quality be judged other than by personal taste?
3. Why is agreement on music for worship so difficult to achieve?
4. Why is this congregation different to St.... in the neighbouring parish?
5. Why do certain hymns and songs ‘work better’ with some congregations than others?
6. How can I understand musical jargon better for dealing with ‘expert’ musicians?
7. How do I handle the group in my congregation who want to change radically the present style/tradition?
8. How can I tell which hymns or songs work best with different accompaniments?
9. How can music be used to maintain the flow/thematic thread of a service?
10. How can I identify and make best use of the resources available?
11. Is it possible to introduce change or extend the range of music without creating conflict?
12. Where can I find out quickly what music is available to suit this church’s needs?

13. How can I use a hymnbook more effectively?

14. Is there a resource where I can find answers to specific questions?

Although these concerns are often raised on a one-off basis, they cover four significant areas:

- the story of music in worship and its contemporary context,
- the role music plays within liturgy and in relationship with specific texts,
- the often complex relationships between musicians, ministers and worshippers,
- help with practical issues and awareness of resources.

## THE CORE QUESTIONS

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In order to develop and produce a practice-based Toolkit, two core underlying questions had to be addressed:

- What would help busy ministers, without musical training, to make more effective use of music and musicians in the context of worship and liturgy, and wider Church life?
- What specific resources and advice would help train them for this, and enable them to do use liturgy and worship for the formation of the congregation?

In setting up an investigation to support the development of such a Toolkit, it would need to be rooted in the practicalities of everyday parish and church life. The motivation for it came from helping and advising many clergy and ministers in a range of contexts, all of whom were seeking answers to questions or problems they had encountered ‘on the ground’. The investigation would therefore incorporate the questioning of clergy in that situation, alongside looking at their current formation provision, and other currently available resources. While acknowledging the important role of academic research, and incorporating its findings where appropriate, the Toolkit will only be effective if it is focused on practical liturgical ministry for clergy who are unlikely to look at anything which appears inaccessible, time-consuming or unconnected with their needs.

## THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS

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The process itself is described in the following chapters, leading up to the Toolkit itself:

### CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1 sets out from the context of the life of a ‘typical’ parish priest, or at least with the kind of responsibilities and pressures routinely encountered day to day, which both limit and distract from preparing worship. It then moves on to five possible perspectives from which the issue of music in worship might be viewed and studied, and continues with a more detailed look at the context of the Church of England, specifically to identify the areas of most importance and interest to hard-pressed clergy. The legal context of the Canons, the historical context and the contemporary context are covered as are the wider issues of the role of music in twenty-first century society and people’s access to it.

### CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2 begins with the personal background underlying the investigation, especially covering ministerial experience and the training of ordinands and newly-ordained or licensed clergy and ministers. The identification of key questions is then followed by the process and outcomes of two detailed dialogues and a small number of questionnaire responses, together with a further dialogue with a specialist liturgy tutor. Reflections on all of these lead towards a more precise definition of the needs which would be met in a Toolkit.

### CHAPTERS 3 & 4

Chapter 3 looks at the current formational provision in the Church of England and where the shortfall might be for clergy dealing with liturgy and music in their parishes week by week. A review of currently available ‘academic’ literature follows this, in part to demonstrate what additional light it might shed on the investigations, and in part also to inform the content of the Toolkit and offer more detailed advice and insight to those clergy wanting to follow up particular issues. Chapter 4 introduces the Toolkit itself, its parameters, its structure, and the key issues it covers, as well as the medium of its presentation and its objective of providing a ‘quick fix’ to offer clergy and other ministers the help they are seeking.

# 1 - THE CONTEXTS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, ITS WORSHIP AND MUSIC

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## 1.1 THE CURRENT PATTERN OF PARISH MINISTRY

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In order to understand and address the need of a priest in parish ministry for help in making choices about music in worship, the context in which she or he works day by day needs also to be understood. Despite the still repeated jibe that clergy only work one day a week, in reality worship is but one aspect of daily ministry, albeit central. Pastoral care and worship are inextricably linked, at times directly through the occasional offices and associated rites such as an annual memorial service, at other times less directly by ensuring that regular public worship reflects the concerns and aspirations of the local community, and the realities of the wider world.

In addition, the past two decades have seen an increasing proportion of ministry time taken up with meetings both parochial and diocesan, administration, management and training of staff, publicity and fundraising. In most communities there are schools that expect local clergy to take assemblies, act as governors or assist with Religious Education in the classroom. Nursing and care homes frequently seek visits and pastoral care for their residents, in more urban areas there may be a tradition of clergy visiting local business and workplaces, and for most there are deanery and diocesan meetings to attend. For some there is an extra workload involved in acting as training incumbent for the newly ordained, or the responsibilities of acting as an Area Dean, overseeing and sharing in the management of a number of parishes and their priests. On top of all this, bishops and senior staff encourage clergy to take their annual leave, make a regular retreat, and rigorously keep their day off. Against a backdrop of falling clergy numbers and consequent amalgamations of parishes, it is no surprise to find ministry time becoming spread ever more thinly.

Worship preparation is therefore squeezed into an increasingly constricted time frame, while the advent of Common Worship has compelled priests and others responsible for public worship to devote more hours to compiling appropriate individual liturgies for weekly services and other occasions. The complexities and demands of the most high-profile ministerial task have increased in inverse proportion to the resources and time available for it. Unsurprisingly, choice of and management of music frequently drops well down the priority list. This investigation aims to



understand the nature of this problem, what ministers themselves think they are lacking in formation and information, and what provision is currently available. The intended outcome of an on-line Toolkit would aim to bridge that gap and offer a resource that would be available on demand to answer questions, suggest good practice and offer a range of resource options for further investigation.

## 1.2 FIVE PERSPECTIVES

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A study of the need for and provision of a resource to enable priests and other ministers to make better informed choices in respect of music in worship could be approached from a number of different and complementary angles, all of which together would offer them a broader perspective than might be otherwise available. Those which have informed this study include the following:

### 1.2.1 THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The ecclesiological perspective focuses particularly on the concept of ‘church’ in the context of worship. The nuances of the English language can provoke a variety of concepts around this word – ‘going to church’ could imply entering a building, joining with a community of Christians, engaging in personal devotion, or taking part in public worship, while reference to ‘the Church’ often describes an institution or organisation. Acknowledging this range of meanings, and how worship influences and is influenced by them, is vital to an understanding of the various roles music plays in the life of the Christian community and especially its worship. This approach is exemplified by the American Lutheran pastor and scholar Gordon Lathrop, who deals with non-verbal elements of worship from an explicitly theological viewpoint in his trilogy of works: *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Lathrop 1993); *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology* (Lathrop 1999); and *Holy Ground: A Liturgical Cosmology* (Lathrop 2004). Mention should also be made of *Mission-shaped Church* (Church of England 2004), one of the most influential, widely disseminated and reprinted reports ever commissioned by the Church of England. In early 21<sup>st</sup> century post-Christian England it highlights many ways in which ‘church’ is being redefined for a generation coming to terms with the impact of immense social change, and outlines the urgent need for the Church to find radically new ways of reaching those on its fringes or beyond (the ‘unchurched’), of addressing issues of resource provision, and of engaging with the wider community and society.

### 1.2.2 THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The sociological perspective seeks to analyse and understand the interactions, interrelationships and responses of all involved in worship, whether as ministers or participants. Equally important is an understanding of the role of ‘church’ in contemporary society, and of the rapidly changing social backdrop against which the Christian community, national and local, comes together to express its faith and mission in corporate worship. In *A Sociological History of Christian Worship* (Stringer 2005) Martin Stringer takes the texts of early Christian worship as a starting point for an overview of Christian worship across the 2000 years of its history in seven 300-year blocks, concluding: “it is the sheer variety of ways in which Christians have worshipped over the centuries that draws me, both in the outward forms of the worship along with the art, music and spaces in which that worship took place, and in the underlying motivations for that worship....It is here we learn....new things about what it might mean to be Christian...from each of the particularities we should learn once more to be creative in our own time and place.” (ibid 237) Surrounded by almost unparalleled change, those engaged in public ministry can only benefit from understanding their own context for worship in the wider narrative of Christian history.

### 1.2.3 THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The anthropological perspective offers insights into the role and significance of music in the interactions and ritual behaviours of a community. The academic study of ethnomusicology analyses this in detail, with the contribution of John Blacking<sup>8</sup> among the most important. An accomplished musician himself, he was raised in a highly musical Anglo-Catholic tradition, to which he remained loyally devoted. However, his period of National Service enabled him to experience of music in many worldwide cultures, and motivated him to study social anthropology rather than academic music, most notably during a lengthy residence in South Africa. As both a leading social anthropologist and skilled musician Blacking’s work sought to draw out the complex relationship between music and the society and culture in which it is rooted. His findings and conclusions have important applications in the musical life of a Christian community, not least for those who take responsibility for it.

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<sup>8</sup> John Blacking was Professor of Social Anthropology at Queen’s University, Belfast, until his death in 1990.

#### 1.2.4 THE THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The theological perspective relates the role of music, specifically in the context of worship, to the wider field of theological study and research. While there is hope and expectation that all ministers will continue with their theological learning and study beyond ordination training, for most the motivation to do so specifically in relation to music will be limited. In the context of worship, liturgical formation has to encompass awareness of music's links with theological understanding and spirituality, explored by Jeremy Begbie, initially in *Theology, Music and Time* (Begbie 2000), recognising that in doing so he was covering ground few had traversed previously: "this almost complete theological disregard of music is regrettable." (ibid 4) In *Resounding Truth* (Begbie 2008) he extends this further by looking at music and theology through the prisms of Scripture, history and an 'ecology', enabling readers both to think more widely and creatively about the role of music in worship, and to respond with theological insight to the many ways in which music can be experienced in 21<sup>st</sup> century culture.

#### 1.2.5 THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The historical perspective is perhaps most familiar in current liturgical formation, and from whichever theological tradition or churchmanship, few will be unaware of the seminal work of Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Dix 1945). Regarded at the time as controversial, Dix's underlying thesis was that the shape of the liturgy mattered more than the words used, a conclusion he based on historical evidence. A Benedictine monk, Dix's viewpoint reflected his own Anglo-Catholic convictions and sat uneasily with a more evangelical theological stance, yet his work emphasised for the first time the historical roots of liturgical texts, and remains in print more than six decades later. Others have developed this since, notably Paul Bradshaw in *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (Bradshaw 1992, revised 2002)<sup>9</sup> and more recently in *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship* (Bradshaw 2009).

All of these perspectives, together with the specific investigation undertaken, inform the underlying approach to production of a web-based Toolkit to help ministers in their understanding of music and worship. The investigation draws on all of them in some measure, and is both qualitative and quantitative, drawing on a range of literature including the works

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<sup>9</sup> Later distilled for a more general readership in *Early Christian Worship* (Bradshaw 1996, revised 2010).

mentioned above. At the same time, recognising that for most users of the Toolkit the academic background is likely to be less immediately important than its application to everyday practice, it will be derived from and applied to the context of everyday ministerial responsibilities within a parish or similar context.

### 1.3 PROBLEMS OF TERMINOLOGY

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Many of the terms fundamental to this study are particularly flexible in their use and implicit meaning. An Anglican referring to ‘church music’ might mean ‘liturgical music’ specifically, choral music generally associated with cathedrals, or simply all music used in church; a Roman Catholic might use ‘sacred music’ rather than ‘church music’ – a term which others might apply more broadly to any setting of a sacred text (or instrumental music on a sacred theme). To clarify their particular use in this study, the following definitions will apply:

- Church – in the context of worship ‘church’ refers primarily to the gathered Christian community or congregation in a particular place, on occasion to a building primarily devoted to worship. Where the institution or organisation is implied it will be capitalised as Church.
- Worship – while ‘worship’ can imply an act of devotion or reverence offered to God by an individual, in this study it refers to the Christian community’s shared expression of praise and devotion to God, whether formal or informal.
- Liturgy – if worship is used in a more general sense to cover a range of activities and events, ‘liturgy’ refers specifically to the rites and written texts authorised and used in public worship.
- Music – while ‘organised sound’ is probably the briefest definition of music<sup>10</sup>, in the context of a community it refers to the combining of sounds, instrumental and/or vocal, in a mutually acceptable and pleasing form of expression.
- Liturgical music – music which specifically carries the text of a liturgy, although this can be in a wide variety of styles from plainsong to rock.

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<sup>10</sup> Defined as such in 1961 by French modernist composer Edgard Varèse.

- Worship music – music which is composed for and used primarily within an act of worship, ranging from metrical psalms and hymns to short ‘worship songs’ in a popular or folk idiom.
- Church music – music which although intended for use as part of an act of worship can be performed or produced in other contexts. Choral anthems and some oratorios clearly fall within this genre, as do Bach’s Chorale Preludes for organ, written as reflections on the chorales at the heart of Lutheran music in worship, and now more often heard before or after worship.
- Sacred music – music embracing all of the above categories, but also including works intended for concert hall or public performance, setting a Biblical or other sacred text - Brahms’ *Ein Deutsches Requiem* or Elgar’s *Dream of Gerontius* qualify in this category. These do not invariably reflect faith on the part of their composer: Ralph Vaughan Williams, son of the Vicarage, editor of *The English Hymnal* and writer of several familiar hymn-tunes, remained an agnostic throughout his life. While complete performances would be beyond the resources of all but a select few parishes, sections of these and similar works are regularly incorporated into liturgy as choral items or recorded music to aid personal reflection.

Beyond these specific definitions, a great deal of music across all genres might be regarded as ‘spiritual’ in that it addresses, or is perceived to address, the deeper and less tangible aspects of the human condition. Whether or not this was the composer’s intention, others identify it as expressing specific feelings or relevant to specific occasions – Sibelius, for example, was never happy that his Symphony no.2 came to symbolise Finnish independence – but whatever its original motivation, there is a growing trend towards using a variety of music from all genres to create or enhance a particular devotional atmosphere during worship.

## 1.4 MUSIC IN THE WORSHIP, LITURGY AND LIFE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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The role of music in the life of a local Christian community is sometimes viewed as little more than the chosen hymnody and whatever the organist chooses to play before and after the service. In some parishes there may be a robed choir to sing anthems and motets with a professional organist, though in many others it may well be a struggle even to find an accompanist. An

increasing number of parishes now use an instrumental group to accompany some or all services, while a growing number are discovering that a pre-recorded accompaniment is not as depressing as they had imagined.

Music serves a number of important functions within an act of worship:

- a. It carries a liturgical text, such as the Sanctus and Benedictus, or Versicles and Responses. Other than in a metrical setting it is unlikely that these could be sung to a recorded accompaniment, whether the setting is choral or congregational.
- b. It carries the texts of the hymns sung by the whole congregation. If for many the words seem more important, there is frequently an awareness of music which does not fit either the text or the mood, with a reaction against either words or music which seem over-complicated, inaccessible or irrelevant.
- c. It can be played in the background, live or recorded, to create a worshipful, prayerful atmosphere. Subjective taste plays a much greater role in this instance, although the range of music now widely available may help bring about a more positive response.

Of the areas of uncertainty expressed by clergy and other ministers about the use and role of music in worship, the majority concern specific practical issues and skills<sup>11</sup>. Behind these lie a lack of awareness about the role of music in worship and liturgy, and how this can be developed to enhance various acts of worship, to enrich the congregation's common life and deepen spiritual awareness. Any formational resource such as a Toolkit would have to address the need for background information and thinking about this.

#### 1.4.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although musical life had flourished in England's churches before the Reformation, the foundation of the Church of England saw considerable restrictions imposed on its liturgy and music. Following the final stage of formal Reformation with the issue of the 1559 Book of Common Prayer, the contemporary Royal Injunctions of 1559 set boundaries for the use and style of music in worship in parish churches and cathedrals, if less so when compared with the more

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<sup>11</sup> Among the most frequently listed are knowing what resources are available, coping with limited resources, understanding hymn metres and how to manage a group of musicians.

extreme restrictions encountered in contemporary Switzerland<sup>12</sup>. At that time, and until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, only authorised texts found in the Book of Common Prayer were permitted to be sung in the services of the Church of England. Metrical psalms and other suitable sacred or Scriptural texts could be sung before and after the service; and it is into this category that anthems fall, as appendages to Morning or Evening Prayer<sup>13</sup>. The inclusion of the rubric allowing the anthem, followed by additional new prayers, in the 1662 version of the Book of Common Prayer complicated this directive, but essentially it held good well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

While the 49<sup>th</sup> of Elizabeth I's Royal Injunctions referred specifically to those cathedrals and parish churches with choral provision, it also indicated the practice of congregational singing. Metrical Psalms were sung before and after Morning and Evening Prayer, and also before and after the Sermon<sup>14</sup>.

Despite the popular assumption that music in Church of England worship is likely to consist of pointed psalms and precisely sung anthems, in reality practice and repertoires have developed and broadened over the centuries to attain the breadth and variety now enjoyed. Much of the current confusion about the status of music within the Church of England emanates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1820, an ecclesiastical court established the admissibility of texts other than metrical psalms, i.e. hymns, before and after services (Temperley 1983, 208). Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the expansion of robed parish choirs, the introduction to parish churches of psalms chanted to Anglican Chant or plainsong tones, the publication of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1862) which brought together selected materials from earlier anthologies as well as new hymns, and the availability of cheaply printed anthems all contributed to blurring the lines between cathedral and parish worship, and between music sung before, during and after worship. This is not the place to

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<sup>12</sup> The Royal Injunctions are printed in full in W. H. Frere, *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation*, III – 1559–1575 (Longmans, London, 1910), pp. 8–29. Injunction 49 deals with music.

<sup>13</sup> On music in parish churches see Nicholas Temperley, *The Music of the English Parish Church* (rev. edn CUP, Cambridge, 1983); on choral foundations see Peter LeHuray, *Music and the Reformation in England 1549-1660* (corrected. edn. CUP, Cambridge, 1978), and Ian Payne, *The provision and practice of sacred music at Cambridge colleges and selected cathedrals, c. 1547-c. 1646: A Comparative Study* (Garland, New York, 1993).

<sup>14</sup> This is made apparent in the title pages of late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century editions of metrical psalters, e.g. Day's psalter of 1572: 'The Whole book of Psalmes set forth and allowed to be sung in all churches, of all the people together before and after morning and evening prayer, and also before and after sermons, and moreover in private houses for their godly solace and comfort ...'

set out a summary history of musical trends and practices within the Church of England, though a section of the Toolkit provides an outline.

#### 1.4.2 SHARED PRAISE AND WORSHIP

In all societies music contributes to a sense of common purpose and shared values. In the Church of England, as in most other Christian traditions, it enables worshippers to express the praise of God together, as well as their feelings through the high and low points of the shared journey. Hymns and liturgical texts sung corporately play a key role in this, and the importance of the act of singing together cannot be underestimated. In the context of mission and engagement with the wider community, there is much common ground to be found in hymns which rejoice in God's creation, for example, or encourage compassionate social action.

#### 1.4.3 BUILDING THE CHURCH COMMUNITY

The significance of singing and music in building up and strengthening the church community can be understood, but less attention is drawn to the negative effects that result from this not working well, which can be identified almost immediately. The often mentioned accounts of musical contention in church life affect not only those involved in public ministry, but also regular worshippers and members of the Christian community, leading to a damaging breakdown of relationships and diminished public witness. The role of music and singing beyond advertised acts of public worship, in community events and charitable support, for example, also brings the community together with unity of purpose, even if the music is neither liturgical nor clearly aimed at worship.

#### 1.4.4 SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

Nurturing spiritual reflection is a more individual aspect of the role of music in worship, but this reflects what is happening more generally in the wider community. In a world full of incessant attention-seeking, advertising and fragmented relationships, many who have no connection with the church local or national are looking for a way of encountering what they feel is beyond them. Whether in sharing the singing of hymns and songs, or listening reflectively to music which enhances awareness of the spiritual journey, the missional role of music in reaching out to those on the edge of the Christian community is vital.



#### 1.4.5 MISSION, OUTREACH AND EVANGELISM

The social and cultural landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the result of transformations which began with World War II and its aftermath. Disaffection with the Church, among many other institutions, has led to a decline not only in its numerical and financial base, but even more in its capacity to influence and transform society. As recent research shows, “...the large decline in church attendance has not happened because many adults have stopped going to church. It is because more and more adults never start attending in the first place.” (*From Anecdote to Evidence*, Church Commissioners for England 2014, 23). For music in worship and liturgy, as for every other aspect of ecclesiastical life, this reality has made an unprecedented impact. Not only has personal taste become more eclectic and individualised, but there is little expectation of experiencing music in an unfamiliar style. As congregations seek to address decline and attract new worshippers, they find it increasingly challenging to do so while retaining styles and repertoire associated with a minority culture rooted in the past. In order to achieve this, many are offering a wider range of musical choices than ever before.

#### 1.4.6 DIVERSITY

In addition to a greatly increased emphasis on mission and evangelism, diversity has now to be considered. Cheaper, safer travel is more widely available, and even those who travel less are able to experience life almost anywhere across the world via the Internet. As the British Empire expanded and missionaries reached out to new cultures, English hymnody was often imposed when churches were first established. Two centuries later there is an equal opportunity to experience and even sing Christian hymns from around the world in an indigenous style, while some of the fastest growing congregations are those with a substantial ethnic minority. In addition, the post-Christian culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has little connection with the established churches, creating another new culture unlikely to engage immediately with ‘traditional’ church music, although some of its greatest masterpieces are still regularly performed in a secular concert setting or to be heard in broadcast. These challenges are not insurmountable, but they will require a major set of changes if congregations are to reverse the numerical decline of the past decade.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> 9% per annum across all age ranges from 2003-2013 (*From Anecdote to Evidence* 2014, 5).

It is hardly surprising to discover that clergy and lay ministers often feel ill-equipped to deal with the issues of music in the worship of their church. The comments of those surveyed reinforced the view that this demonstrated a lack of confidence rather than a lack of musical awareness, a concern not only with the skills and practicalities of selecting or performing music for each service, but also with the necessary decision-making and prior negotiation. Parish ministry demands of its authorised ministers an increasingly wide range of skill and knowledge, and within overall ministerial formation music has to find its place among a wide range of theological, pastoral and liturgical formation needs. Thus an awareness of the place of music within the Church of England's story and theology is essential for all ministers, not simply to gain a sense of its priority as part of ministerial formation, but also to understand how it fits into and forms part of the identity of Anglicans as a Christian community, not least within the context of a largely secular and 'unchurched' culture. Such a narrative is not currently available: Andrew Wilson-Dickson's *The Story of Christian Music* (Wilson-Dickson 1992), and Kenneth Long's *The Music of the English Church* (Long 1972) remain the most accessible resources, though not entirely suitable for general use by clergy and worship leaders within the Church of England<sup>16</sup>.

## 1.5 SPECIFIC CONTEXTS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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### 1.5.1 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CHURCH OF ENGLAND LITURGY

Despite the evidence of numerical decline the Church of England remains one of the foremost institutions in the country. A brief investigation of its history reveals its roots in the Elizabethan Settlement, and in the contemporary political need to establish uniformity of religious practice. While its origins as a Church independent of Rome date back to 1534, and its earliest vernacular forms of liturgy to the first two versions of the Book of Common Prayer (1549, 1552), the stability and continuity of the Church of England dates from the 1559 Settlement between Elizabeth I and her Parliament, embodied (with regard to worship) in the 1559 Book of Common Prayer and contemporary Royal Injunctions (Frere 1910, 29). A Church 'by law established' was therefore structured and governed originally according to the law of the land. Its structures and

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<sup>16</sup> Though unpublished, John Harper's study book for the MA in Sacred Music Studies (Bangor University) module WMM4046 Liturgy and Music provides a comprehensive review of the history of Christian music for worship, including the Church of England. In relation to the latter, his extended handout for a lecture on music in the Church of England (Graz, June 2012) provides a helpful outline framework for a history of music in the Church of England.

public worship are still governed to some degree by Parliament, the Archbishop of Canterbury remains the nation's second citizen, and Church of England clergy to this day have to swear allegiance to the monarch (as head of the Church) when making their ordination oaths or being installed in a new parish.

Within that context, clergy also have to swear that they will use only those forms of worship permitted by the law. The Book of Common Prayer (1662) provided a set of texts, including the Psalter, to which all were obliged to adhere, and it remains the only permanently authorised, 'core text' of the Church of England. Its language remains much valued and admired for its literary (even poetic) qualities, though now more rarely used for principal parish services: since the *Alternative Services Measure* (passed by Parliament in 1965<sup>17</sup>), the Church has had greater control of the liturgical forms and texts<sup>18</sup>, and a series of alternatives has appeared, culminating in the current portfolio of *Common Worship* which offers much greater flexibility of liturgical form and language than ever before. If now largely freed from direct Parliamentary control, the Church of England remains a liturgical Church, its worship rooted in its ministry to the whole nation, every person being part of a geographical parish.

### 1.5.2 TOWARDS THE ADVENT OF COMMON WORSHIP

A mere 72 years separate Parliament's rejection in 1928 of some relatively minor changes to the Book of Common Prayer, and the publication of *Common Worship* in 2000. From a volume revered because its text had remained unaltered for three hundred years, it took a huge conceptual leap to arrive at an entirely new portfolio of liturgical resources based not on a prescribed set of texts, but on an authorised set of frameworks and resources, aimed at making all Church of England liturgy more accessible and flexible for 21<sup>st</sup> century worshippers.

Radical liturgical reform has been debated since the 1950s, when Church and people were entering into a different kind of relationship, no longer founded on authority or outmoded social distinctions. Despite the debacle of 1928, when Parliament blocked a proposed modest revision of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, the Liturgical Commission, first convened in 1955, began a

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<sup>17</sup> On the debate in the House of Lords, 18 February 1965, see <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1965/feb/18/prayer-book-alternative-and-other>

<sup>18</sup> The authorising body is now the General Synod of the Church of England, consisting of three houses – of bishops, clergy and laity.

process of revision, culminating in the *Alternative Service Book* of 1980<sup>19</sup>. In its first two decades of work, the Liturgical Commission produced a series of revised liturgies, beginning with *Alternative Services Series 1* (1965) and *Series 2* (1966, 1967). The former authorised the texts of the revised Prayer Book rejected by Parliament in 1928, and the latter initiated more substantial revisions to certain services. *Series 3*, published in 1973, provoked most discussion by addressing God as ‘You’ for the first time in an authorised text. Although a small change in itself, this was the standard-bearer for the major changes in the *Alternative Service Book* (1980), which remained ‘alternative’ throughout its twenty years of official life, as the Book of Common Prayer retained its previous status, but rapidly became the first choice for liturgical texts in many parishes. The differences went far deeper than linguistic updating: where in 1662 the compilers followed Cranmer in making almost no allowance for the major Christian festivals<sup>20</sup>, by 1980 there were four significantly varied Eucharistic Prayers together with a wealth of other material reflecting the Christian year, the impact of pastoral theology and the need for worship to embrace the Church’s task of caring for all.

Complaints that the Book of Common Prayer would become sidelined may have proved justified in many parishes, but having been authorised for only twenty years, the liturgical experience of the *Alternative Service Book* became absorbed into *Common Worship* (2000). The prescribed texts of *Book of Common Prayer* are incorporated into *Common Worship* and still in regular use, but clergy and other ministers presiding at worship are expected to make their own choice of seasonal or topical prayers, responses or words of praise. The use of material beyond even that provided is also accepted, the rubric ‘other suitable material’ indicating permission to make use of a variety of texts from other Christian traditions, albeit with some restrictions. In particular, the availability of eight Eucharistic Prayers<sup>21</sup> has led many clergy and parishes to produce worship booklets for local use covering each season of the Christian year, in order to provide some consistency and common features. The Preface to *Common Worship* sees itself as ‘drawing together the rich inheritance of the past and the very best of our contemporary forms of worship – this combination of old and new provides for the diverse worshipping needs of our communities,

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<sup>19</sup> This was facilitated by the Worship and Doctrine Measure of 1974, which effectively released the Church of England from Parliamentary control over forms of worship

<sup>20</sup> Only five additional prefaces are provided in the Book of Common Prayer for the Eucharist at the most important festivals and seasons.

<sup>21</sup> A further two were authorised in 2012 for use with significant numbers of young people present.

within an ordered structure....' (ix) Other than suggesting points where hymns might be included, the Sunday service book contains no specific instructions or rubrics about music, but *Common Worship*'s hallmark adaptability to local needs is intended to embrace musical as well as spoken aspects of public worship<sup>22</sup>, alongside *New Patterns for Worship* (2002) which is described as 'entirely compatible' with *Common Worship* and 'provides a wealth of supplementary material' (ibid ix).

### 1.5.3 THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

The Church now finds itself regarded as rooted in conventions and belief structures no longer widely regarded as compatible with everyday experience. Rapidly shifting assumptions about the role of the Church in society, its core theological and ethical beliefs, and the conduct of public worship, focus on the gap between those who are part of its structures and those who feel left on the outside. Disputes between 'traditionalists' and 'modernisers' often centre on making public worship more attractive or accessible in order to attract the 'Internet generation', alienated by the Church's apparent 'irrelevance', and if this becomes the accepted norm, whether there is any longer a place for styles and practices of worship and music hailing from eras long past.

A notable feature of widespread social change has been the rise of consumerism and the assumption of a right to personal choice in every area of life, driven by the mass media and the Internet which, much as the printing press had done five hundred years earlier, offers an alternative means of accessing texts and information. Alongside this lies a belief that the 'democratic process' will determine decisions and choices made by a community. Choice and variety of material are regarded as the norm in many parishes, along with an acceptance and expectation of visual and aural elements unimaginable even a generation ago. *Common Worship* therefore offers a wide-ranging resource from which clergy can select material appropriate to season, local context and events in the wider community or world.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> More specific advice on music can be found in *New Patterns for Worship* (2002). Authorised by the General Synod (and originally published in 1995), the new edition includes a short section on why and how to use music in worship, on how to teach new material, and questions to ask when choosing it for a particular occasion (ibid.35-38).

<sup>23</sup> In the electronic form *Visual Liturgy*, the texts of *Common Worship* texts are readily transferred to a PowerPoint presentation for a data projector, or to a weekly service sheet, enabling use of a much wider range of material and broader musical repertoire.

#### 1.5.4 CORRESPONDING ISSUES IN MUSIC IN CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

The provision of a range of new texts demands a change in attitude and approach from all ministers, and when wider expectations around music are brought into the equation it is no surprise that many ministers, without adequate preparation for this and lacking the confidence to tackle any resulting disagreement, either focus on other priorities or become locked in conflict. A resource enabling them to deal with it might give greater confidence in addressing disputes or managing necessary change.

Indeed, the choice of suitable music makes the task of constructing liturgy much more complex. Until the mid-20th century, churches of all traditions relied on one hymnbook for congregational hymn texts. For some denominations this reflected their own theology and history, such as the *Methodist Hymn Book*, and while not officially recognised as such, either *Hymns Ancient and Modern* or *The English Hymnal* would have been provided in most Church of England parish churches. The recent decline in denominational Christianity, coupled with a corresponding increase in cross-denominational Christian activities such as conferences, has led to a burgeoning market for non-denominational hymn and song collections<sup>24</sup>. While rooted in the evangelical and charismatic traditions *Mission Praise* and *Songs of Fellowship* are now found in churches of all traditions and backgrounds, as are the more eclectic *Hymns Old and New* series, which incorporate music from the rather different traditions of the Taizé and Iona Communities. Many churches regard this positively, even though it can lead to a fragmentation in styles of worship and music, and increasingly parish worship is becoming more varied and broad in its musical repertoire, creating a tradition local rather than denominational.

Where liturgical texts are sung, the range of settings has grown significantly in recent years, in a variety of styles. Since 1980 the use of languages other than English in worship has been permitted, and choral repertoire is no longer restricted to the English Cathedral style, as demonstrated by settings and anthems from contemporary composers such as John Rutter and Bob Chilcott. The decline in church attendance has undoubtedly affected many church choirs, but in the wider community there is a growing interest in spirituality that does not demand denominational allegiance or committed church attendance. The success of recent television series has raised awareness in the unlikeliest quarters of the potential joys and achievements of

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<sup>24</sup> Events such as Spring Harvest and New Wine routinely publish collections of new material each year.

singing together<sup>25</sup>. In parallel with this the concept of the ‘Big Sing’, originating in the Celtic tradition, has grown in some parishes, enabling all present to enjoy singing, and this may offer another way forward for developing music for worship.

The impact of technological change has been dramatic, if largely taken for granted:

- The mass production of musical instruments, once created in small numbers by master craftsmen, has spread throughout the world, extending the possibilities for musical performance and education.
- While in western society traditional ‘classical’ music teaching has declined, elsewhere it has flourished, notably in the Far East – in China alone an estimated 30,000,000 young people now learn the piano<sup>26</sup>.
- Techniques and styles developed within western classical music have become blended with quite different forms of local musical expression, now available through the Internet and travel - Jazz Masses and the *African Sanctus* are just two examples of this trend, an area also developed in recent years by the Wild Goose Resource Group.
- The development of the i-Pod and mP-3 player enables everyone to listen exclusively to their own preferred musical choices, filtering out anything considered uninteresting or irrelevant.
- Electronic technology in recording has created the possibility of both registering and fundamentally altering the quality, volume and timbre of a musical sound. Electronic keyboards are now commonplace and affordable for home use, enabling the player to create a seemingly infinite range of musical sounds, and if no keyboard player is available, a simple piece of software can provide an instant accompaniment to most familiar hymns or worship songs.
- Electronic organs have now developed to the point where their sound quality is second to none, with a level of flexibility and reliability that enables any church to enjoy the

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<sup>25</sup> The programmes involving the Military Wives’ Choirs in particular (2011/2012), with conductor Gareth Malone, achieved an unprecedented level of popularity, resulting in 67 such choirs being formed by October 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted by Eva Hoffman in ‘The Key to Success’ (*Financial Times* 20 May 2011)

possibility of pipe organ quality sound. When no organist is available such organs are increasingly used to play pre-recorded accompaniments for hymn-singing. Although acknowledged to have some drawbacks, these are generally regarded as being rather less severe than having no accompaniment at all.

#### 1.5.5 MUSIC AND EDUCATION

Education in school has also impacted significantly both on the musical life of the Church and the wider community. Quality of teaching has improved in parallel with greater encouragement of independent learning and an unprecedented range of available resources and experiences. Beyond school and tertiary education the concept of lifelong learning has broadened the horizons of many, even into retirement years, and alongside standards of learning and attainment, expectations have also been raised – of what is possible, achievable and even desirable. High quality performance can be experienced in a small number of clicks on a laptop computer, as well as at outdoor festivals and in the concert hall, so musical standards in worship are often compared with those experienced elsewhere, not invariably to the advantage of the Church – while their commitment and dedication are commendable, both elderly organists playing slowly or inaccurately and young music groups struggling with tuning and intonation easily become the target of criticism from those looking to find fault.

Most significantly, few schools are likely to nurture pupils in the singing of traditional hymns, while joining a church choir would not be seen by many young people or their parents as a preferred leisure activity. Despite an increase in the number of pupils learning to play an instrument or train their voice, only a small proportion of these are learning the organ, while many of those receiving instrumental or vocal training are not available to contribute their skills to an act of worship.

#### 1.5.6 WORSHIP AND MUSIC IN THE TECHNOLOGICAL ERA

The technological revolution at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has transformed the entire developed world beyond anything previously imagined. The impact of this on the Church goes far beyond the audio-visual equipment now available to enhance worship, and which in some churches has even replaced books and paper. The ‘IT revolution’ has completely reshaped the way society accesses and analyses information, and has magnified the process of ‘consumerisation’ by



expanding the potential of personal choice almost without limits, at the same time enabling instant worldwide networking between common interest groups and commercial concerns.

*Common Worship* has been produced in the context of this new ‘Information Age’ in order to facilitate an accessible and meaningful liturgical ministry for a new generation of computer-literate worshippers. Not only does it contain blocks of material from which specific text selections can be made; in its electronic format, *Visual Liturgy*, it also makes production of ‘designer liturgies’ relatively straightforward, whether in booklet form or through use of a data projector. It contains the words to a wealth of hymn texts, although many churches prefer to use a software package such as *Hymnquest* or *Songpro*, designed specifically to provide simple access to the texts of a wealth of hymns and songs.

Technological innovation has been driving the music industry since the invention of the gramophone and sound recording at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1930 the BBC started to broadcast the annual Promenade Concerts<sup>27</sup>, since when music recording has developed to the downloaded tracks now taken for granted. However, the capacity to choose to listen to any music of choice means that for many music has ceased to be a shared or community experience, and become a mere background track to other activities<sup>28</sup>. As a result, the music which forms an integral part of liturgy is in danger of becoming another soundtrack, which when measured against commercial standards is found wanting. Worshippers whose personal taste is not reflected in their own local church can simply look elsewhere to find something they prefer. That hymns and psalms might play a rather more important role in gathering and building the Christian community than pandering to individual preference is a perception less often encountered.

### 1.5.7 DECLINE IN MUSICAL PARTICIPATION

Most young people during their education will have the opportunity to perform music occasionally in an ensemble as part of a ‘school production’, but choral conductors are aware of the importance of regular singing practice to familiarise young people with the benefits of making music together, to develop listening skills and creating a sense of common purpose. The

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<sup>27</sup> Sir Thomas Beecham famously objected to this, on the grounds that concert-going would soon become a thing of the past

<sup>28</sup> as encountered every day, for example, in gymnasia, where exercise regimes are routinely practised with the assistance of an iPod or mp3 player.

decline in music education in schools has left church and other local choirs with a shrinking pool of potential new choristers, and the increasing age of those remaining can lead to contraction and eventual closure. Aside from cathedrals or other churches with dedicated choir schools, this has become a significant challenge, notably in more rural areas with fewer younger people. Despite the legal requirement for a daily act of corporate worship in primary schools, there is often scant awareness of traditional hymnody, revealed in the limited suggestions put forward by those planning a wedding or funeral service some years later. If the Church's repertoire of hymns, psalms and songs becomes restricted only to what is known to regular worshippers and participants, it stands little chance of acting as a source of cohesion and community.

### 1.5.8 THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION

While social changes have directly affected the Church of England's liturgical and musical life, their implications seem at times to pass local congregations by. The influential report *Mission-Shaped Church* (ed. Cray 2004), already quoted, was described by Archbishop Rowan Williams in his Foreword (Cray 2004, vii) as a "penetrating and exciting introduction to the possible shape of our mission in the next generation", and has become one of the most widely circulated reports ever compiled for the General Synod of the Church of England in the past decade, bringing concepts such as Fresh Expressions of Worship and Emerging Church into general ecclesiastical circulation<sup>29</sup>.

### 1.5.9 LITURGY AND MUSIC AS A RESOURCE FOR MISSION

Diversity has become a key word for society and politics in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, and cultural diversity is generally seen to be enriching: choristers from ethnic backgrounds may come with a different view of the importance of corporate singing, instrumentalists may own and perform on instruments from other musical cultures, while electronic keyboards reproduce the sound of almost any other instrument. Less positively, there is also a huge diversity in terms of opportunities available to share and take part in this revolution, but the same token there is much scope for the Church to reach out to the wider community by making worship and music as accessible and inclusive as possible. Churches of every tradition declared the 1990's to be a

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<sup>29</sup> Michael Moynagh's *Changing World, Changing Church* (Moynagh 2001) covers similar ground from a more analytical angle, while Bryan Spinks' *The Worship Mall* (Spinks 2010) offers distinctive insights into how 21<sup>st</sup> century consumer culture has influenced our way of organising and conducting worship.

‘Decade of Evangelism’<sup>30</sup>, and there is a clear sense of common agreement and purpose about the importance of mission and evangelistic outreach across all Christian denominations. That public worship should be accessible and attractive to non-churchgoers would be disputed by few, but disagreement often arises over the extent to which this should modify traditional practice or belief. Does expressing belief or commitment in simpler terms always constitute ‘dumbing down’? Is purity of faith compromised by introducing ‘secular’ verbal and musical styles acceptable to a wider public? The Church, regardless of specific liturgical or structural traditions, is a community of believers called to exist within a wider community as a sign of God’s Kingdom. It cannot ignore the context in which it worships and lives, but paradoxically its missionary effectiveness lies in its capacity to be distinctive, and to represent a set of values with a validity and significance beyond this mortal existence. Church authorities have long attempted to exclude musical styles considered too ‘worldly’, i.e. associated with undesirable behaviour or merely temporal concerns. However, once the gulf between the Church and its surrounding community becomes too wide, the absence of any visible connection leads to it being dismissed as archaic.

With its capacity to function as a common ‘language’, music can therefore help to build both the Christian community and the bridges needed for those outside its walls to gain access. Controversy and conflict arise when those who see themselves as guardians of musical traditions in their congregation react against styles they experience as foreign and damaging to what they struggle to preserve. Increasingly therefore, worship aimed specifically at reaching out to those unfamiliar with traditional church culture takes place outside of principal services, either at a different time or in a separate venue. Such activities often successfully attract such a clientele, although the disparity in liturgical and musical styles can lead to few making the transition to more traditional worship.

## 1.6 THE CONTEXT OF HYMNODY AND OTHER CONGREGATIONAL MUSIC FOR WORSHIP IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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Despite attempting to present itself as a haven of certainty and stability in a maelstrom of social change, in reality the Church has become more marginalised and remote from wider society over

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<sup>30</sup> The original call for the 1990s to be a Decade of Evangelism came from the 1988 Lambeth Conference.

the past half-century, both through its perceived attitudes and general incomprehension of its beliefs and practices. Internal arguments over ‘traditional or modern’ have been played out to media scorn and near empty pews, while awareness in society of liturgical texts and hymnody has declined significantly – those who come into a church only to attend one of the occasional offices may well struggle to recognise the hymns, and express surprise if their requests to include secular material are turned down. TV programmes such as *Songs of Praise* have maintained some general awareness, but even within the ranks of regular worshippers there is little common ground on what might be considered ‘core repertoire’. Without an ‘official’ hymnal the Church of England may have been hit harder by this than some other Christian traditions, although all report similar experiences, while even between superficially similar churches there can be major differences in musical awareness and style, and little consistency over choice of material.

### 1.7 MUSIC AND ‘ALTERNATIVE WORSHIP’

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The Information Technology revolution and consequent social changes have led to the Christian community radically rethinking how it should live in relationship with secular society. Since the ill-fated Nine o’ Clock Service in Sheffield<sup>31</sup> foundered in a storm of negative publicity, there have been many ‘Fresh Expressions of Church’, some more durable than others, some reaching out to specific cultures in a local area, others such as Messy Church and Godly Play resourcing local churches to provide a worshipping environment attractive to families with young children. Anecdotal evidence suggests that if organised well and at a suitable time and venue these can attract a substantial congregation, many of whom might otherwise never make contact with the Church, although they are far removed from accustomed practice and models. The unfamiliarity of many worshippers with traditional hymnody and liturgical texts, lead to an informal approach and a much simplified style, reliant on a relatively limited selection of hymns and songs to establish a community ‘identity’. Regularly repeated items act as ‘liturgical signposts’ and help draw a potentially disparate group together around a common vision and purpose. A reduced range of theological language implies that non-verbal signals take on a new significance,

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<sup>31</sup> A parish-based act of ‘alternative worship’, aiming to meet the spiritual aspirations and needs of Sheffield’s nightclub community, which was sanctioned by the Bishop of Sheffield in 1988 and grew to around 600 worshippers before ending in scandal in 1995 and became the subject of a TV documentary

sometimes as corporate ‘actions’ to express the words of a song, while melody and rhythm are generally uncomplicated and easily learned, an asset if musical resources are limited.

### 1.7.1 CHANGING TASTES, CHANGING TEXTS

Tastes, expectations and beliefs in wider society have shifted increasingly rapidly alongside the development of new communication and information technologies, although it may feel to those outside of its structures that the Church of England has not yet noticed. The 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, itself rooted in the Prayer Books of a century earlier, was almost entirely prescriptive, but from 1966 a series of alternative liturgies started to appear in an attempt to make worship more accessible and attractive to a generation willing to challenge traditional beliefs and faith. These culminated in the *Alternative Service Book* of 1980, which remained an alternative to the *Book of Common Prayer*, but almost at once became the liturgical text of first choice in many parishes.

This process culminated in the publication of *Common Worship* in 2000, when for the first time the Church of England moved away from a set text, and towards ‘designer liturgies’ the presentation of which in electronic as well as printed form has enabled parishes to compile their own service-books and weekly sheets, or to project texts on to a screen.

### 1.7.2 HYMNS AND SONGS

The core texts of *Common Worship* together with *New Patterns for Worship*, *Times and Seasons* and the volumes of Pastoral and Initiation Services have made available an unprecedented range of liturgical material covering every possible worshipping situation. It may seem strange therefore that the Church of England has no ‘official’ musical resource or collection of hymns, even though until 1820 the singing of hymns was not permitted in the Church of England. Until then, only liturgical texts and settings of Scripture in Psalms and canticles could be sung in parish worship, and it took a Consistory Court hearing in Sheffield that year to permit the singing of hymns<sup>32</sup> and bring about a fundamental change in the musical culture of the Church of England.

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<sup>32</sup> Initially, only the hymns of the poet and Moravian James Montgomery were allowed to be sung

Just four decades later, in 1862, the first edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* was published in an attempt to provide a body of material that was of high musical quality, distinctively Anglican and appropriate to its liturgical tradition. However, it has never become the authorised hymnal of the Church of England (even if many have assumed this), nor was it regarded as an exclusive collection, in marked contrast to, for example, the Lutheran Church throughout the world, which jealously guards its musical heritage from the 16<sup>th</sup> century until now. Even within the worldwide Anglican Church there are authorised hymn-books such as *The Hymnal* (from the Episcopal church of the United States of America, first published in 1940, most recently revised in 1982) and Canada's *Common Praise* (1998), while closer to home the Presbyterian Church of Scotland has recently published the fourth edition of its *Church Hymnary* (2005), first issued in 1898. The Church of England now draws its musical material from a wide range of sources and traditions<sup>33</sup>, and while the publication of *Common Praise* in parallel with *Common Worship* in 2000 was described as the 'first major revision of Hymns A & M for more than 50 years', it has had to take its place among a number of popular hymn collections, many of which are non-denominational. The recent new collection in the *Ancient and Modern* series is entitled *Ancient and Modern, Hymns and Songs for Refreshing Worship* (2012), and announces a significant shift in approach from previous editions in its inclusion of more contemporary material and styles.

### 1.7.3 HYMNS AND MUSIC IN THE 'POST-DENOMINATIONAL' ERA

As in the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when vast quantities of new musical material was published specifically for church use, the last four decades have seen an explosion in liturgical and musical publishing, relatively little of it rooted in a specific Christian tradition. Commercial constraints, the development of high quality recordings, and the growth in large-scale cross-denominational Christian events, have all facilitated the widespread interchange of material between many different Christian traditions, including non-denominational groups such as the Taizé Community and the Iona Community through their Wild Goose Resource Group.

The growth of electronic media and near universal use of the Internet have accelerated this process. Just as the Church of England has reformatted and published *Common Worship* as *Visual*

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<sup>33</sup> The Roman Catholic Church similarly has no authorised vernacular hymnal, using material drawn from many sources. Of course, *Liber Hymnarius* (1983) draws together the repertory of Latin Office hymns for the Latin Breviary.

*Liturgy* to facilitate service booklets and data projection, most publishers and producers of resources have moved in a similar direction. In addition to the hymns and songs accessible on *Visual Liturgy*, products such as *Hymnquest*<sup>34</sup> have extended the range available still further, accessing Christian musical traditions from across the world. This trend has affected the worship and music of every major Christian tradition, and the worshipping life of all Christian communities.

John L Bell sums this up in his introduction to *Church Hymnary 4*: “It has not only to be expected, therefore, but it is essential, that any new hymnary should take into account the realities of faith and life today as its forerunners did in their day. This is not to suggest that all that is old has lost its value, and all that is new is automatically virtuous. It is simply to attest that a book intended to be used for the worship of God in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should reflect the contemporary experience of humanity, and the contemporary fruits of God’s creative Spirit....” (*Church Hymnary 4* vii)

#### 1.7.4 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS

The plethora of liturgical and musical resources now available inevitably feels confusing or threatening to some, but it also opens up previously unimagined creative possibilities. From cathedrals to parish churches, from chapels to ‘Fresh Expressions’ of worship, an increasingly broad range of liturgical material is encountered. The number of organists and church musicians has declined in recent years, but at the same time electronic technology has come to the aid of churches without anyone to accompany hymns and psalms. CDs of pre-recorded accompaniments are readily available and selling in greater quantities, although to the extent to which this reflects regular use in worship is unclear. Beyond dispute this reflects a significant culture shift for Church of England worship, even if the rate of change varies greatly between parishes. At the same time it is a reflection of the breadth of the Church of England that much of this can be absorbed into a story of continuing change over five centuries.

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<sup>34</sup> Developed by the Pratt Green Trust, *Hymnquest* was first launched in 2000. Its 2014 version contains the full text of 29,500 songs from 483 hymnbooks and publications, and the first bars of 22,800 melodies, which can be searched using a virtual keyboard

## 1.8 THE CONTEXT OF ECCLESIASTICAL LAW

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The legal context of the Church of England in relation to Parliament (section 6.1 above), and the implications for authorisation of its forms of worship, have been mentioned above already. In addition there is the question of the Church's own law – Canon Law. From the time of its establishment as separate from the Roman Church in the sixteenth-century Reformation, worship in the Church of England has been governed by the requirements of its Canons. The political and social context of the immediate post-Reformation era persuaded monarchy and government of the need to ensure conformity of religious practice throughout the nation, and despite the reservations and increasing resistance of those who became known as 'non-conformists', its Canons have determined and controlled every aspect of Church of England life since then<sup>35</sup>. While Parliament still has a limited say, the 'Canons Ecclesiastical' in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are those promulgated by the Convocations of Canterbury and York in 1964 and 1969, and by the General Synod of the Church of England from 1970<sup>36</sup>. These seek not only to govern the life of the Church of England, but also to preserve its inherited traditions, most visibly in public worship.

### 1.8.1 THE CANONS AND MUSIC

The first major group of Canons, by far the most comprehensive, are those concerning worship, but of the 44 in Section B, only one (B20) refers to music and musicians. Its three paragraphs address:

1. The appointment of 'any organist, choirmaster or director of music', and the termination of the same, which are defined as the responsibility of 'the minister with the agreement of the parochial church council' - although the archdeacon may dispense with the need for this agreement if he considers the circumstances warrant.
2. The 'choosing of chants, hymns, anthems and other settings', in which the minister is required to 'pay due heed to the advice and assistance' of the appointed musician. In the

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<sup>35</sup> On the Canons of the Church of England, see Gerald Bray, ed., *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947* (Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1998).

<sup>36</sup> The current, seventh edition is available online <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/structure/churchlawlegis/canons/canons-7th-edition.aspx>



event of disagreement, however, it is clear that ‘the final responsibility and decision in these matters rests with the minister’

3. In choosing musical settings and material, the minister must ensure that it is ‘appropriate, both the words and the music, to the solemn act of worship and prayer’ – and must ‘banish all irreverence in practice and performance of the same’.

The only other passing reference to music is in Canon B35, dealing with church weddings, in which the minister of the parish has the right ‘to decide what music shall be played, what hymns or anthems shall be sung’.

The Canons focus significantly on the relationship between ministers and musicians, and while the default responsibility for choices made lies with the incumbent, the emphasis is on both parties listening to and cooperating with each other to ensure the proper conduct of worship, the minister referred to being the incumbent of the parish<sup>37</sup>. It is understood that assistant curates in training should be given some experience, and that self-supporting priests, honorary priests and locally licensed ministers (formerly Readers) be allowed some freedom in making musical choices, but the final responsibility lies with the incumbent.

More ambiguous, however, is the determination or precise definition of what constitutes an ‘appropriate’ musical input, not to mention ‘irreverence’. Many recent disputes between clergy and musicians have arisen from widely differing views of how to interpret these terms, with occasional unhappy tales of choirs and organists refusing to perform certain contemporary worship songs, or to take part in services involving instrumental groups. By tradition the Church of England is a very ‘broad church’, and within its orbit can be found a range of worship styles and accompanying music wide enough to encompass most preferences. However, those preferences are changing constantly, reflecting the increasingly varied tastes of wider society, leading to inevitable discussion about precisely what might be considered ‘appropriate’ (in the light of received tradition) or ‘irreverent’ (frequently more accessible language, use of modern amplified instruments or a pop/rock style of music).

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<sup>37</sup> In a vacancy the Rural Dean has this responsibility

## 1.9 THE STATUS AND ROLE OF MUSICIANS

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In the world of business, relationships between employer and employee are usually defined by a contract of employment signed by both parties, formalising agreement on duties, hours of work and remuneration. In the predominant Lutheran churches of the Nordic nations and Germany, church musicians are treated as employees in this way, and paid in effect as civil servants from a church tax or ‘contribution’. Musicians in the Church of England are not remunerated with any such consistency, however, and outside of cathedrals and large collegiate churches there is a wide variety of practice regarding their terms and conditions of service, hardly conducive to resolving or avoiding conflict. Historically in England, church musicians have been paid very poorly, no doubt a contributory factor in the generally low standards of worship and liturgy encountered even in cathedrals at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following previous initiatives on a smaller scale such as St Michael’s College, Tenbury, the School of English Church Music was founded by Sir Sydney Nicholson in 1928 as the to promote the training of all church musicians and encourage good musical practice in church worship, becoming the Royal School of Church Music in 1945. Although its role as a residential college has long since ceased, it continues to promote training and education, and publishes guidance and a ‘recommended minimum rate’ to enable ministers and church councils to set the remuneration of their musicians at a suitable level. This will depend:

- on the demands of the post in terms of time and responsibility,
- on the experience, qualifications and circumstances of the musician,
- on the resources available in each parish situation.
- Unlike their colleagues in the Lutheran churches of northern and central Europe, Church of England musicians are not all expected to possess high-level musical qualifications, nor is there a consistent level of expectation about workload and responsibility. Among the factors listed on its website, the RSCM considers the following should be taken into account in setting musicians’ terms of employment:
  - the frequency and length of choir or instrumental rehearsals,
  - the number of occasional offices for which musicians will be required,
  - the responsibility for recruitment and pastoral care (especially where children and young people are concerned),

- the extent to which a musical director relies on church activity as a source of income.
- Some church musicians are full-time professional, earning their living entirely through musical activity, but many will be employed in other work and devote themselves to being church musicians in their free time. Whichever is true, the ‘significant extra responsibility’ undertaken demands that ‘realistic remuneration should be considered, and ratified through a formal contract or letter of agreement’. Even in a smaller church, where payment of a modest honorarium may be most convenient, ‘it is still important to draw up an agreement, so that both church and musician are clear about expectations and levels of commitment’. Attention to such practicalities makes as much impact on relationships as the choice of musical material or use of certain instruments.

## 1.10 IDENTIFYING CLERGY AND OTHER WORSHIP LEADERS’ NEEDS

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Given the historical and contemporary context of the Church of England, what awareness do ministers need of the role of music in worship, and the impact of technological and social change on their ministry?

- An understanding of the way musical taste has been transformed by technological developments in music
- An awareness of how consumerism has affected choices available and expectations of personal preference being met.
- An insight into potential sources of conflict over music and how these might be managed and addressed.
- An awareness of alternative forms of worship and the music appropriate to them.

What might ministers want or need to know and understand about the musical aspects of Church of England worship?

- An awareness of the Canons covering worship and music, and of how to interpret these for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- An understanding of the place and role of musicians within the liturgy, and of how to manage them effectively.

- A basic knowledge of the way in which the Church of England's liturgical texts have developed through its history, and how these have influenced or been influenced by music both in the Church and in the wider community.
- An overview of the development of music as part of Church of England liturgy, and of the range of resources now available.

### 1.11 THE PERCEIVED NEEDS OF CLERGY AND OTHER MINISTERS

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Most clergy and authorised ministers of worship will acknowledge a shortfall in their knowledge of and confidence to handle matters of music within worship in their parish. They frequently highlight practical concerns:

- How to manage a choir and organist without conflict
- How to manage without any musical resource
- How to introduce change and new material
- How to understand and use a hymnbook, especially the metrical index
- How to integrate liturgical ministers, musicians and gathered congregation in a cohesive act of worship which builds community, enhances spiritual reflection and motivates worshippers for the ongoing journey of faith

Defining their actual need requires investigation beneath the immediately presenting issues of hard-pressed clergy and ministers. The following questions arise from regular ongoing contact with them on various levels:

- Has initial formation provided them with any background or tools to help with musical choices and management in their developing ministry?
- What priority was liturgy and music given during formation among the many other competing study modules?
- Are those who engage in formational training work aware of the actual needs as well as the presenting ones?
- Is there any readily available continuing ministerial formation to help clergy and other ministers develop and grow in confidence?

- Are they aware of the Church of England as an institution, with its history, its liturgical development over five centuries and the contemporary context in which it now has to survive and grow?
- Are they aware of available resources and how to make best use of them?
- Are they aware of their own musical tastes and what has formed these, and how this might unconsciously influence their own preferences and choices of music in worship?

Both the background outlined in this chapter, and the issues and questions identified in this final section need to inform (a) the processes of personal reflection, dialogue with ministers in training, and interrogation of experienced clergy, and (b) the assumptions, parameters and content of a Toolkit

## 2 – REFLECTION, EXPLORATION & INVESTIGATION

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### 2.1 EXPERIENCE OF MUSICAL TRAINING, MINISTERIAL FORMATION AND WORK AS A LITURGICAL TRAINER

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#### 2.1.1 INITIAL EXPERIENCE OF MUSIC & WORSHIP

Worship has been a part of life for as long as I can remember. Brought up in a Non-Conformist family there was an expectation of attending church at least twice each Sunday, although memories of this as an enriching or stimulating environment, musically or spiritually. A self-taught church organist father and a reasonable piano at home encouraged an early interest in music, and from the age of 12 I was accompanying hymns on both piano and organ. Hymnody in the late 1960s felt drab and unrewarding, although the arrival of *Youth Praise* (Falcon 1966)<sup>38</sup> seemed more promising, not least because sternly disapproved! As a result the world of classical piano repertoire and jazz offered greater attractions, alongside singing great choral masterpieces with the school choir. These interests continued throughout university studies, until an unexpected employment move provoked a reluctant resumption of church organist duties, slowly rekindling a much stronger awareness of the role of music as a vital component of liturgy, alongside singing in a major choir with international performers.

Working life, marriage and parenthood left little available time for active musical participation, and despite continuing to accompany congregational singing, the more compelling call was towards the priesthood. Both during ordination training and almost immediately once ordained these various musical influences and interests joined together, with regular invitations either to accompany worship and musical events or to address church groups on aspects of worship and music. Thus developed an unforeseen long-term commitment and role, as a liturgical trainer for a diocesan ordination course and a number of other groups, as a facilitator and enabler at parish and deanery level, and for a while as a writer and editor. Course handouts, lecture notes and papers have been written and revised extensively over more than two decades.

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<sup>38</sup> Volume 2 followed this (Falcon 1969), followed by *Psalm Praise* (Falcon 1973)

### 2.1.2 EXPERIENCE OF FORMATION

Already at the outset of this journey towards ordination the world of music and worship was in a process of rapid change, developments generally welcomed both at the newly formed ‘church plant’ where that calling became clear, and later at theological college. A love of jazz was adapted to recently written worship songs, and while too many of these were of mediocre quality at best, much thinking was provoked about the role of music in worship, and its significance, although regrettably with little in the formal liturgy curriculum to assist this process. Back in the Diocese of Guildford, in a relatively formal parish church with a strong choral tradition, a curacy offered both important new skills and a very different context to stimulate reflection, even if Post-Ordination Training<sup>39</sup> covered little on liturgy and almost nothing about music. Since then, Continuing Ministerial Education within the Diocese of Guildford has incorporated an occasional session on music and worship, to which I have contributed from time to time, though these are not obligatory and are usually attended by those with a longstanding interest.

### 2.1.3 EXPERIENCE AS A PARISH PRIEST

Experience as priest of three different parishes over a quarter of a century confirms anecdotal observations from colleagues, that the pressures of parochial, deanery and diocesan responsibilities - not to mention ongoing pastoral care and the daily grind of finance, building maintenance and administration - restrict even routine preparation of worship into a narrow time frame. It is no surprise to discover that many with less confidence are content to delegate responsibility for musical choices to their organist or music director, while those not blessed with such resources simply stick with the familiar and tested. 20 years of ministry in an Anglican-Methodist partnership also suggests that despite the enriching, often frustrating experience of ecumenical collaboration, tensions and questions around music remain. A rather different historical context since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, slight divergences in musical repertoire, and minor liturgical variances pale into insignificance when facing the same social and contemporary

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<sup>39</sup> Now Initial Ministerial Education, introduced following General Synod’s acceptance of the report Formation for Ministry within a Learning Church (2003), often referred to as the Hind report.

challenges. Methodism, despite producing its own denominational hymnbook<sup>40</sup>, encounters precisely the same debates as the Church of England.

#### 2.1.4 EXPERIENCE OF HELPING COLLEAGUES WITH MUSIC

An extra-parochial role contributing to the experiences that motivated this study was that of Rural Dean, a post held for nearly seven years. Among other responsibilities it involved managing 11 parishes during a ministerial vacancy over that period, not least ensuring that their worshipping life continued smoothly. In pastoral conversations with ordained colleagues over that time, it became very clear that regardless of churchmanship or style issues, ministers lacked confidence in addressing issues of worship and music. In three parishes where a robed choir led worship, the incumbents left all major decision-making to musicians on the grounds of being insufficiently knowledgeable or expert to do so themselves. In eight of the remaining twelve frustration would be expressed either at a lack of progress, or an excess. Of the remaining four, one enjoyed worship led predominantly by a well-amplified music group, and two relied regularly on pre-recorded accompaniments, leaving just one with a visible collaboration between musicians and ministers, making for a wide and enriching repertoire of hymns and music which contribute to spiritual nourishment and building up the Christian community.

#### 2.1.5 ECUMENICAL EXPERIENCE

A further non-parochial role contributing to the investigation was that of Diocesan Ecumenical Officer, in which acting as a recognised representative between the Diocese of Guildford and other Christian denominations allowed substantial access to different musical traditions and challenges. However, the rise of non-denominational hymnals and songbooks has provided such a wealth of common musical material that denominational differences have become barely noticeable. A parallel but different aspect of this role, which raised more questions and reflections, was developing relationships with other European Protestant Churches. In particular, colleagues in the Austrian Lutheran Church and Evangelical Church of Finland provided helpful insights and comparisons with the Church of England.

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<sup>40</sup> Most recently *Singing the Faith* (2010)



### 2.1.6 EDITORIAL EXPERIENCE

Although a minor element in terms of overall ministry, the experience of writing for a significant liturgical publisher, and most especially working as part of a small editorial team on a best-selling hymnbook<sup>41</sup>, proved formative in many ways. Although in practical terms a one-off task, it undoubtedly contributed greatly to these investigations, not least in making judgements about quality of music and text.

### 2.1.7 EXPERIENCE AS LITURGICAL TRAINER

Both within the parish and beyond, liturgical formation has formed a major part throughout nearly three decades of ministerial experience to date. This involved tutoring ten separate year groups with three colleague tutors on the Guildford Diocesan Ministry Course<sup>42</sup>, a recognised scheme for ordination and LLM training. The syllabus developed from year to year, reflecting both increased experience and liturgical changes, notably the introduction of Common Worship (2000). Throughout that time music was incorporated into the ‘liturgy term’, even if the time available was constrained. At parochial level the experience of training three Title Curates<sup>43</sup> through their first four years of ordained ministry, and an ordinand through her three-year formation period, also provided valuable opportunity for reflection. Although two of these had some limited prior experience of music in worship, all were offered the same opportunity to choose musical material and reflect on the impact of this, helped by the musicians themselves. They were unanimous that little or no background information or practical advice had been provided, but were able to carry their learning and insights into later responsibilities. While these formation roles were very different – one working with groups, the other with individuals; one more theoretical, the other practical – both emphasised the need for a resource to assist ministers with musical choices and decisions.

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<sup>41</sup> *One Church, One Faith, One Lord* (2004) is the ecumenical volume in the *Hymns Old and New* series from Kevin Mayhew Publishers

<sup>42</sup> Now known as the Local Ministry Programme

<sup>43</sup> Curates go through the second phase of the seven years of Initial Ministerial Education.

### 2.1.8 CONSOLIDATING EXPERIENCES

The experiences and findings of this ministerial work over two decades formed the foundation for the research underlying this work, stimulated initially by informal research in Lutheran churches in Nordic Europe during a sabbatical leave ten years ago. Funding was offered by the Diocese as part of Continuing Ministerial Education and Professor John Harper, a former director of the Royal School of Church Music in addition to his academic credentials, agreed to act as supervisor. Following a house move and major family illness, and despite increasingly heavy demands imposed by parish ministry, work on the research began at the end of 2008.

## 2.2 IDENTIFYING ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

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### 2.2.1 OUTCOMES OF PERSONAL REFLECTION

Throughout the process described above it became clear that a number of common factors were influencing ministers in the way they dealt with music in worship, and more generally in their approach to liturgical worship. These impacted personal ministerial duties in four main contexts:

- Initial formation of ordinands
- Practical formation of Title Curates
- Addressing and enabling parish and deanery groups, musicians as well as ministers
- Assisting with specific questions or projects

Within these certain questions were raised consistently and from every context:

- How can I understand better the congregation's responses to music?
- How do I integrate music to create a sense of liturgical flow?
- How can I work more effectively and collaboratively with musicians?
- How do I discover what resources are available and find advice on using them?

At times a presenting issue focused these questions on a practical issue that had arisen:

- How do I introduce new, more contemporary material without provoking complaints?
- Why do certain hymns seem 'not to work' in a particular liturgy?

- How do I manage the relationship with the choir/music group so that we are moving in the same direction rather than apart?
- How do I know which hymnbooks to search in order to find what I am looking for?

### 2.2.2 ASSISTANCE REQUIRED BY MINISTERS

Further reflection indicated a dearth of suitable resources to advise or inform ministers on their use of music in worship. Much general advice available was seen as ‘too technical’ or not appropriate for their particular situation, without background or contextual information to provide perspective.

The need for musical assistance presented was essentially twofold:

- How to manage relationships, both with musicians who provide and lead the music, and with the musical expectations and tastes of the wider congregation;
- How to discover and access available musical and liturgical resources, how to use these to assist the ‘flow’ of the liturgy, how to make choices to match different occasions and moods, and how to recognise what might, or might not, ‘work’ in these settings.

Beyond this, two possible areas for further exploration suggested themselves:

- How might ministers be enabled to understand the origins of their own musical tastes (both within and beyond liturgy and the Church), and to recognise the impact of these on their own choices of music for worship?
- How might ministers be helped to understand and interpret changing tastes in contemporary culture in order to inform their decisions and attitudes towards music in worship?

## 2.3 KEY ISSUES FOR INVESTIGATION

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Since much of the experience gained through ministerial duties was inevitably subjective and had not been subjected to extended analysis, any investigation of the validity of the conclusions would have to be more objective and focused on a limited number of key issues. Personal reflection already suggested the need for a musical resource which would enable busy clergy to

find advice or information on areas of concern. However, this would need to be offered in a wider narrative and context, and designed to encourage further independent reflection or research. Practical information would be easily accessible and geared towards the questions about music most frequently asked by clergy, whatever their specific ministry context.

The ‘live’ investigation was facilitated by ongoing regular access to two ministers in different phases of Initial Ministerial Education, with whom it was straightforward to organise an extended conversation and dialogue around a series of questions. This was supplemented by a questionnaire completed eventually by six more experienced colleagues, exploring the same areas as in the dialogue though in less detail. The two detailed conversations were structured to cover particular areas, but were also open-ended, neither presuming any specific response in advance nor making any attempt to steer responses in a particular direction, even if some were predictable. It should be noted that both newer ministers were working together in the same parish, having arrived from active involvement in two completely different parishes, and bringing very different musical backgrounds and preferences.

The dialogue began with a question about personal musical tastes and preferences, and what might have shaped them, moving on to explore how these had developed over the years in the light of changing circumstances. This was then applied to liturgical, worship and church music, looking for points at which secular tastes might diverge from this, and developed into a discussion on how a congregation’s musical expectations might differ from those of ministers and musicians. Further discussion areas covered musical choices and who should make them, and the resources – printed, instrumental or vocal – that ministers would want to have available. The last part of the conversation moved on to their confidence in dealing with music, and the level of help and guidance offered during ministerial formation, before or after ordination. From this came an analysis of the perceived gaps - in knowledge base, expertise or skill - and what kind of formational resource might help develop their confidence about music in worship.

## 2.4 THE DIALOGUES

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In order to gather detailed data not only about the current training provision for new ministers in liturgy and music, but also about how they experienced and responded to this, a simple outline

questionnaire was compiled and used to gather a set of responses. The two practitioners, at the time of the conversations<sup>44</sup> both still in the first phase of public ministry, were asked specifically about how music and worship were connected for them both in experience and practice, for both within the same liturgical environment.

While issues of age, gender and ministerial status are of no direct consequence to the investigation, the parallels and differences between the two ministers should be noted:

Both were women, at the time of the dialogue ministering in the same parish, presiding at worship in the same liturgical setting, and combining ministerial duties with family responsibilities, albeit at different phases. But there were striking differences:

- One was approaching the ‘empty nest’ phase of life, while the other was juggling ministry and formation with the school run and her husband’s work
- They had trained on different training schemes and had been motivated to enter public ministry by quite dissimilar experiences; one had a family background of singing in a church choir and liturgical participation as a child, with an awareness of musical expectations, the other had come to faith in mid-life in the context of a very different church environment with a rather less formal initial experience of liturgy
- One was recently ordained, and in completing pre-ordination training had experienced for the first time further education at a higher level; the other was licensed as a Local Lay Minister<sup>45</sup>, with a university degree behind her and greater academic confidence.
- One came to ministry bringing practical experience and creative gifts, while the other brought high-level analytical skills and the capacity to lead and manage others
- One had been immersed in Christian worship from childhood, while the other discovered it through the pain of tragedy and loss
- One had become aware of her calling through participation in her local church, which provided the context for training and formation from a first sermon to licensing three years later and a call to ordained ministry; the other arrived in the same church newly-

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<sup>44</sup> Both dialogues took place during the summer and early autumn of 2009

<sup>45</sup> Formerly a Reader, or (incorrectly) a Lay Reader

ordained after three years training to preach her first sermon to a group of people she as yet hardly knew.

Yet despite these different journeys, the experience of taking responsibility as an authorised minister for an act of worship and ministering in the same worshipping environment had proved formative for both.

Their responses reflected both their differences and similarities, and a growing awareness of the various factors which influence, consciously or otherwise, the choices they were making. Both started, and have continued to explore different approaches to liturgy and selecting appropriate music, able to make their own choices in a more informed way now that both are ordained and taking significant responsibilities. Given that these two ministers offer a marked contrast in background and style, it was anticipated that their responses would reflect this.

## 2.5 THE RESPONSES

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### 2.5.1 INITIAL EXPERIENCES OF MUSIC

Both ministers described briefly their general childhood and teenage experiences of music, which largely reflected the prevailing culture in which each grew up. More specifically, one had sung in a church choir with other family members from childhood through to marriage, and understood something of musical theory and technique, whereas the other had no background in classical music and preferred a contemporary style of music with which she was familiar. The former returned to choral singing following university studies, while the latter discovered the great choral masterpieces for the first time through joining her local choral society, in response to a family tragedy. However, through coming to faith she became increasingly involved in her local parish church, where the well-attended principal acts of worship were predominantly informal in style. Although hardly different from the music she was used to hearing every day, she now found some popular contemporary worship songs lacking in thoughtfulness and substance, often set to music of matching superficiality. Instead she found herself drawn more to hymns from the Celtic tradition, and to a choral tradition she had hardly known previously. This was not a rejection of contemporary worship styles, simply a recognition that it did not reflect or express fully how she felt at that time. She also learned a great deal from the way this evangelical parish combined both traditional and contemporary music in its worship, and carried that principle

through into her own liturgical ministry. Her colleague, by contrast, found that a move to a different congregation highlighted concerns about the choral tradition she had only recently left, with its ‘middle-of-the-road’ tradition offering little sense of change or awareness of current liturgical trends. Significantly, both ministers described growing in their awareness of the importance of music within liturgy and worship, not wanting to discard earlier experiences, but to explore other possibilities with the congregation.

### 2.5.2 CONGREGATIONAL EXPECTATIONS AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES

The two congregations from which these ministers originated displayed equally diverse expectations. In the large, evangelically inclined congregation were many talented and committed individuals with sufficient time and money to invest in its worshipping life, and during the first minister’s active membership there had been a marked shift from an organ-dominated liturgical experience to one where listening to the organ had almost become a pleasant occasional alternative to the regular instrumental music group. This reflected changes both in the accepted style of music for worship and in the technology for sound reproduction, which because of their resources and ethos, the congregation subscribed to as ‘progressive’ and accessible - a statement of missionary vision and intent.

This was in marked contrast to parish with a central, choral tradition, where if developments elsewhere were reluctantly acknowledged, there was also a sense that liturgical change had to be resisted if the church was to fulfil its primary purpose as a place of stability and security. Its primary musical resource was a fine ‘Father Willis’ organ of which the church is justifiably proud, only quite recently supplemented by an electronic keyboard or occasionally other instruments. The choir took its role of leading worship very seriously, but the minister who grew up here felt that over the years clergy had left most musical decisions to the organist, leading to occasional tensions and little sense of dialogue between the two. Although acknowledging some more recent developments, she commented succinctly: “when I go back there now, I still can’t see much evidence of change”. A slightly more adventurous liturgical approach had yet to result in an instrumental group or investment in new technology.

### 2.5.3 MUSIC, LITURGY AND VOCATION

For both recently appointed ministers the call to public ministry became real after moving to another parish. For one a house move brought her back to her childhood home area and a church

she knew well, although the contrast between the two congregations could not have been sharper, reflecting the breadth of Anglican experience and practice. From a large, distinctively evangelical congregation with a contemporary worship style, she moved into a much smaller worshipping community based in an ancient village church building bypassed by developments in worship, music and technology, though proud of the traditions it had maintained. Musical life was dominated by organ and choir, but their level of competence was hardly comparable, while worship songs were mostly unknown territory, resisted on both musical and theological grounds, although Taizé chants had gradually gained acceptance. Initially this felt rather dry and lifeless, though with a sense of ‘being at home’ as an Anglican, and in this smaller setting, playing a greater pastoral role led to an unexpected vocation to ordained ministry. If not entirely satisfied with the musical aspects of worship in either congregation, experience of both developed into a personal awareness that a blend of liturgical and musical styles was her preferred style, a view reinforced by the variety of experiences available during formation.

For the second minister the move to another congregation was brought about by impending marriage to a practising Methodist. Her previous experience had been confined largely to one setting, but any initial uncertainty about worshipping with an ecumenical congregation soon gave way to feeling comfortable with a distinctive, occasionally quirky mixture of styles and traditions. A rapidly developing sense of vocation led to a steep learning curve as she embarked on formation, but exploring the greater range of liturgical and musical possibilities in her new setting proved stimulating and enriching, while working as assistant manager of a Christian bookshop developed an unusually broad knowledge of texts and resources for worship. Experience of parenthood contributed a new dimension in an awareness of the liturgical and musical needs of parents and young children and their parents as part of the worshipping community. Both new ministers found through their vocation and formation that building on previous experience enabled them to adopt a more inclusive approach to music in worship.

#### 2.5.4 ADAPTING TO AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Despite contrasting initial and subsequent experiences of liturgy and music, both ministers learned in the same worship environment to work with a large and flexible group of instrumental musicians, skilled at offering a musical ministry across a range of traditions and expectations. Both regarded this adaptability as a great asset, extending the choices available, although realising the demands placed on them to make a suitable selection from such a range of



alternatives. This practical experience of using resources more effectively has been taken by both and applied to development of the liturgy and music in two very different contexts.

### 2.5.5 MUSIC FOR WORSHIP AND PERSONAL TASTE

Personal preference in music for liturgy and worship is shaped and determined by the same factors which influence musical preferences outside of the church. Both ministers had developed generally eclectic and broad tastes, though without any specific or formal musical education. For one an unexpected appreciation of classical music had grown - especially great choral works - and an affinity with more reflective, less triumphalist expressions of music in worship. While still valuing traditional hymnody and some contemporary songs, her priority became music which provoked deeper reflection on belief and faith, regardless of style or composition date.

The other valued her experience of singing in a church choir, even if classical choral music did not become first choice for personal reflection or relaxation. She was less concerned to maintain a specific musical style or tradition, preferring to use a wide range of material reflective of other texts within worship. Both valued ministry in an environment with such a flexible musical resource and a congregation who enjoyed open and varied worship, but recognized that not all its members would necessarily like every musical item chosen. Their aspiration was therefore to create enough variety for everyone present to feel some of their preferences had been met.

### 2.5.6 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE REACTIONS TO CERTAIN STYLES OF MUSIC, HYMNS AND SERVICE SETTINGS

Every Christian minister's experience of worship forms an ever-increasing set of preferences and 'pet hates'. But behind these specific, probably indelible memories of occasions which leave a positive or negative impression, lie rather more elusive factors. A distressing event can become linked inextricably with a song or musical style, not in itself necessarily of poor quality, but rejected or set aside because of past associations. Equally, joyful or peaceful times also become connected with a particular musical sound-world, whether or not intended by the writer or composer.<sup>46</sup> Neither minister expressed a strong preference for a particular style of music,

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<sup>46</sup> Famously Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup> symphony symbolised for a generation the end of the Second World War, it's rhythmic motif representing 'V' for 'Victory' in Morse Code, even though the composer's nephew Czerny reportedly said that it meant "nothing more than the call of the yellowhammer"! (*The First Four Notes* Matthew Guerrieri 9)

although one loved jazz and blues a great deal more than opera. In addition to her growing love of classical music, the other developed a liking for music in the Celtic tradition, particularly that of the Iona Community, alongside any music involving the human voice.

Neither felt that preparing music for worship required them to divide it into artificially opposing categories. While actively enjoying a range of styles and approaches to music in worship, the critical factor for both was the integrity of the text and music in the context of a particular act of worship. Experience of choral singing had given both an understanding of musical shape and structure, an insight into harmony, and an intuitive awareness of whether the music suited the text it carried. Both therefore responded negatively to superficial theological content, in which immediate experience is placed above theology or reflection, and thus against music which matched this in banal melody, insipid harmony or mind-numbingly repetitive rhythmic patterns. For both, exploration of vocation combined with theological formation enabled them to see beyond the surface comparisons a congregation might make, to a deeper understanding of the needs of every congregation and worshipper, and how music might help meet those needs.

#### 2.5.7 THE VALUE OF A MUSICAL ‘TOOLKIT’ FOR MINISTERS PREPARING ACTS WORSHIP

These two sets of experiences described above demonstrate the importance and value of a musical component as part of liturgical formation, since the development of musical understanding and a capacity to identify, access and evaluate resources is an ongoing process, something to be worked on throughout the initial formation process and continued thereafter over the course of ministry.

It should be noted that one new minister had received no formal input about music within liturgy at any point during her pre-ordination formation, while the other recognised the severe limitations of one one-hour input. Both were emphatic about the usefulness of a resource such as a Toolkit, citing various concerns which, as ministers entering full-time ordained public ministry with very little background, they would value being addressed in an accessible and practical format. The following summarises these briefly:

- Knowing the congregation

Without guidance it is far from easy for any minister, even with some musical knowledge, to reflect on a congregation’s assumptions and expectations in the light of their own previous experience and competence. “How far can a congregation be

pushed”, one asked, “and is it ever possible to anticipate their response?” On a deeper level another important question was also raised of what motivation or rationale might lie behind any attempt to enforce major changes in style or taste, and both felt strongly it was better to minimise the potential for worshippers to feel they have endured an unnecessarily negative experience.

- Nurturing good relationships between ministers and musicians

A particular concern was how to identify areas of potential sensitivity or conflict, not least when ministering in an unfamiliar context or tradition, or in one with a history of troubled relationships

- Understanding how to integrate the musical and textual aspects of liturgy in order to create a ‘desired flow’ of experience and formation for worshippers

Both were concerned to understand the potential impact on worshippers of choosing and arranging a particular set of liturgical materials and resources in a specific order, together with the negative consequences of making choices with which the congregation cannot identify or relate.

- Making appropriate choices from a wide range of material

Both expressed concern at being able to identify and select appropriate material from the plethora of liturgical and musical resources now available. Particular issues raised included: knowing how to look out texts, music and activities which might contribute to a coherent whole;

identifying material which might be inappropriate, or ‘too single-tracked’; using Psalmody creatively;

varying Eucharistic material in a constructive way;

effective use of indexing, in particular hymn tunes and metres.

using music more imaginatively to help worshippers to engage with the liturgy as a whole; for example, as a background to meditation or prayer activities, lighting candles or reflecting on an image.

### 2.5.8 ISSUES FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:

- How can ministers and congregations adapt the present trend towards worship combining a wide variety of musical styles and inputs without creating a feeling of fragmentation or blandness?
- Is it necessary for a congregation to preserve a distinctive musical tradition in order to maintain cohesiveness and sense of identity?
- Should ministers and congregations give issues of personal preference and taste lower priority than textual or contextual relevance? How might they distinguish between these?

## 2.6 A WIDER GROUP OF CLERGY

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During the dialogues it was important was to ask the same questions of these two fairly new ministers leading worship in the same environment with the same objective, despite their differences in temperament and life experience. However, this was only one part of the wider picture of the need for a musical toolkit for clergy. Therefore a similar set of questions, slightly compressed and focused more on their own experience and current praxis, was presented to a group of Deanery clergy<sup>47</sup>, and a number of colleagues made helpful responses. The range and scope of the questions was reduced somewhat to encourage a more rapid response, although this was offset by being distributed electronically<sup>48</sup>.

### 2.6.1 THE DEANERY CONTEXT

To provide a brief context for this part of the research, the Deanery where it was conducted lies in the Home Counties, on the outer fringe of London, covering an area which has more in common with the London suburbs than with its county address<sup>49</sup> The principal town is situated in the centre of an area shaped on the map like a banana, and the Deanery is made up of six densely populated suburban parishes to its north, three similarly non-rural parishes to its east, while to the

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<sup>47</sup> The time available precluded the possibility of similar face-to-face dialogues

<sup>48</sup> The questions were emailed to recipients during Lent 2010

<sup>49</sup> Through historical anomaly one parish finds itself in a London borough.

south a larger, more rural area is covered by one large and two rather smaller parishes, with three substantial parishes sharing responsibility for the town centre area<sup>50</sup>. In all, the Deanery's 15 parishes and 16.5 stipendiary clergy serve its 109000 residents<sup>51</sup>, together with five further priests in sector ministry, and a varying number of title curates, self-supporting priests and active retired clergy.

As everywhere else, patterns of churchgoing have changed dramatically over the past three decades. Working from a survey conducted by the then Rural Dean in 1993, only one church had seen significant numerical growth since then - a large 'evangelical cathedral' with a usual Sunday attendance of around 700 worshippers in one of the smallest parishes geographically - while the largest congregation in 1982, with nearly 400 attending worship each Sunday, has declined dramatically in attendance to become one of the smaller. In that year three parishes might have described themselves as Anglo-Catholic, but today none of the parishes would use that description, although the one Evangelical congregation continues to see itself in that light, as do two others less overtly. Today the Deanery embraces a typically Anglican mix of liturgical styles, tending more towards Evangelical, although with a number who might consider themselves Liberal Catholic. Two parishes are formally linked with the Methodist Church in a single congregation Local Ecumenical Partnership.

## 2.7 THE QUESTIONNAIRES AND RESPONSES

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All active clergy were invited to respond to the questionnaire, and although only six returned it, their views formed a representative cross-section of this typical group of Church of England ministers. In a more condensed format the questions covered similar ground to those which structured the more detailed dialogue with two new ministers.

Of the six respondents:

- the first was a very experienced priest in a parish in the less affluent part of town, with residents from more than 40 nationalities

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<sup>50</sup> Other major institutions include a large acute hospital trust, two large prisons, and a major independent school, with one of the largest populations anywhere in the United Kingdom of people with learning difficulties and mental health problems.

<sup>51</sup> Only 15000 of these live in the three more rural parishes, making this Deanery very unusually mixed.

- the second was also an experienced priest in a mixed parish with a large housing estate, an Ecumenical Partnership with the local Methodist Church and an innovative Messy Church programme
- the third priest had recently been appointed to a fairly affluent suburban parish having served in a more challenging area, although the ‘broad church’ tradition he inherited was struggling to progress, and tensions had become evident
- the fourth respondent was serving her deacon’s year outside of her evangelical tradition in a town centre parish with a strong choral tradition, with which she was unfamiliar and not entirely comfortable
- the fifth respondent was a female priest in a sector chaplaincy role, perhaps the toughest in the Deanery, which she fulfilled alongside her roles as wife and mother of school-age children
- the sixth priest, also female, had spent her career as a senior Civil Servant, and returned to serve her affluent suburban home parish after retirement

All six respondents have now moved on from the posts they held at the time of completing the questionnaire, but they represent both the variety of churches across the Deanery, and a wide range of theological traditions and approaches to ministry - their combined views can be taken as a fair indication of wider clergy need regarding music and worship

### 2.7.1 DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL TASTE

Three respondents claimed to have been brought up surrounded by classical music, although only one (a child of the vicarage) had experience of singing in a church choir or received formal musical training. Choirs dominated music in three of their parishes, two were struggling to find an organist and at that time none had a regular instrumental group. All six described how their tastes and preferences had changed over time, especially in respect of music for worship, and most expressed frustration that their present liturgical circumstances were proving both musically unrewarding, and difficult to change. Having grown up in a clergy household two were more sympathetic to traditional hymnody, while those more familiar with a contemporary musical idiom appreciated music in a different style. All preferred a synthesis of different styles whenever possible, and were enthusiastically open about coming to terms with new material, while regretting having insufficient time to explore this. A number stated clearly that their personal

preferences were not reflected in their choices of music for worship, while only one acknowledged listening to “CDs with a Christian flavour” for personal devotion.

### 2.7.2 MUSICAL PREFERENCES IN WORSHIP

Having grown up familiar with classical music, four claimed they had grown into listening to it as a devotional exercise. Almost all felt at home with the reflective style of music from sources such as Taize and Iona, and some mentioned ‘gentler evangelical choruses’ as an inspiration, though not all congregations appeared willing to adapt to these. Even for personal devotion however, worship songs were used, along with instrumental tracks or classical repertoire, in preference to traditional hymnody. The one priest with musical training and choral experience had also played in a rock band, but summed up the implicit paradox: “worship music isn’t to please me as such.” While rejoicing in a variety of musical styles and experiences, all recognised that their calling on every occasion was to choose music for worship on the basis of nurturing and building the Christian community, rather than personal taste.

### 2.7.3 CHOOSING MUSIC

Only one respondent did not take final responsibility for choosing music for worship, on the basis of her relative inexperience, although this was experienced negatively, as she felt the choir exercised too much control. However, all were aware of the constraints placed on them by the capability of the players, the resources available and the perceived formational needs of the congregation. Most were clear that the president and preacher should have first claim on choosing music, whatever the inherited expectation, not least to ensure hymn-texts were consistent with liturgical texts, readings and overall theme. All expressed apprehension about keeping up to date with new hymns and songs, as equally about managing musicians and using hymnody as a part of congregational formation.

### 2.7.4 MAKING BEST USE OF RESOURCES

Three of the six respondents had access to very limited available resources, and struggled to maintain a musical tradition, while two of the others enjoyed the services of a competent choir and organist. The fourth respondent, in a large town centre church with a strong choral tradition, was unsure how it would ever be possible to develop the existing tradition or exercise any direction over the musicians. The third respondent, despite the services of an enthusiastic and

flexible choir and organist, despaired of being able to use this to encourage congregational participation. In marked contrast the fifth respondent, despite having the most limited resource, often found herself deeply moved by the participation level of the congregation.

### 2.7.5 FORMATION AND CONFIDENCE IN CHOOSING MUSIC

Two respondents felt ‘confident enough’ to deal with music and worship on their own, both being experienced priests who had received ‘some basic instruction’ or formation, either during Initial Ministerial Education, or since then on their own initiative. The others, regardless of any personal connection with music, expressed the hope that an ‘expert’ would be on hand to advise, guide or help them, even to make the choices on their behalf. Awareness of available resources across the six respondents was at best patchy, with even those claiming some level of knowledge or previous experience recognising their own limitations. Most significant, regardless of length of experience, four of the six respondents claimed to have received no formal input on music, the remaining two nothing more than the most basic background. This is in line with the comments of the two new ministers in their dialogue, and while it is possible to extend personal development through reading or seeking advice, the pressures of other parish duties mean it is unlikely that this will become a first priority.

### 2.7.6 GAPS IN FORMATION AND WHAT MIGHT FILL THEM

Responses to this question were particularly varied, both individually and more generally. The following are noteworthy:

- Help with recruiting and developing instrumentalists and choir members
- Coaching in singing in public or how to act as cantor
- Regular updating about resources
- Continuing exposure to a wide range of worship music and contexts – observing good practice
- Working alongside other musical expertise locally
- Confidence in knowledge of Church of England choral tradition in order to motivate change and development.



Although trained in different places across more than two decades, with varying levels of personal musical formation, and exercising their liturgical ministries in quite dissimilar contexts, the answers given by all six respondents exhibited a surprising consistency:

- Only two had received even basic initial training in the musical aspects of liturgy, and all were aware of large gaps in knowledge and experience
- Only one was able to access musical expertise and direction in their immediate context
- Only one regularly used contemporary technology for projecting the texts of hymns and liturgy
- Whatever the local mythology around guitars or drumkits ‘taking over worship’, all respondents were encountering difficulties in establishing and maintaining a reliable, creative instrumental group to accompany and support worship.

A few years later, of the fifteen Deanery churches only four have a competent and active instrumental group, at least four do not have the services of a regular organist or keyboard player, and six still enjoy a robed choir, others forming an occasional singing group. Almost all report continuing difficulties in recruiting new members.

#### **2.7.7 FURTHER ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED FROM THIS SET OF RESPONSES:**

- What formational tool might be most helpful in enabling more experienced ministers to upgrade and update their knowledge of music and liturgy without eating into limited time or resources?
- How can ministers be helped to stay up to date with the many changes in liturgical and musical resources, and to identify how these might enhance different styles of worship?
- How can ministers be enabled to negotiate with liturgical musicians on an equal footing, sharing equally in the task of ministering to a congregation and acknowledging each others’ responsibilities and competence?

## 2.8 RESPONSES FROM TWO EUROPEAN LUTHERAN CHURCHES

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In exploring possible comparisons with current provision and expectation within the Church of England, it was instructive to analyse responses to the same questionnaire from two ministers within the Evangelical Church of Austria and one from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Although no direct dialogue was possible, each was asked questions similar to those addressed in dialogue with the two Church of England ministers<sup>52</sup>. A number of parallels can immediately be identified: both ministers were women, both had some musical background, and at the time of responding both were ministering in the same church. However, both also had substantial experience across a range of churches, one as a native resident of Vienna, the other as an ordained minister of the *Evangelische-lutherische Landeskirche Hannovers*<sup>53</sup> who had chosen to move to Austria with her family. Their church community at the time of responding was situated in inner-city Vienna, close to the historic centre in an area dominated by shops and businesses. The congregation was eclectic and diverse, with a substantial proportion of students and short-term members.

### 2.8.1 THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AUSTRIA

The first minister was the daughter of a pastor in the Lutheran Church of Hannover, growing up with her family in rural northern Germany during the 1960's and 70's. She was profoundly influenced by this lifestyle from an early age, and since childhood had never considered any other career choice. Her initial experiences of music within worship were among her earliest memories, in particular singing the entire Lutheran liturgy, which made a profound impression. Traditional Lutheran hymnody was the norm - "I loved all the ancient hymns and tried to sing them from the score, even if I had never heard them before....I did not like the sermon!" Only at the start of Confirmation classes (which lasted for two years) did children begin to attend adult worship on alternate Sundays. For younger children her mother led a children's service in the village hall nearby, consisting of "a simplified liturgy without Communion. We sang a collection of core

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<sup>52</sup> Both respondents addressed these questions in English, and any verbatim comments quoted are exactly as expressed in their written responses.

<sup>53</sup> The Evangelical Lutheran Provincial Church of Hannover, one of 22 regional member churches of the Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands (Evangelical Church of Germany)

hymns and carefully selected new hymns.” The question of expectations about church did not arise for this minister as she had never known a time when she expected anything different.

The second minister, although brought up in Vienna<sup>54</sup>, echoed these feelings and experiences with uncanny similarity. She too “loved the parts that I could sing along because they were always the same....I loved the beginning of the lessons most because the teacher always sang some hymns with us. I learned them by heart, just by singing them again and again”. She too struggled to answer the question about expectations because there was no concept of anything different to expect. Even for young children, the musical tradition was clearly both an attraction and a fundamental part of their formation.

#### 2.8.1.1 AVAILABLE RESOURCES

German-speaking Protestant churches use the *Evangelisches Kirchengesangbuch* (*Evangelical Church Hymn Book*), the standard German language Lutheran book of hymns and musical settings with a few minor modifications to allow for local or regional variations. The first minister grew up with the edition used in the Evangelische-Lutherische Landeskirche Hannovers, while the second was familiar with the Austrian version. Although neither had any expectations of alternative forms of worship, both acknowledged that part of its attraction at that time was its tradition. For many Lutheran worshippers this is precisely how they expect the liturgy to be conducted. Both ministers also indicated that liturgical change was not high on the agenda<sup>55</sup>, although there was also the possibility for liturgical experimentation “...the possibility to try new things first and evaluate them afterwards, instead of rejecting them before even trying”. Both had valued greatly this open-mindedness.

#### 2.8.1.2 DEVELOPMENTS AND CHANGES

At the age of 12 the first minister’s father had allowed the youth group to accompany a traditional hymn with guitars – “the Church Council nearly threw him out!” As a teenager she experienced for the first time worship in larger churches with choirs, and even an orchestra for Bach cantatas. Deeply impressed by this, she then struggled with contemporary songs where “the texts did not

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<sup>54</sup> The Evangelische Kirche in Österreich (Lutheran Church in Austria) is completely independent of its German counterpart, although with comparable resources and structures

<sup>55</sup> The current version of the Kirchengesangbuch was introduced in 1987, with a supplementary volume published in 2000

seem to fit into the music lines.” By the time she was ordained in the mid-1980’s, guitars and modern spiritual songs had become commonplace, although there was an enthusiastic response to sung liturgical responses and traditional hymnody<sup>56</sup> For the second minister musical resource was sadly lacking, although with no professional musician to play the organ, the congregation had to find an alternative local resource for accompanying liturgical texts and hymns.

#### 2.8.1.3 PREFERENCE AND CHOICE

When asked about their own preferences and tastes and what had influenced them, The first minister was very aware that her upbringing in a clergy family had influenced her preferences and tastes profoundly, and she found most other styles and approaches not to her taste. The second had enjoyed a more varied set of influences and preferred to include a variety of different styles of music, loving traditional hymns if the congregation enjoyed singing them too, but not dismissing newer songs that avoid ‘dumbing-down’ or banality.

#### 2.8.1.4 LITURGY AND MUSIC

The two differed slightly in how they addressed what kind of music might enable worshippers to engage with the text, or might hinder them in this. The second minister felt the congregation would not be affected greatly by how hymn texts were presented, but for the first “good hymns link words and music so that you never forget them...” No doubt she would have left choice of more contemporary hymnody to church musicians, but made the point that “superficial music can lead to the impression that God’s relationship to humankind is superficial as well” The second stressed that worshippers must be able to relate to what they are singing in straightforward texts with music that is easy to pick up and sing, recognising that they might otherwise be distracted from focusing on the text. On hymnbooks and Psalmody, both respondents acknowledged that although there is just one hymnbook for Lutherans it is by no means easy to navigate. They quite liked the new *Kirchengesangbuch* (1994) and while they loved hearing a church choir singing Psalms well, they were also supportive of metrical psalms as a good alternative.

#### 2.8.1.5 CHOOSING HYMNS

Both respondents were confident about selecting music for a liturgy as a joint exercise with a non-professional musician, but the first firmly believed that “professional church musicians

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<sup>56</sup> She was fortunate to have organ accompaniments played by her husband, a professional musician

should choose on their own”, while the second chose hymns, but left other music to the organist, who made initial choices before a shared decision was reached around 48 hours before the service. In Germany or Austria, both agreed that German-speaking Lutheran pastors undergo minimal liturgical training, and that liturgy with music should be a central topic in every pastor’s training.

- Although German-speaking, these two Lutheran pastors were from culturally diverse backgrounds, but they hold much in common:
- There was a strong sense of shared Lutheran identity above and beyond cultural differences. Minor regional variations between hymn-books and liturgical texts were not seen as significant, nor did regional and national differences appear to affect their attitude to worship.
- Neither enthused about liturgical experimentation or updating, both having a great love of traditional Lutheran hymnody from childhood.
- Both agreed that their liturgical formation as ordinands was inadequate, especially on musical aspects of worship.

## 2.8.2 THE EVANGELICAL – LUTHERAN CHURCH OF FINLAND

The sole respondent to the questionnaire in Finland was a very experienced Lutheran minister, at that time working on ministerial formation, primarily in liturgy and music. He chose to respond in a single more extended paragraph, but his specific knowledge and overview of a wide range of worship styles across the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland enabled him to express views somewhat different to those in parish ministry. There had been a recent new emphasis across the Church of encompassing a wide range of musical styles in order to attract occasional worshippers, which in busier parishes would commonly mean a traditional morning service - “hymns from our hymn book approved by the Synod, organ music” - but an afternoon or evening service in a more contemporary musical style, adapted to changing social trends and technology. The Finnish bishops were looking to widen the traditional formation of organists (cantors) in order to make church musicians more flexible across different styles of music, but while this minister understood what lay behind their thinking, he disagreed with the premise of the argument that if performance was good, any style of music could be used in worship - “It is not insignificant, what style of music is supposed to be used. Certain styles are appropriate to express certain contents.” This was not implying that only certain approved musical styles or instruments were appropriate for specific content, but felt that “much of the music of today is...influenced by entertaining

contents which are not compatible with worship”. He was evidently aware of this being a source of anxiety and concern to a number of church musicians and church ministers.

Having recently returned from a study trip to London during which he explored and experienced worship in the Church of England, his perception was that rather than different approaches co-existing in the same parish or congregation, Evangelical congregations were likely to use ‘contemporary’ worship songs and a variety of styles, with little or no music to carry liturgical texts, unlike Anglo-Catholic congregations, who tended to prefer more traditional liturgical music, including anthems, psalmody and hymns. He did not compare this with the situation in Finland, nor pass judgment on any worship he had experienced in London, although it had clearly given much opportunity for further reflection.

## 2.9 DIALOGUE WITH AN EXPERIENCED LITURGY TRAINER

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As part of a more detailed study of current training provision, a final conversation was conducted, with a specialist tutor in liturgy at a residential training scheme<sup>57</sup>. Since the two new ministers had trained on non-residential schemes, there was a useful comparison to be drawn with a residential scheme, alongside an on-line analysis of liturgical formation available. The Queen’s Foundation in Birmingham had the additional dimension of being an ecumenical establishment, training ordinands from the Methodist and United Reformed traditions, each with its own distinctive liturgical tradition, even if their current worship texts reveal at least as much in common as at variance.

The websites of other residential colleges and training schemes did not suggest in general that liturgy was given a high profile within the overall curriculum, so a number of issues were identified for exploration:

- How typical of the national picture is the Queen’s Foundation?
- How much emphasis is it possible to give liturgy within the demands of other curriculum areas?
- Is liturgy given the profile you would like it to have?

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<sup>57</sup> The interview was conducted in Birmingham in January 2010

- How does music for worship fit into the liturgy module?
- What resources are made available for liturgy and music to be taught?
- What do students perceive their formational need to be, and does this match the tutors' perception?
- What are the most important issues to be addressed?

The conversation took place over a typical day during term, and while informal, it raised a set of data which contributed to the wider picture. Liturgical formation is regarded as equally important across all three denominations, within which music is covered over an 18-week period during the first year of study, focusing not least on the musical skills needed in public worship. Simple reading of a musical score to give a basic grasp of a hymn-tune, elementary voice skills (both speaking and singing), learning to teach new hymns or songs and finding creative ways of singing the Psalms are all included, many sessions led by the local Diocesan Music Advisor. The aim of this was what the Anglican liturgy tutor described as enabling students to “make good and well-informed choices”, although he identified an underlying issue: “who does the choosing, and against what criteria?” If this is not addressed, there will generally be a default to ‘verbal and lyrical criteria’ in making choices rather than assessing the music. This is covered as part of a modular curriculum approach, along with the use of language and how it shapes us, pastoral liturgy, occasional offices, and the daily offices. These are also revisited on each year’s leavers’ course, as a ‘bridge into ministry’.

This tutor is one of just four remaining specialist liturgy tutors on any ordination training scheme around the country, and he acknowledged his own sense of unease about the lack of adequate formation, both in liturgy generally and music in particular, although common experience indicated that this had been the case for many years. Perhaps it was less important before the advent of Common Worship, when ministers had far fewer choices to make, but to leave this at its previous level, with the range of options increased dramatically, was agreed to be particularly short-sighted. This tutor himself acknowledged how much he had had to learn about liturgy once he had set out on ordained ministry, and said with feeling, “I wish I’d known as a curate what I know now – and had the confidence I have now!” Shortly after this conversation the same tutor published a Grove Book which reflected some of this discussion. (*How to Choose Songs and Hymns for Worship* W201 Mark Earey 2009)

## 2.10 REFLECTIONS ON PROCESS

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### 2.10.1 OVERVIEW

The process of setting, posing, and evaluating the answers to the questions consistently produced responses which related to each other in significant ways, and while they were directed differently to allow for the differences between each group, there was a great deal of common ground between them. Overall the questioning elicited the kinds of response that had been sought and anticipated.

### 2.10.2 KEY THEMES

A number of key themes emerged, which could be tracked through each part of the investigation. There were variances of practice, experience and theological perspective, as well as personal preference, but also overlaps and reiterated concerns, all of which connected with personal experience over many years, and were endorsed by the liturgy tutor.

The most significant themes, relevant to the production of a resource to give clergy confidence and greater background knowledge were:

- Ordination training schemes in general provided little liturgical formation, with music only small part even of that. This puts considerable pressure on training incumbents and parishes to make up the shortfall, although they may not have great confidence themselves to do so.
- There is a wide range of liturgical contexts in which priests or ministers may find themselves ministering, from churches with a strong choral tradition to the increasing number who struggle to find any musical resources for their congregation. There is little available to cover all of these alternatives.
- Students and serving priests or ministers express consistent practical concerns: management and pastoral care of musicians as part of a ministry team; knowing the background to the story of music in worship as a context for making sound decisions; being aware of the range of resources now available and knowing how to use them to select suitable material; making choices of music in order to enhance both the flow of the worship and the ongoing formation of worshippers.



- The underlying issues of personality, personal taste, experience, and present context and how these potentially impact on choices. These also made an impact on all the responses received, and not least on how these were interpreted.
- Some liturgical formation is clearly best addressed once ordained ministry has commenced, particularly those of making appropriate choices in specific local situations.

## 3 - CLERGY AND MUSICIAN TRAINING, FORMATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES

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### 3.1 EXISTING PROVISION FOR LITURGICAL FORMATION OF CLERGY

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The first area for investigation was the level and scope of liturgical formation currently offered to ordinands and trainee ministers in the Church of England. Some detailed knowledge was already available as a long-term previous tutor in liturgy for the Guildford Local Ministry Programme<sup>58</sup>, and as Tutor and Training Minister for the Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme<sup>59</sup>. More general awareness of the broader picture in the Church of England had been built up through attendance as a tutor in liturgy at the annual conferences of the Liturgical Commission<sup>60</sup>, although the websites of each theological college and non-residential training scheme were explored in order to assess the present situation. A long-term connection with the Austrian Lutheran Church and direct contact with its ministerial formation programme provided insights into a comparable situation, as did relationships built up with the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland, although access was restricted to materials available in English.

#### 3.1.1 PRIOR ATTAINMENT AND EXPERIENCE

An external observer looking at the Church of England might wonder if sufficient emphasis was being placed on the initial and continuing formation of its authorised ministers. In the Lutheran Church a first degree in theology is taken for granted, with specific pastoral and ministerial training introduced only after this has been awarded. Both national churches considered as comparators in this study regard graduation as a prerequisite for all ordained ministry, and a significant proportion of their clergy will also have studied for a doctorate, either before ordination or in conjunction with ministry thereafter. Until twenty years ago most Church of

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<sup>58</sup> Until 2007

<sup>59</sup> Until 2012

<sup>60</sup> Residential conferences were held in 1995, 2000, 2005, 2009, 2013

England ordinands entered theological college after completing a degree course, not necessarily in theology, but more recently the average age at ordination has increased so much that candidates in their twenties are now in a minority, the majority completing their training in their middle years, either in parallel with current employment or seeking a change of career. This has been accompanied by an equally marked change in the pattern of ministerial formation. Full-time residential training courses were the norm for all pre-ordination training until the 1980's, but they now compete with local and regional non-residential training schemes which enable students to remain in their current employment and housing – at the same time, maintaining and developing college premises has become a financial drain on limited resources.

That said, authorised ministers today enjoy a more comprehensive formation for future ministry than ever before. Until the mid-nineteenth century there were frequent accounts of poorly trained and equipped parish ministry - standards have since been improved to a remarkable extent, highlighting the achievement of those who recognized the need for change.

### 3.1.2 CURRENT TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Three years of initial training remains the standard required for all authorised public ministry, but in three decades the picture of formation for ordination has been transformed. Many fewer clergy now enter training directly from a first degree course, as Christian ministry is no longer generally viewed as a long-term career, and prior work experience is considered equally valuable, even essential<sup>61</sup>. Financial stringencies have dictated a move to non-residential training for many ordinands, as stretched resources are directed towards many other outlays besides formation. By 1984 candidates over 30 years old were allowed to train over two years on a residential course<sup>62</sup>, but candidates for 'non-stipendiary ministry' in their late fifties were still a rare sight at a Selection Conference. A few far-sighted bishops realized that this offered a fruitful ministry pattern for many years ahead, and the rate of change has been such that in the Diocese of Guildford today, for example, a significant proportion of those ordained each year will serve their Title Curacy as self-supporting ministers, offering a specific amount of time each week to their

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<sup>61</sup> The appointment of a new Archbishop of Canterbury in November 2012 who had previously held a senior appointment in the oil industry was unprecedented, though recognised as a sign of changing expectations and contexts.

<sup>62</sup> Candidates over 30 were still a small minority in 1984, referred to by other students and the system as 'geriatrics'!

parish based around an existing career, but less affected by organisational burdens such as Church Councils, parochial paperwork and local expectation. Today, all of these, as well as some candidates for stipendiary posts, will have attended a part-time training scheme in their own region rather than a residential course at a theological college, living in their own home, earning a living, and able to avoid disrupting family life.

### 3.1.3 LITURGICAL FORMATION

Much effort is now devoted to ensuring that all ordinands are trained to a consistent standard for ministry, attaining at least a basic level of competence and understanding, which is developed thereafter during a training curacy. Public worship is for many the Church's shop window, "the first point of contact people have with the church and...one of our most important and valuable tools for mission" (Diocese of Liverpool website 2012), so it might be assumed that liturgy and worship receive considerable emphasis during ministerial formation. However, in 2011 only four of the eleven surviving residential training courses for ordination into the Church of England retained a specialist tutor in liturgy<sup>63</sup>, and despite assurances on their websites about the centrality of worship in corporate life, some of the largest theological colleges, frequently evangelical in churchmanship, rely heavily for their formation input on non-specialist tutors, locally based experts, or enthusiastic serving clergy.

A few colleges mention music as part of their curriculum - Oak Hill include two two-hour sessions on music in worship in their chapel led by a parish priest musician - but there is not enough time to cover the breadth of music to be found now in Church of England worship. Corporate worship within the college community may provide some formational experience, planned or otherwise, but this is likely to remain within the previous experience and comfort zone of most participants, possibly unimportant if an ordinand's future parish post is rooted in their own tradition. However, as parishes are increasingly grouped together into one benefice, and as congregations reflect a bewilderingly wide range of spirituality and theology, most newly-ordained or licensed ministers will very likely have to embrace a broad spectrum of worship styles, familiar or not, each stoutly defended.

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<sup>63</sup> Ripon College Cuddesden, the ecumenical Cambridge Federation, the ecumenical Queen's Foundation at Birmingham, and the College of the Resurrection at Mirfield

Part-time non-residential training has rapidly become the preferred option for ministerial formation:

- candidates may need to remain in their present employment for financial reasons
- younger candidates may have dependent children whose education they would rather not disrupt
- older candidates may not want to leave their present home because of their spouse's employment, elderly parents living nearby, or similar practical concern
- relocating for the entire training period is disruptive and costly.

This inevitably requires both teaching staff and students to tackle the formation process rather differently. Not without disadvantages, in some respects it is also more demanding on both parties:

- Teaching staff and students cannot enjoy such regular contact as those on a residential course, so more weight has to be placed on study days, with residential weekends and weeks.
- For each student or group of students suitable local tutors must be identified, who are able to supervise studies, monitor progress and contribute to the assessment process
- When added to work and family responsibilities, the demands of maintaining progress with studies can be intense
- Students can feel more isolated from their peers, with less capacity to support one another
- Maintaining a consistent standard of teaching and attainment is more challenging when students are spread across a number of dioceses
- For liturgical formation students have less opportunity to learn from one another, and local experience may be less than satisfactory, although conversely a wider variety of worship styles may be experienced through placements.

### 3.1.4 MUSIC AS PART OF LITURGICAL FORMATION

The current rigorous inspection process highlights areas of weakness in each college or scheme's overall curriculum, and recent reports are readily available on the Internet. These suggest that on most courses, residential or not, liturgical formation overall is rarely identified as a major cause for concern, even if aspects for improvement are highlighted. Areas covered typically include the theology and history of liturgy, liturgical texts focusing on *Common Worship*, and some discussion about the practice of worship. Since many courses lead to the award of a degree the focus is on academic rigour to maintain the standards demanded by the institution conferring the degree, while the modular nature of most ordination training makes it possible to minimize liturgical study and devote energy to more immediately appealing topics.

As part of liturgical formation, music has to fight to make itself heard, even among those with musical skills and prior experience, leaving those unsure of themselves musically, with little choice but to delegate musical choices to 'experts'. Non-specialist tutors or external visitors teaching liturgy and music may not have strong formational skills, nor expertise in managing the very broad range of different musical styles now evident in many parish churches across the country. Working with church musicians is barely mentioned, while understanding how a particular tradition has been built up in a parish and how to make suitable choices of musical material are no more likely to receive dedicated time.

### 3.1.5 A RESIDENTIAL TRAINING SCHEME

A study of a residential training scheme's liturgical formation was conducted in January 2010 at the ecumenical Queen's Foundation in Birmingham. The dialogue with the Tutor in Liturgy there is recounted in Chapter 2.5, in which his discomfort with the limited time made available for liturgy and music became very clear. While the coverage of liturgy in this college seems to be above average, and includes a musical module led by the local Diocesan Music Advisor, it appears nonetheless that many students begin public ministry, having the responsibility of making musical choices, with little confidence in their capacity to make effective decisions.

### 3.1.6 A NON-RESIDENTIAL TRAINING SCHEME

The Local Ministry Programme offered by the Diocese of Guildford illustrates both the present scope of liturgical formation on a non-residential course, and the limitations in delivering it. This three-year course is divided into nine ten-week terms of two-hour sessions, liturgy occupying the

seventh term, at the beginning of students' final year of study. In addition to the in-house liturgy tutors, other local clergy are invited to share specific experience and expertise, on three evenings in their own parish churches. Attention is given to liturgical practice, giving students the opportunity to construct and assess short acts of worship. The term is based around the chapters of Stephen Burns' *SCM Studyguide: Liturgy* (Burns 2006), and while availability of guest tutors may affect the order of these in a given year, each year-group is intended to cover the same ground. Burns devotes his third chapter to Music and Song, for which this course allows one half of an evening, shared with Liturgical Spirituality, Burn's seventh chapter<sup>64</sup>. All students receive just one hour of formation in the role of music in liturgy during their three- year training period for ministry – the maximum possible when university accreditation demands that so much else be covered in the available time. Once ordained, curates are unlikely to influence the musical choices in their parish, and some will encounter a context in which clergy routinely devolve decisions about music to the 'experts'. On reaching a position of sole responsibility, therefore, a priest may very well lack the experience and confidence to make appropriate musical choices, and remain perplexed by sung responses and hymnbook indices.

### 3.1.7 AN OVERVIEW OF AVAILABLE FORMATION

Despite the best efforts of the available tutorial staff and some courses, liturgical formation is one small component of overall training for ordained clergy and licensed lay ministers, with musical elements contributing at best ten per cent of even that limited time allowance. This imposes greater pressure on their training incumbents, and on the Initial Ministerial Education programme operating within their diocese. Depending on available tutors, during its three to four years cycle the latter may devote a session to the practicalities of planning and presiding at worship, possibly including music, although even this may not encompass all newly ordained and licensed ministers. Any further training in liturgy and music will be a matter of personal initiative, dependent on personal interest or being fortunate enough to find a ministry environment which enables formation to continue.

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<sup>64</sup> A similar pattern for teaching liturgy can be identified in the course overview for the Yorkshire Ministry Course, to take one example: on most non-residential programmes, liturgy is taught over a ten-week term, with less than an evening devoted to the place of music

### 3.1.8 MUSIC WITHIN CONTINUING MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

Some dioceses take the opportunity of a regular clergy conference to offer input on recent liturgical and musical developments, while annual Continuing Ministerial Education programmes cover similar ground from time to time. The evidence from Guildford Diocese suggests that the popularity of these increased greatly at the time *Common Worship* was introduced, but has since dropped back to appeal mainly to those with an already high level of commitment and interest. The less confident often avoid such events, participation in which is usually voluntary, perhaps fearing that their lack of knowledge or experience may be shown up in the company of ‘experts’. The Guildford Diocesan CME programme for 2011 included a morning session entitled Life into Liturgy (focused on presidency and planning, music playing at best an incidental role) and a full day spent studying J S Bach’s St Matthew Passion, on a devotional rather than liturgical level. These training events are mostly tutored by serving parish or diocesan clergy, whose considerable knowledge and expertise may not always be accompanied by educational skills, nor by sufficient time and capacity to follow up issues raised by participants.

More broadly, clergy and ministers can choose to participate in training which, if not directed at their particular role in worship, is still applicable at a general level and provides insights into a musician’s perspective. The Guild of Church Musicians, founded in 1888, has adhered to its original objective to support and develop church musicians and music, and retains this as its primary focus. The majority of courses are geared towards developing those whose ministry is to provide music for their church each week, but a glance at the website indicates a wider brief:

- its membership is open ‘to all members of the Christian church’
- it describes itself as ‘a fellowship of those who sincerely desire to offer the best in music to the service of the church, both amateur and professional musicians being united in a common ideal’
- both Archbishop’s Certificate and Fellowship Diploma awards require musicians to undertake studies in the history, theology and practice of Christian worship (Guild of Church Musicians website 2011)



Of specific interest to ordained clergy and licensed ministers is the Archbishops' Certificate in Public Worship, which 'encourages candidates to improve their skills in planning and leading public worship....' and to develop 'greater awareness of the role and effectiveness of the spoken word and of music in local worship.' It also 'develops practical skills essential to the art of liturgical presidency', suitable for those in full-time ordained ministry. PRAXIS, the training arm of the Liturgical Commission, promotes short courses in specific areas of liturgical interest, some of which cover musical topics. It is possible in conjunction with the Mirfield Liturgical Institute to take a 'liturgical pathway' through the MA course, while Heythrop College offers an MA in Pastoral Liturgy. King's College, University of London, offers an MA in Contemporary Worship, while their Doctorate in Ministry allows liturgy to be the focus of a research project for those who are interested. None of these is exclusive to those engaged in public ministry, but the cost and time required to fulfill a degree course may prove prohibitive to many ordained and licensed ministers.

### 3.1.9 FORMATION FOR MUSICIANS

For church musicians the provision of musical training is wider. The RSCM runs courses specifically aimed at developing the skills of church musicians, although its Church Music Skills programme also offers as part of the syllabus two ranges of Supporting Studies, entitled Worship and Ministry, and Church Music in Practice, the units of which cover more theological and practical topics. The Sacred Music Studies programme<sup>65</sup>, has attracted one or two serving clergy, and one former student is now ordained. As a research institute the International Centre for Sacred Music Studies has allowed individual projects to be tackled, but ordained ministers would be faced with significant time and cost in order to fulfill the demands of a research degree<sup>66</sup>, while adequate prior qualification, substantial commitment and a high level of previous interest would be assumed.

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<sup>65</sup> This was run originally in conjunction with Bangor University but transferred to Canterbury Christ Church University in 2010

<sup>66</sup> Of five research degrees recently completed or currently in progress, two – including this one – have been undertaken by ordained ministers

### 3.1.10 LITURGICAL AND MUSICAL FORMATION IN AUSTRIA & FINLAND

In order to understand whether these problems are unique to the Church of England, brief research was conducted into the liturgical training available to ordained ministers in two European countries with a strong and dynamic musical culture. Few countries in the world have a stronger musical culture than Austria, now a small, largely rural nation of eight million, but justifiably proud of its musical heritage and status. Small and largely rural, but otherwise in complete contrast, Finland gained independence only in 1917<sup>67</sup> With a musical reputation more recent than Austria's, and a population of just five million, each of its major cities supports a professional orchestra, while Helsinki's Sibelius Academy compares favourably with the world's leading conservatoires.

At the time of the Reformation Austria initially became quite strongly Protestant, but the Counter-Reformation brought persecution and hardship for the Lutheran community, especially in towns and cities<sup>68</sup>. Since 1861, when Kaiser Franz Josef I's Deed for Protestantism (*Protestantpatent*) became law, there has been complete freedom of religious confession and practice in Austria, and since 1961 all Protestants and their churches have enjoyed complete independence and freedom. Nevertheless, the identity of Austrian Protestants is still deeply rooted in the days of worshipping in secret, and the Austrian Lutheran Church remains very protective of its liturgical tradition.

Worship is conducted according to the *Evangelisches Gottesdienstbuch* (Protestant Service Book), which despite revision and updating has remained the liturgical text for German-speaking Lutherans, with much less scope for flexibility than *Common Worship*. It also contains their official hymnal. Recent editions have been made more user-friendly and contain some contemporary material, but in shape and style it is still very much in the Lutheran and Reformed traditions, together described as 'Evangelisch'<sup>69</sup>. Contemporary worship songs and a non-classical musical idiom are hardly unknown among Austrian Protestants, but dispensing with the *Gottesdienstbuch* and its hymns would be unthinkable, such is its place in their sense of identity.

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<sup>67</sup> Finland was previously ruled by Sweden, then Russia

<sup>68</sup> Many Lutheran strongholds were to be found in more remote rural areas such as Carinthia, where the Emperor's troops were less likely to find them

<sup>69</sup> Evangelisch translates as Protestant rather than 'Evangelical'

Young people within the Lutheran tradition still undergo lengthy preparation for Confirmation, part of which familiarises candidates with the history of the *Gottesdienstbuch* and its musical tradition and acquaints them with many of its great hymns and chorales.

Ministerial training for Austrian Lutherans takes place in two phases, the first being theological study to degree level at a recognised university. Thereafter ordinands embark on practical aspects of formation, including liturgical presidency, over a period of three years, known as the Vikariat. This is not unlike a Title Curacy in the Church of England, supervised by an experienced pastor under a Director of Training. The 2008 syllabus for this required trainees to have conducted at least 15 acts of worship independently, in a variety of contexts, as well as occasional offices and other special services. Attention is paid to preaching and personal presentation in public, but the underlying assumption is that students will already have a detailed knowledge of the liturgical texts and hymns, so that music plays a relatively small part in liturgical formation, as there is not the breadth of musical styles encountered in Anglican worship, nor for a high expectation of variety among congregations. The majority of Protestant churches in Austria have the services of a qualified organist, although a regular choir is now most often encountered on major occasions. An instrumental group would be restricted to playing on special occasions – rarely would such a band accompany congregational singing or conflict with the organist, whose would be tasked to organise and train the players.

While the Reformation did not take root in Austria, leaving its Protestant Churches as a small minority even today, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland claims nearly 90% of Finns as confirmed members, and is a signatory to the Porvoo Agreement<sup>70</sup>, relating to other Nordic and Protestant churches, whereas Austrian Protestants relate to other Lutheran churches through the Leuenberg Agreement<sup>71</sup>.

As part of Sweden's Empire at the time of the Reformation, Finland became Protestant, and as all of Nordic Europe has remained so ever since. The New Testament was translated into Finnish by

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<sup>70</sup> Signed in 1992 between the Lutheran and Protestant Churches of Nordic Europe and the Anglican Churches of the British Isles, with the Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain and the Lusitanian Church of Portugal – Denmark formally signed the Porvoo Agreement in October 2010 and Latvia, while not yet a signatory has been granted formal observer status

<sup>71</sup> Originally adopted in 1973 by the major Reformed and Lutheran churches of Europe, since when 98 churches have become signatories, while others, notably the Nordic countries are known as participating churches.

Mikael Agricola in 1548, along with the prayer book, the Mass, hymns, and other liturgical texts, his work forming the basis of modern Finnish grammar and spelling. Only with the rise of nationalism towards the end of the nineteenth century was Finnish recognised as Finland's official language - Swedish-speaking Finns today form only six per cent of the population, although they still have their own non-geographical diocese of Porvoo/Borga<sup>72</sup>. Proud of its links with Finnish cultural tradition and its role in history, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland before the Second World War was increasingly criticised as reactionary and out of touch with wider society, for example in its stance on Sunday observance. However, the traumatic experiences of Finns during the Second World War gave the Church greatly increased opportunities for effective ministry and it has retained its popularity since then, despite many pastors' reluctance to revise their model of ministry. By the end of the 1960s it had become clear that change was inevitable and numerical decline had to be arrested, so work began on a new translation of the Bible, authorised eventually in 1992, and a new hymnal with more contemporary material, inaugurated in 1986<sup>73</sup>, which helped make public worship more accessible,

Despite recent changes in style and the unfamiliarity of its language, the Finnish Service Book is readily identifiable as Lutheran, its shape and style similar to its Austrian counterpart, hymns similarly incorporated. Singing is fundamental to Nordic life and culture, and hymns especially have been central to the Church of Finland - its first collection was published as early as 1583, while the 1701 edition remained in use for two centuries. These were seen as so important that for centuries in many homes the hymnal was the only book owned apart from the Bible – even today most Finns own a copy.

As in Austria, training for ordination starts with a theology degree, and a Master's degree is required before students are permitted to continue with practical ministerial formation. Liturgy is largely given, although increasingly it is possible to find alternative material in use, especially in

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<sup>72</sup> Porvoo (Borga in Swedish) is not a geographical diocese, but the diocese of Swedish-speaking Finns across the country.

<sup>73</sup> These changes were overshadowed by the controversy over women priests, blocked by Synod in 1984. Many left because of this, and although the first women were ordained priest in 1988, numerical decline has continued advance.

the *Tuomasmissa* or St Thomas Mass<sup>74</sup>, first celebrated in 1988. The massive Mikael Agricola Church near Helsinki's harbour is the home of this rite, a traditional Lutheran Mass accompanied by a choir and band, using music from a wide range of sources such as Taizé, and the Finnish equivalent of worship songs. Given the small percentage of those confirmed who actually attend worship, the 800 or so regularly present at this St Thomas Mass are notable; however, its impact in cities and towns has not been matched in more rural settings. Many clergy are involved in these services, but while liturgical formation now acknowledges its place, there is little preparation for running worship of this kind, possibly a parallel with the Church of England's preparation of its clergy for Fresh Expressions of worship.

All other worship music is in the hands of a professional musician, quite probably trained at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. As paid full-time employees in most Finnish parishes, organists take responsibility for all aspects of church music; larger parishes with a number of choirs to direct may well have more than one organist. The predominant style is broadly classical, as in Austria, although other influences are now making a noticeable difference to worship. The management of church musicians is thus a major part of the ministry of most Lutheran pastors in Finland, but while music plays a relatively small part in their formation, it is noteworthy that in direct comparison, the Sibelius Academy's training for church musicians includes a substantial component of theology.

### 3.1.11 CHANGES IN FORMATION FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

The past 50 years have seen massive changes throughout society in the developed world. Technological developments have transformed daily living, communication and information processing; social changes have affected profoundly expectations of life, mobility, community cohesion and working patterns, how we relate to one another and try to grasp the meaning and purpose of life; educational changes have led to children growing up with a different view of their place and role in the world, in community and personal relationships. The style and practice of public worship have been affected no less, along with the training of those entrusted with its conduct. The Church has become increasingly marginalised, leaving even its committed members questioning their place and purpose as Christians in the community, and how it might remain true to its values and traditions while being accessible to those on the outside. With finances ever

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<sup>74</sup> So named for its intended appeal to those who have doubts

more stretched, searching questions are being asked about how resources should be allocated. In the face of such radical and rapid change, the development of pastoral theology and new concepts of how to be a church, such as Fresh Expressions, are just two of the responses now evident in the Church of England. However, beyond more user-friendly acts of worship, this rate of change requires the Church of England to engage in radical re-thinking if it is to adapt effectively for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Training for ordination demands new vision and reshaping if it is to send out well-prepared ministers, liturgical formation has to reflect 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations, as part of which the role of music must also connect with contemporary taste and expectation. Training competent ministers for this new and uncertain age requires a radical overhaul of formation for ordination, so that the Church of England becomes focused on mission and reaching out in love and service locally and nationally

### **3.1.12 KEY AREAS IN DEVELOPING A TRAINING RESOURCE TO HELP MINISTERS MAKE BETTER-INFORMED MUSICAL CHOICES**

- Recognise that the Church of England is unlike some other churches used as comparators in not having an official hymnal, creating limitations and opportunities in equal measure
- Identify how the wide variety of sources and musical styles used or adopted might result in a disparate approach, even within a limited geographical area.
- Understand how, unlike the majority of Reformed churches in northern and central Europe which rely on a professional organist, a Church of England parish might experience musical accompaniment provided by a variety of instruments, a wide range of competency, or reliance on recorded tracks.
- Acknowledge how limited available time during training prior to ordination leaves many clergy without adequate awareness of the issues involved or confidence needed to tap the potentially vast reservoir of musical possibilities or to deal with those who lead music.
- Recognise that the rapid growth of sources for both liturgical text and musical material for worship can daunt even those with some background and experience, and that there is still a marked lack of confidence in handling these.

- Be aware of how little time is available for most ministers to update their liturgical and musical knowledge or skill base continuously, or to access sources of information or help.
- Understand how a musical culture develops, leading to potential conflicts over apparently clashing styles and choices.
- Acknowledge how, whatever their pastoral skills, personal uncertainty in an unfamiliar field may constrain their management and nurture of musicians and singers.

### 3.2 CURRENT STUDIES, RESEARCH AND RESOURCES – LITURGY

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In the light of the technological and sociological changes which have forced the Church to review previous practice and respond to new challenges and demands, liturgical research over the past three decades has generated a great deal of literature which both analyses and motivates that response, and seeks to enable those who shape and deliver acts of worship. The sheer complexity of contemporary life in a fragmented and diverse world have changed not only the Church's identity and place in western society, but also therefore the way in which its ministers are trained for their role within it. Two global conflicts highlighted an ever-widening gulf between academic theological disciplines and the realities of life the world around, as a result of which a growing emphasis has emerged on restoring the connection between ministerial formation and practice, so that ministers understand and relate to the broader context of their work.

For this study, from the range of academic research now available, a number of specific areas suggest themselves as being of value to a training resource for busy clergy. These divide broadly into more general studies of liturgy offering insights into worship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and studies on the place of music within liturgy and worship. There are significant areas of overlap – music and worship cannot be considered without a theological perspective, for example – and some of those overlaps may well provide helpful routes into liturgy and music for ministers more familiar with other disciplines. Studies of both liturgy and music offer a variety of approaches, some based on secular disciplines such as sociology or ethnomusicology, others on ecclesiology or theology, while a historical focus encompasses both. Many now point to a more practical approach, and much literature has been focused on the connections holding all these together.

### 3.2.1 PASTORAL THEOLOGY

Over the past three decades, the need for both academic theological research and Church life to connect more with 21<sup>st</sup> century realities have seen the disciplines of Practical Theology and Pastoral Theology grow rapidly. Although much of the impetus for this has come from the United States, notable British scholars including Paul Ballard<sup>75</sup> have produced a number of texts now widely used in ministerial formation. Together with John Pritchard, he co-authored *Practical Theology in Action* (Ballard and Pritchard 2006), with the unambiguous strapline, ‘Christian Thinking in the Service of Church and Society’. Ballard’s successor at Cardiff, Stephen Pattison describes this memorably in *A Critique of Pastoral Care*: “Confused, muddled and messy, pastoral theology will be lively and incarnate, finding a place for bodies, emotions and symbols as well as for mind, reason and tradition....if it does not teach other kinds of theology to dance, it might at least persuade them to sway a little more in time with the music of contemporary experience”. (Pattison: 2000 218/219).

Used as a core text in the part-time ministerial training course based in the South of England (STETS, this passage is quoted in the module *Developing Ministry 3 (D3)*, where it is stated that students will be “embarking on the fascinating quest of how to integrate the gospel and life, theology and experience, Christ and culture...”<sup>76</sup>

Ministerial formation prepares students for leadership within the Church, whose role in society has been discussed extensively. Denominational allegiance may provoke disagreements over detail, but there is widespread acceptance that any church or Christian community can be defined by its beliefs, rituals and governance. The Church of England is founded on the 39 Articles of Religion its Canons and the *Book of Common Prayer*. The latter has retained its status as the core text of the Church of England since 1662, but the Church itself has been transformed, not least in its own perception of its nature and role in contemporary society. In *Repitching the Tent* Richard Giles memorably describes his chastening experiences of viewing and assessing many church buildings, and concludes: “The question that needs to be asked is this...’what are the distinguishing features of the followers of Jesus when they meet as a community, and how can

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<sup>75</sup> Former Professor of Religious and Theological Studies at the University of Cardiff

<sup>76</sup> The process of reintegrating theology and spirituality is often described as ‘theological reflection’, and Pattison is one of three contributors (alongside Judith Thompson and Ross Thompson) to the *SCM Study Guide to Theological Reflection* (2008)



they best use buildings (if they are allowed any) to express their life together and the message they long to share?” (*Repitching the Tent* 1996, 8). His specific point about the physical space used for liturgy resonates strongly with the concerns of Pastoral Theology: “For some the preservation of church fabric unaltered represents stability in the midst of unprecedented change, and church rituals are often subject to a similar pressure”, while failure to apply Christian belief and practice to living in the 21st century will result in “a fatal lack of connection between theology and life, a church fit only for the heritage trail”. (ibid 7)

### 3.2.2 LITURGY AND MISSION

Of the reports the Church of England has commissioned to help address the challenges it faces, none has been more influential, widely disseminated or reprinted than *Mission-shaped Church* (Church of England 2004). Terms such as ‘church-planting’ and ‘Fresh Expressions of Church’ were hardly unknown previously, but since its publication have now become an everyday part of ministerial life and vocabulary. It highlights the urgent need for the Church to find radically new ways of reaching those on its fringes or beyond (the ‘unchurched’), of addressing issues of resourcing, and of engaging effectively with the wider community. While not invalidated by this, familiar patterns of ministerial formation need to be supplemented: “the initial training of all ministers, lay and ordained, within the Church of England should include a focus on cross-cultural evangelism, church planting, and fresh expressions of church.” (ibid 147). The report highlights a specific concern about worship: “this balance between loyalty to our liturgical inheritance....and appropriateness to cultural context expresses in microcosm the challenge of cross-cultural church planting and the tension between relevance and syncretism” (ibid 117). Those involved in liturgical and musical leadership will identify readily with this observation.

The connections between liturgical practice and contemporary social research have also been investigated and detailed, not least in a Joint Liturgical Studies publication, *Social Science Research Methods in Contemporary Liturgical Research* (Lloyd, Steven and Tovey 2010). Such an application of secular academic methodology to the life of the Church in this way would have been unthinkable to ordinands of previous generations, but its contemporary relevance to those following in their footsteps is unlikely to be questioned.

### 3.2.3 LITURGICAL GOOD PRACTICE

Few would argue with the principle that worship is the Church's 'shop window', but there is a wide range of views on precisely what it should display there in order to present itself attractively to the wider community. Many regard worship as a valuable tool for mission, but it is very easy to criticise or belittle when not conducted well. Good liturgical practice can be identified as much by its absence as by its presence, and it is difficult to identify and analyse its component parts, so readily is it taken for granted. A pleasant speaking voice and a sense of drama are certainly presentational assets, but a capacity to understand how liturgy 'forms' worshippers is essential; an awareness of the psychological and sociological aspects of public worship is beneficial, but familiarity with liturgical texts a *sine qua non*.

Yet good liturgical practice goes deeper than this. The Church of England has moved in four decades from a given text in almost universal use to a set of resources from which 'bespoke' liturgies are constructed; from clergy-dominated worship with tightly scripted participation to shared worship in which the whole congregation plays its part; from a word- and text-dominated event to one in which all of the senses may be brought into play. Sociological change, media-rooted expectations and the changing role of the Church in the community have all contributed to this process, but an increased awareness of previous liturgical practice and of worship in different contexts has been equally influential. Few studies have raised this awareness more than Dom Gregory Dix's seminal work *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Dix 1945), initially viewed by some as controversial, because of Dix's underlying thesis that the shape of the liturgy mattered more than the words used, a conclusion he based on historical evidence. As an Anglican Benedictine monk, Dix' own Anglo-Catholic convictions reflected his conclusions and sat uneasily with a more evangelical approach, yet his work emphasised for the first time the historical roots of liturgical texts, and it remains in print more nearly seven decades later.

### 3.2.4 THE HISTORY OF LITURGY

Since Dix, scholars from a range of theological positions have taken up the study of liturgical history, including many based in the USA and from a Roman Catholic background. Within the Church of England Paul Bradshaw's research on early liturgy has brought a new focus on how contemporary liturgy can be informed by awareness of earlier practice. *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (Bradshaw: 1992, revised 2002) is a comprehensive survey of scholarship to that point, rewritten for a more general readership as *Early Christian Worship*

(Bradshaw 1996, revised 2010). In the introduction he poses questions which demand an answer so that we not only understand more about how the Early Church conducted worship, but also how this might influence Christian communities in contemporary public worship. “What caused them to choose these particular liturgical forms instead of others? What did they understand themselves to be doing in their worship? What effect did that have on the development of Christian doctrine?” (ibid: introduction). Another distinguished liturgical historian writes, “those first stages of the Christian era continue to be of vital importance. They have been far more formative on Christian worship down the ages than any of us realise” (*The First Rites* Stevenson 1989 Preface vii)<sup>77</sup>. Whether or not the contemporary Church should follow Early Church practice may be debated, its influence is no longer in dispute.

### 3.2.5 WORSHIP AND SOCIETY

If early Christian worship to be of more than historical interest, a corresponding awareness of worship within contemporary society is also needed. In *A Sociological History of Christian Worship* Martin Stringer takes those ancient texts as a starting point for an overview of Christian worship across the 2000 years of its history, referring to the ways in which scholars of different liturgical and ecclesiastical traditions have reinterpreted “what little evidence there is in a way that supports their own particular understandings...using words and phrases that, over the centuries, have developed very technical or highly contested meanings” – specifically mentioning *ekklesia*, *episkopos*, and *diakonos* in this context.....”with particular ecclesial positions to defend it is easy to see how the use of such terms can be the starting point for a serious misreading of the evidence.” (ibid 27). After investigating the history of Christian worship in seven 300 year blocks, Stringer concludes: “it is the sheer variety of ways in which Christians have worshipped over the centuries that draws me, both in the outward forms of the worship along with the art, music and spaces in which that worship took place, and in the underlying motivations for that worship.... It is here we learn....new things about what it might mean to be Christian...” (ibid 237)

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<sup>77</sup> More recent scholarship has looked to reconstruct possible ancient liturgical rites more precisely, summarised in Bradshaw’s own *Reconstructing Early Christian Worship* (Bradshaw: 2009).

### 3.2.6 WORSHIP IN SPECIFIC SETTINGS

The context of worship has also been a concern of recent liturgical scholarship. Stephen Burns' volume *Worship in Context: Liturgical Theology, Children and the City* (2006) highlights one particular context, as do a number of Grove Books in the *Worship Series*, for example on Rural Ministry (*All Mud and Matins? Understanding Rural Worship* – Paul Lack 2008); on *Liturgy and Urban Mission* (Tim Stratford 2002); and more chronologically, *How to Plan Seasonal Events – A Drama in Four Parts* (Trevor Lloyd 2010).

Since 1971, Grove Books have aimed to provide in slim booklet format a brief and practical introduction to a single aspect of liturgy and worship. Originally aimed at an evangelical constituency suspicious of anything 'liturgical', their scope has since expanded to cover an extensive range of topics and perspectives, unafraid to challenge conventional wisdom, adding to the increasing number of practical handbooks and resource materials for ministers. The Liturgical Commission's *Transforming Worship* initiative has developed from the introduction of *Common Worship* and the need for liturgical formation of the whole Christian community. *Worship Changes Lives*, the glossy booklet produced for its launch, is intended for use in local parishes with worship preparation committees and other groups with an interest (Bradshaw and Moger: 2008), and as a stimulus for a whole congregation to be formed liturgically and spiritually by its worship. Stephen Burns in his *SCM study guide to Liturgy* (2006)<sup>78</sup> focuses on the non-verbal aspects of worship as well as historical texts, emphasising the participation of all worshippers as a core concern. From an ecumenical perspective he also draws out the many ways in which the recently published worship books of several denominations find much common ground<sup>79</sup>. The text and layout of this study guide enable students of any tradition to understand in greater depth the various components of an act of worship, not least unspoken elements such as space, symbol and sound.

### 3.2.7 WORSHIP AND SILENCE

Ministers frustrated at the limitations of so much text may ask in despair: "why does the Church have to be so wordy?" The significance of silence in face of the wearingly incessant aural assault

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<sup>78</sup> Based on the course he taught to pre-ordination students of three denominations at Queen's College Birmingham

<sup>79</sup> *Common Worship* (2000), *Methodist Worship Book* (1999), *Worship* (URC 1989) and *Gathering for Worship* (Baptist 2005)

of the mass media was revealed when an astonishing 2.5 million viewers were captivated by The Monastery (BBC2 2005)<sup>80</sup>. The liturgical texts of all major traditions incorporate and strongly encourage the use of silence as an integral part of corporate worship, and not only regular churchgoers welcome this: many informal comments suggest that less frequent worshippers and those who attend ‘user-friendly’ services value silence equally, and it is included more frequently during occasional offices such as funerals and even weddings. Worship in the style of the Taizé Community has familiarised its younger pilgrims with extended periods of silence, something which resonates at a profound level with many outside of regular church life.

### 3.2.8 SACRED SPACE

The absence of the spoken word for a length of time not only provides respite for overtaxed eardrums, but also focuses attention on aspects of liturgy otherwise perceived primarily at a subconscious level. The impact of an ecclesiastical building on those worshipping in it cannot be underestimated. An ornate Baroque monastery in central Europe and a simple 19<sup>th</sup> century non-conformist chapel both reflect the culture, experiences and beliefs of those who used the building. Equally important is the way the premises are presented, and the care evident in the maintenance of the areas which can be reached and modified without difficulty: any spiritual environment is downgraded by untidy piles of books, out of date notices, and poor lighting. Richard Giles develops this theme in *Re-pitching the Tent* (Giles 1996) to underline the impact that both the physical environment and the use of available space can have on corporate worship, following this up in *Creating Uncommon Worship* (Canterbury Press, 2004)<sup>81</sup> The American Lutheran pastor and scholar Gordon Lathrop explores non-verbal elements of worship from an explicitly theological viewpoint in his trilogy of works: *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Lathrop 1993); *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology* (Lathrop 1999); and *Holy Ground: A Liturgical Cosmology* (Lathrop 2004).

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<sup>80</sup> In which participants experienced the reality of monastic life for a limited period, although ironically the Abbot of Worth Abbey became an instant celebrity as a result.

<sup>81</sup> Nigel Yates studies this from a historical perspective in *Liturgical Space* (Yates 2008), his investigation of Christian worship and church building in Western Europe over the past 500 years.

### 3.3 CURRENT STUDIES, RESEARCH AND RESOURCES – MUSIC & LITURGICAL FORMATION

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This writing and scholarship specifically on music focuses both on developing a clear historical and theological understanding of liturgy and worship, and on promoting good practice in applying these principles to worship in the Christian community. Some form part of a reading syllabus for pre-ordination ministerial formation, and to differing degrees all root liturgical practice in theological study, historical awareness, and in engagement with contemporary culture. However, few give the role of music much more than a passing reference<sup>82</sup>, reinforcing what this investigation is confirming, that music is too often put to one side as a part of liturgy ‘best left to experts’.

#### 3.3.1 AN OVERVIEW OF MUSIC IN WORSHIP

‘Sacred music’ lies near the heart of the academic study of music. Despite the so-called ‘secularism’ of contemporary western society, the great sacred choral works have retained their status as masterpieces<sup>83</sup>, as demonstrated by two very successful television series entitled *Sacred Music – A Story Spanning Six Centuries*, BBC 2008, 2010<sup>84</sup>, and the even more popular single programmes covering the Sacred Music of the Christmas and Easter seasons. This story is found in any number of secular histories of music, few written from a faith or theological perspective, but if much can be found in print about ‘church music’, rather less has appeared about the use of music in church.

Erik Routley, Congregational minister, hymnwriter and composer, published his *Church Music and Theology* in 1959 (Routley 1959)<sup>85</sup>, aiming to enlighten readers about contemporary Christian music as he saw and experienced it. He included works from the Old Testament to the Romantic period, largely avoiding the challenges posed by contemporary compositions, before offering practical help and advice for the church musician. A man of strong opinions and limited

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<sup>82</sup> Burns’ SCM study guide devotes a chapter to exploring the place of music

<sup>83</sup> Bach’s *St Matthew Passion* or *B Minor Mass*, Haydn’s late *Masses* or Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* rank unanimously among the greatest music ever composed

<sup>84</sup> The first was subsequently released on DVD (2010).

<sup>85</sup> Substantially rewritten two decades later as *Church Music and the Christian Faith* (Routley 1978).

patience, his writing was as much polemical as informative, and his acerbic criticism of electronically generated music<sup>86</sup> hardly resonates with the sound quality routinely achieved today.

Andrew Wilson-Dickson's *The Story of Christian Music* (1992, since revised and reissued several times, most recently in 2009) covers an even greater breadth<sup>87</sup>, embracing contemporary British composers, Gospel, and the Australasian tradition. Avoiding Routley's judgemental comments, he is more positive about the charismatic tradition, and recognizes that the origins of its music arise from within Christian communities as much as they are externally imposed, raising a sharp dichotomy: "the judgement of Christian music by these two distinct criteria – musical excellence or spiritual sincerity – has created ever-widening chasms between the styles of music in churches of differing denominations." (ibid 425). Many involved in the musical life of the Church will share his view that it is not inevitable either that "only bad music will satisfy a congregation's needs", or that "good music simply turns worship into a concert." (ibid 426)

Where Wilson-Dickson raises theological issues, American Lutheran theologian Paul Westermeyer addresses the history of liturgical music with an explicitly theological agenda in his volume *Te Deum: The Church and Music* (Westermeyer 1998). His core argument is that music in worship is a key part of the encounter between God and those gathered to worship him, bringing out the interrelationship between music, liturgy and theology, but demonstrating historically how the Church has often experienced conflict or tension between worshippers, musicians and ministers or leaders. This is often the consequence of uncertainty about the role musicians play in public ministry, and because for Westermeyer congregational singing is the heart of worship, anything detracting from this is either "high art (which has) turned beauty into idolatry" or "superficial praise choruses (and) poorly crafted attempts to tell God how we feel." (ibid 318)

On a specifically Anglican trajectory, Trevor Beeson's *In Tuneful Accord: the Church Musicians* (2009) tells the story of music in the Church of England from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present. Focusing as much on personalities as on music, and intentionally anecdotal, this account summarises the journey to the present liturgical and musical situation in

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<sup>86</sup> He refers to the "repulsiveness of the glutinous sounds produced by mass-produced electronic instruments for popular entertainment" (ibid 110)

<sup>87</sup> Published in paperback format as *A Brief History of Christian Music* (1997) though much more comprehensive than this description suggests

the Church of England, highlighting the challenges faced by “those responsible for the ordering of the church’s worship”<sup>88</sup> (ibid 225-227)

### 3.3.2 PRACTICAL HELP WITH MUSIC

Volumes of practical advice for both clergy and musicians have been available for rather longer. One of the 20th century’s greatest liturgical musicians and organists was Sydney Nicholson, whose concern to maintain and raise standards in church music led him to leave his post as organist of Westminster Abbey to found the Royal School of Church Music. Editor of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* and *The Parish Psalter*, Nicholson’s concern for proper training led him to write *Church Music: a practical guide* (1920), and three years later *A Manual of English Church Music* (1923, with GLH Garner): his later *Practical Methods in Choir Training* 1927 is still available as a handbook from the RSCM. In addition to his writing on music and theology Lutheran Pastor and musician Paul Westermeyer, has contributed a practical handbook for the church musician, entitled simply *The Church Musician* (Westermeyer 1988, revised 1997). A number of the Grove Books Worship Series provide concise practical advice on musical issues on topics from *Recovering the Lord’s Song* (Harrison 2009) to *How to Choose Songs and Hymns for Worship* (Earey 2009). Although the origins of these lie in the provision of new insights into liturgy for evangelical clergy, the present-day authors are more concerned to present differing viewpoints than to promote a particular perspective. From the Roman Catholic tradition, musician and publisher Stephen Dean has edited the *Celebration Hymnal* (1997), *Laudate* (1999) and *Cantate* (2005), and has exercised considerable influence ecumenically by promoting the hymns of writers such as American Lutheran Marty Haugen and English Roman Catholic Bernadette Farrell.

Already mentioned are the Sacred Music Studies modules both for undergraduates and postgraduates, written by John Harper. Here too is a wealth of insight, information and practical help in understanding and using music in worship. While not specifically directed at ordained or authorised ministers, this study course covers much ground not well covered elsewhere, and does not shy away from the challenge of integrating theology with liturgical praxis.

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<sup>88</sup> In particular the overall standard of public worship - “very much lower than it ought to be” (ibid 227) - maintaining an adequate supply of choristers organists and directors for cathedrals and other major churches (not least due to costs of education and housing); and raising the funding required for high standards to be maintained



### 3.3.3 WORSHIP AS SONG

St Augustine is famously quoted as saying, “He sings prays twice.” The role of singing within worship has received a greater emphasis in recent writing, even if the focus is more often on the liturgical formation of congregation rather than clergy. In *Worship-Shaped Life* (ed. Meyers and Gibson 2010) American Anglican musician and scholar Carol Doran contributes a chapter on The Role of Music in Liturgical Formation, explaining how music, by ‘its inherent nature...draws both the stranger and the faithful toward the Church’s liturgical prayer’ (ibid 56-57). She underlines corporate singing, bringing voices together in a coherent harmony and rhythm to express oneness, mutual respect and the combining of experience and preference in order to express theology. She quotes Scottish minister, hymn-writer and musician John L Bell of the Iona Community, who makes a similar point in *The Singing Thing – The Case for Congregational Song* (Bell 2004), describing the liturgical song of a number of culturally different Christian communities to demonstrate its role on their wider theological formation.

Don Saliers, Methodist pastor and professor of theology and worship, explores the relationship between music and theology in his slim handbook *Music and Theology* (Saliers 2007), while *A Song to Sing, A Life to Live: Reflections on Music as Spiritual Practice* (2004) was published three years earlier, co-authored with his daughter Emily, a ‘folk-rock’ singer (2004). From a Roman Catholic perspective the French Jesuit priest and liturgical musician Joseph Gelineau<sup>89</sup>, wrote in *Liturgical Assembly, Liturgical Song* (Gelineau 2000): “liturgy is the action of a people gathered together” (ibid 9), and therefore those who contribute to that action are servants. Lucien Deiss, French priest, liturgical educator and musician also looks to the future in *Visions of Liturgy and Music for a New Century* (Deiss 1996) Following the Second Vatican Council’s momentous reforms, he explains: “the theology of the Church as communion changes our vision of the liturgical celebration and especially of liturgical song.” (ibid 29). This shift in thinking was reflected by the Roman Catholic bishops of the USA in a liturgical document entitled *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* (2007), in which they sought to integrate the practical, theological and pastoral aspects of music in worship. They re-presented - from a similar document entitled *The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations* published in 1969 - a framework ‘threefold judgement’ for choosing music:

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<sup>89</sup> Best known for his psalm translations and settings and numerous contributions to the worship resources of the Taizé Community

- “is it technically, aesthetically and expressively good?”
- “does it respect the texts, structures and various ministerial roles in worship?”
- “does it enable the people to express their faith, in this place, in this age, in this culture?”

Cardinal Ratzinger, before he became Pope Benedict XVI, stated in *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (2000) that singing in the liturgy had priority over instrumental music, without excluding it. For him “the singing of the Church comes ultimately out of love – the Holy Spirit is love and it is he who produces the singing.” (ibid 142) Conversely, music rooted in mass entertainment styles draws attention to itself rather than to God and thus undermines the essence of the liturgy.

### 3.3.4 MUSIC, WORSHIP AND RELATIONSHIP

The tensions highlighted by the issue of styles of music in worship reflect an ambivalence about whether it is aimed primarily at ministering to the faithful, at preserving a given tradition or at attracting and engaging with those outside of the Church. Each is a vital aspect of the life of the Christian community, but agreement on this makes it no easier to define ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’, ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’. John Witvliet’s call for ‘liturgical discernment’ (*Music in Christian Worship* 2005, ed. Croeker) strikes a note which many ministers will identify at once: “Many of our discussions about worship and music feature what we might call the rhetoric of persuasion....we gather a) to be affirmed in our own positions, b) to convince others of our well-founded positions, or c) to amass ammunition to do that better in the future.” (ibid 83). Witvliet brings out six “ingredients in the recipe of discernment” (ibid 88 ff):

- openness (to innovation and a range of options)
- awareness of the consequences of choosing between ‘yes’ or ‘no’ (which brings consistency in judgment and decision-making)
- knowledge and insight (learned and shared with other musicians and congregations)
- love (empathic to take seriously the experiences of other Christians, and tough when mutual challenge is called for)
- community (where discernment is most effective, rather than in the isolation many ministers and musicians prefer to maintain)

- the Gift of the Spirit, to aid the community process of discerning how music might be best used in worship in the contemporary scene.

Witfliet's suggested 'rhetoric of discernment' (ibid p.97) surely suggests a way forward for music in liturgy and worship which resonates strongly with Douglas Galbraith's exploration of 'koinonia' in his thesis, *Aspects of Koinonia: Developing an Ecclesiological Approach to Music in Contemporary Christian Worship* (Bangor University Doctoral Thesis, 2010).

### 3.3.5 WORSHIP AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MUSIC

The psychology of the human response to music is a growing research area, popularised in books such as Oliver Sacks' *Musicophilia* (2007). We are aware of musical sound in almost every sphere of life, and in different environments it can produce reactions ranging from calm<sup>90</sup> to an almost irrational ecstasy<sup>91</sup>. Clearly music in a church or spiritual setting can promote and assist prayerful reflection and awareness of the divine, as it can equally provoke joyful praise and thanksgiving in worship, although the value of this as an uncritical and purely subjective response is debatable. The Scottish composer and church musician, James MacMillan, has said: "there has to be a balance between that which is overtly of the heart and that which is directly from the head, and to allow one to get out of synch, out of balance with the other causes an imperfection in the music." (quoted in *Creative Chords* 2000, edited by Astley, Hone and Savage 13). What is true for him as a composer applies equally to performers who recreate his music, whether in church or concert hall. Conflicts arise when those participating in worship find that choice of musical material and performance style emphasise either an emotional or a cerebral response to the exclusion of the other.

Don Saliers makes a rather different point in *Music and Theology*: "it is easy to think of all commercial popular music as 'secular'....and all the music heard in churches as 'sacred'", arguing instead that in reality "it is not so easy to draw hard and fast distinctions between the sacred and secular in music." (ibid 55). While many Christian leaders and communities have attempted to define what is suitable or not for use in worship, the distinction between sacred and

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<sup>90</sup> E.g. classical music played on public transport to help reduce violence and stress

<sup>91</sup> An experience of the kind often associated in nightclubs

secular is fluid, as society and culture continue in a ceaseless state of flux. Recognising and adapting to these ongoing shifts is a key aspect of effective management of music in worship.

### 3.3.6 ETHNOMUSICOLOGY AND LITURGICAL FORMATION

John Blacking, Professor of Social Anthropology at Queen's University Belfast until his death in 1990, made an unrivalled contribution to the study of ethnomusicology. An accomplished musician himself, and a devoted Anglo-Catholic tradition, his period of National Service gave him both the experience of music in many worldwide cultures, and the motivation to study social anthropology rather than academic music, most notably during his lengthy residence in South Africa<sup>92</sup>. As both a leading social anthropologist and skilled musician Blacking's work sought to draw out the complex relationship between music and the society and culture in which it is rooted. He defines four 'types of musical communication':

1. When the "ideal motion of music" (i.e. its rhythm and/or tone-stress) is experienced relative to a cultural stimulus "it may induce a purely physical state in a listener by portraying motor impulse and/or nervous tension." He mentions dance or march music, but some music in worship has a similar effect.
2. When "a musical pattern has come to be regarded as a sign of a social situation or is accompanied by words that specify a social situation....it may....recall certain feelings and even reinforce social values", even if not heard in that situation or provoking feelings about it. In Lutheran worship the sound of a chorale prelude on the organ at the beginning is intended to prompt quiet reflection on the theme of the day.
3. Once a pattern of sound, combined with 'ideal motion' and tone-stress, becomes associated with a social situation and its meaning to individuals, it may be developed to increase the emotional impact of words or a 'stated programme' - "timbres, patterns of melody or harmony, or of groups of instruments do not have absolute meaning in themselves. Their meanings are assigned to them by society." The tendency of churches to develop their own musical culture may be explained in part by the meanings given to those sounds and patterns within that Christian community, which may differ markedly from those in another church nearby.

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<sup>92</sup> His detailed investigation of children's songs of the Venda is described in *Music, Culture and Experience* (edited Byron, 1995), a collection of his most important papers.

4. Even without words, a programme or connection with a social situation, “music may express ideas about aspects of society and convey to its audiences various degrees of consciousness of experience.” (ibid 38-44) Blacking cites Bach as supreme in his use of musical patterns to express ideas, and concludes, “Music is humanly organised sound, and its effectiveness and value, as a means of expression, rests ultimately on the kind and quality of human experiences involved in its creation and performance.” (ibid 53) Blacking refers to composers such as Mahler, Haydn and Janacek in this respect, but the same is surely no less true of hymnody, psalmody and the range of music encountered in contemporary worship.

Blacking had no specific agenda to influence music in worship, but ethnomusicology has influenced more recent liturgical thinking. In *Exploring Music as Worship and Theology* (2002) Mary McGann draws both on Blacking and his fellow ethnomusicologist Alan Merriam in offering a series of ‘orientations’ specific to music in the context of religious ritual: “From the perspective of liturgical theory, (music and the expressive arts) are not embellishments but constitutive of what takes place in liturgy....music and liturgical song are key modes of ritual expressiveness....Therefore, the interpretation of an assembly’s liturgy requires careful attention to the musical idioms used, to their power to take on ‘affecting presence’ for those who engage them, and to how they affect all other aspects of the liturgical action”. (ibid 20) In a society increasingly devoted to accessing music of all kinds as a personalised experience, it is often forgotten that “music is human action – something people do (and) make.” (ibid 22) For McGann music is in itself ritual; the rituals and the music can only be “interpreted as an integrated whole”. (ibid 35) All who participate in an act of worship, by their devotion and commitment, are equally “shaping the parameters of musical performance.” (ibid 35)

### 3.3.7 WORSHIP AND CONSUMERISM

A vast range of alternative musical styles can be experienced in churches on an average Sunday, and the consumer image of a shopping mall is used by Brian Spinks in *The Worship Mall* (Spinks 2010)<sup>93</sup> to explore the various liturgical offerings available in our ‘post-modern’ consumer society. Masses by U2 and Duke Ellington, Finland’s *Tuomasmissa*, Fresh Expressions, Seeker services and Celtic worship among many others, are all quoted by Spinks as options for would-be

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<sup>93</sup> Professor of Liturgical Studies at Yale University

worshippers as they ‘shop around’ to find what suits them best: “the worship styles represent a mall, offered by different churches to suit your personal taste or spirituality, all enticing in different ways, and in competition with one another.” (ibid xxiii) He asks who they are for, who they appeal to, even whether they are worship at all, underlining the competition offered to worship by the leisure and entertainment industries. Although not focused primarily on musical aspects, Spinks underlines McGann’s comments about music being integral to the ritual of worship: “praise and worship songs play a major role in neo-charismatic worship, and it is through the songs that its theology/theologies is/are expressed.” (ibid 113) In contrast the Iona Community tradition centres more on the Christian community serving the world, especially the poor and voiceless, in a quite different musical style. Detailed socio-cultural analysis will clearly lie beyond most ministers’ available time and scope, but some recognition of how a community has developed its musical culture, and the effects of consumerism would help them make better choices and recognise areas of potential conflict.

### 3.3.8 LITURGY, MUSIC AND THEOLOGY

Liturgical formation also encompasses awareness of music’s particular links with theological understanding and spirituality, an area explored by Jeremy Begbie, initially in *Theology, Music and Time* (2000), knowing he was covering ground few had traversed previously: “this almost complete theological disregard of music is regrettable.” (ibid 4) He is “not offering a systematic theology of music”, but rather “enquiring as to the ways in which music can benefit theology.” (ibid 5) In particular he probes the connections between music and time, since music can only exist within the context of time<sup>94</sup>. In *Resounding Truth* (Begbie 2008) he extends this by looking at music and theology through the prisms of Scripture, history and an ‘ecology’, enabling readers both to think more widely and creatively about the role of music in worship, and to respond with theological insight to the many ways in which music can be experienced in 21<sup>st</sup> century culture. An accomplished musician, Begbie nonetheless writes to be accessible to all, and tackles the broad issues of theology and music rather than its specific application to Christian worship. All with specific responsibility for the latter would do well the note the pitfalls of which warns (ibid 21-24):

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<sup>94</sup> Begbie’s chapter headings are a clear indication of his direction of thought: In God’s Good Time’, Resolution and Salvation’, ‘Music, Time and Eternity’, ‘Repetition and Eucharist’

- ‘theological imperialism’, in which theology (with ministers perceived as its guardians) demands that music is subservient to the wider message, and is “valid only insofar as (it) can spell out clearly just what that message is.”
- ‘theological aestheticism’, in which “listening to music on its own terms” becomes its own religious aim, “supposedly giving us supreme access to God or....some spiritual realm.”
- limitation of “the theology-music dialogue to a discussion of music in worship”, perhaps understandable, but ignoring the reality that by far the largest proportion of music most people hear does not come from a Christian or religious source. Begbie is brave enough to point out that “what goes on musically outside the church is often far more interesting and boundary- breaking than what goes on inside it” – an uncomfortable insight that all involved in church music of any kind should nonetheless take on board.
- ‘moral adjudication’, to which level theological discussions about music are too often reduced to a simple ‘acceptable’ or ‘unacceptable’ pigeon-holing.
- turning “talk about music into talk about words. Christians....speak about lyrics, texts, titles, and the musical sounds are often forgotten.”

### 3.3.9 MUSIC AS CORPORATE WORSHIP

Few scholars have explored music within the Church at a theological level. American liturgist Kathleen Harmon has written *The Ministry of Music: Singing the Paschal Mystery* (2002) and *The Mystery we Celebrate, the Song we Sing: a Theology of Liturgical Music* (2008) as a means to enable closer integration of music, words and liturgical action, so that music enables participants to join in the “ritual enactment of the paschal mystery.” For Harmon, liturgical music without words is a poor relation, music’s prime purpose being to draw all worshippers together in participation. Most recently, Douglas Galbraith has completed a monumental study of music in worship in his recent thesis *Aspects of Koinonia: Developing an Ecclesiological Approach to music in Contemporary Christian Worship* (Bangor University Doctoral Thesis, 2010), which encompasses both theology and musicology, with a specific emphasis on the concept of ‘koinonia’. This he identifies as being “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” (koinonia), and seeks to draw insights and principles from these discussions “which

may be further explored in the context of the composition, choice, performance and structures of the music of the Christian church.” He writes from the perspective of both a church musician and an ordained minister in the Church of Scotland, but observes exactly what this study identifies, that the concept of *koinonia*, a struggle to achieve at the highest levels of inter-church negotiation, is perhaps hardest to attain in the field of music in worship. He quotes from Begbie in *Resounding Truth*: “fights over music can tear a church apart quicker than almost anything else”, and when it comes to rancorous public disputes, the Church of England is far from unique. Galbraith’s conclusion is that a new way has to be discovered for participants in worship – ministers, musicians and congregation – to talk through the role of music from the perspective of shared vision and commitment rather than the separated interests and conflicting priorities of those who have developed different expertises or cultural preferences.

One conclusion to take forward from this survey is that many musical disputes in churches are rooted in the separation of theological understanding and musical expertise, combined with a ‘consumerist’ mind-set that places personal ambition and agendas above the wider concepts of communion and community. A vital outcome of liturgical formation for ministers should surely be the capacity to identify situations with potential for conflict, and develop strategies for dealing with them. More significantly, following Galbraith’s recent new focus on music in worship in relation to ecclesiology, the emphasis should be placed more on providing ministers with the conceptual, analytical and practical tools needed to create a common language or framework for music to fulfil its role effectively within the liturgy.

### 3.4 ASPECTS OF CURRENT LITURGICAL AND MUSICAL SCHOLARSHIP USEFUL TO MINISTERS CONSULTING A TOOLKIT

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In taking forward the fruits of this overview of resources, certain questions may be borne in mind:

- Which scholarly perspectives on liturgy and music would most benefit busy ministers seeking information and guidance?
- What place should music take within liturgical formation?
- Can ‘good taste’ or ‘poor taste’ in the context of worship be assessed objectively or theologically?



- What further help or insights might be gained from available scholarship and literature, and how might a busy minister discover where to turn to find the most useful writings on a subject?
- How might a minister start to make fruitful use of the connections between theology, liturgy and music?

## 4 - TOWARDS THE PREPARATION OF THE TOOLKIT

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### 4.1 OUTCOMES FROM THE INVESTIGATIONS CONTRIBUTING TO THE TOOLKIT

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Investigations into the current level of formation available for clergy and other ministers in the musical aspects of liturgy and worship suggest strongly that need and provision are seriously mismatched. With only four specialist liturgical tutors currently teaching at Church of England residential colleges, the evidence points to a lower priority given to liturgical formation in general than is needed either by present or future ministers. Traditionally regarded as an aspect of ministry development to be covered during a curacy, this probably worked well enough with far less choice of material and more clearly defined expectations, but today's training incumbents, lacking in liturgical formation and awareness themselves, may well struggle to help their curates develop the skills and attitudes needed to address contemporary expectations of worship. The demands now imposed both by *Common Worship*, with its new emphasis on ministers compiling liturgies from a range of material, and by a surrounding culture based on consumer choice, leave ministers to make decisions about liturgy and music from still unfamiliar alternatives for a fragmented culture.

This raises a further concern over who has authority to make liturgical and musical decisions, raised in particular during the dialogue with the liturgy tutor. While the Canons are clear that ultimately this is vested in the officiating priest, they also assume that good relationships between ministers and musicians will enable choices which are owned by both parties, appropriate to season and occasion, and contribute to the spiritual growth of the Christian community. Once these become soured, however, the tension created spreads rapidly across the life of the community, affecting the impact and atmosphere of worship, and risking congregational disengagement and negative publicity. Some ministers avoid the risk of disagreement and conflict, assuming their inferior knowledge of and competence in music, and instead devolving all decision-making and responsibility to the 'experts' rather than negotiating, even when they find the outcome less than acceptable. However, today a growing number of ministers are more concerned about making best use of very limited resources, many having to manage where there is a severe lack of available musicians with even basic skills.

## 4.2 SPECIFIC AREAS TO ADDRESS

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The investigation has highlighted a number of specific aspects of music and worship in which many practising ministers feel they are constrained, not sufficiently competent, or lacking in confidence:

- A limited awareness of the principles of liturgy and worship, in particular of traditions beyond their own. This applies equally to musical styles, resulting in many either dismissing what is unfamiliar or condemning what is not to their personal taste. Not all ministers are able to analyse their own musical preferences and dislikes, and how these have been formed in personal experience, leading to a lack of understanding about how members of the congregation relate to music, what might have contributed to their musical tradition in the past, and what might enable them to engage more with the liturgy and grow in spiritual awareness. Any training material or activity for ministers in selecting and integrating music into an act of worship needs first to devise a tool which enables them to recognise both their own and their congregation's preferences, identify where there are differences which might lead to tension and conflict, and foster those areas which can be developed to the mutual benefit of the whole Christian community.
- A frequent uncertainty about how music can enhance liturgical texts and flow while meeting the spiritual needs of worshippers. Not all ministers are sensitive to the impact of liturgy and music on the Christian community and its growth. All acts of worship interact with the wider environment, and events both within and outside the worshipping community - the death of a much loved member, a local tragedy or scandal, or a national crisis - impact profoundly on worshippers and their wider social network. However, awareness of these and other specific circumstances is often lacking, as equally of the spiritual and pastoral needs of the congregation.
- Ministers are also lacking in confidence at dealing with worship, notably at the Occasional Offices, involving a significant proportion of non-churchgoers unfamiliar with any tradition of music in worship, ancient or modern. Beneath these distinct areas of concern runs an underlying common theme, described by one of the research respondents: "I need to understand better how to integrate music into the liturgy to make it flow better." Most ministers report a concern to be more aware of musical resources and developments for worship, to build a broader repertoire for themselves

and their congregations, and to know how to make best use of these. However, formation also has to tackle the principles of integrating text and music with context and expectation so as to address both pastoral and spiritual needs.

- A significant lack of confidence in managing relationships and negotiations with those offering a ministry of music in worship, whether professional or amateur, technically competent or willing but limited volunteers. Ministers are frequently less sure about dealing with musicians than with almost any other group within the Christian community, possibly reluctant to challenge ‘experts’ or risk conflict in what feels like a vulnerable area; it may also be rooted in anecdotal reports (whether media-based or from personal encounter) of destructive fall-outs from such conflict; equally often it is the outcome of a past history of poor relationships between musicians, ministers and the congregation, or an imbalance of influence which cannot be challenged without raising tension levels. Congregations can become very defensive about their musical tradition and those who uphold it, especially when they perceive these to be under threat from the forces of change. Only a small minority of churches can afford to sustain a musical tradition using paid professional musicians, and even among those with sufficient funds there is often a lack of understanding about good practice in employing musicians, and of the resources available to help maintain and develop good working relationships. A formation resource needs to address both the issues which lead to a lack of confidence or unhelpful defensiveness, and the employment frameworks which provide a more secure basis for co-operation and collaboration.
- A lack of awareness of currently available resources and how to use them. With so much music published for worship in recent years, no minister or church musician could expect to have a detailed working knowledge of the whole range. The variety of styles is now so broad, the number of publications so great, that most churches focus on a ‘core repertoire’, whether taken from an established hymnal or gathered from a number of sources. Many ministers would welcome help to find a way through this maze of material. Feeling trapped with their congregations by the demands of previous history, constrained by time and other responsibilities, it is safer to keep to known repertoire rather than invest energy in introducing new material - the risk of

disagreement is avoided, even when alternatives have been experienced either at conferences or through colleagues<sup>95</sup>.

However, a basic knowledge of the material ‘out there’ on the market or the worldwide web needs to be underpinned by an understanding of how this can best be used. By no means every modern worship song can be transcribed comfortably for the organ, for example, nor will an instrumental group find plainsong easy to accompany. Ministers and musicians both have a set of ‘technical jargon’ which they use as verbal shorthand to make particular points. These can sound like a foreign language to those not in the know, and many ministers will keep a low profile when the names and metres of hymn tunes enter the discussion. They need to be enabled not just to know about certain publications or how to access certain material, but also how to find their way around these, how to make the most appropriate selection for the services in question, and how to understand what their impact might be on a particular congregation, whether made up of long-term churchgoers or occasional visitors.

### 4.3 ADDRESSING THE FORMATIONAL NEED

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Given the lack of musical and even liturgical input to pre-ordination and initial ministerial education, the most immediate training vehicle for offering ministers necessary musical advice is Continuing Ministerial Education. Diocesan Conference lectures and workshops, one-day courses led by an expert musician or liturgist, and music events - denominational or not - are all available, sometimes across different venues. These are useful for introducing and learning new material, or for giving a broad overview, but regrettably the take-up of places is usually limited, and attendance made up predominantly of those already enthusiastic and knowledgeable about liturgy and music. Those who feel their skill levels do not warrant investing time and effort into attending these, or who believe their energies and time would be better employed otherwise, have few alternatives for personal upgrading and updating in music and liturgy. They are unlikely to read much in this field, having little idea where to begin among so many specialised titles seemingly beyond their level.

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<sup>95</sup> A frequent question at training events is, “where can I find that hymn/song/setting we sang this morning...?”, indicating an openness to new material which may well later become lost in the wider needs of maintaining and growing the local Christian community

For many ministers a web-based ‘toolkit’ would prove far more helpful than an event at another location, however interesting or compelling the content. Not only would it eliminate travelling time and costs, but more significantly it could be accessed at home on a computer, be tackled in different ways, and need not incur a fee. For most the approach would be to ‘dip in’ when the need arises, although other lines of thinking could be pursued through the various links. Beyond provision of a simple list of resource material – hymn-books, musical arrangements, liturgical texts, more detailed reading – the aim would be to stimulate further thinking, reflection and development of praxis about the use of liturgy and music. The initial motivation for using the Toolkit is likely to be a search for specific material, but in so doing it is hoped that other parts of the toolkit would prove informative, motivate further study and lead to transformed practice.

#### 4.4 SHAPING A TOOLKIT IN THE LIGHT OF THE INVESTIGATIONS

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The Toolkit is intended to address two distinct if interconnected groups:

- those managing a musical tradition in their parish without either basic knowledge and information or confidence in their ability or competence;
- those with limited musical resources who want to make best use of what is available or extend the range of alternatives.

The Toolkit is intended ultimately for use on a website, and although it exists for this purpose in a ‘two-dimensional’ form, it consists of five sections broken down into a number of subsections, which can be interlinked in electronic form for flexible browsing.

1. Introduction
2. The story of music as part of Church of England worship
3. Building and maintaining good relationships
4. Knowing how to choose and use music
5. Available resources and how to use them.

Section 2 of the Toolkit covers both the historical background to music in Church of England worship, and its present-day social and cultural context, an area in which many ministers lack basic knowledge. From this comes insight into the story of each congregation, and the factors which have formed their tastes and expectations. Section 3 deals specifically with the questions

concerning relationships between ministers and musicians, and between both of these and the congregation. Section 4 tackles the selection of music suitable for various acts of worship and liturgical contexts, while Section 5 lists a variety of available resources and points users beyond this to more detailed or specific resources which can be explored in greater depth as required.

Certain issues raised in the study have to be addressed in the Toolkit. The Toolkit has to describe the musical context of Church of England worship in simple form, covering the Canons, the place of musicians within the liturgical life of a congregation, the development of liturgical texts, and the role music has played in the Church of England through its history, as well as currently available resources. These were matters raised above in Chapter 1.

An outline of the historical aspects of Church of England liturgy and music, may be regarded by many clergy and authorised ministers as an ‘optional extra’ for those with a particular interest or in posts with a significant musical aspect. Specialised technical knowledge is certainly not necessary for all who prepare and lead worship, but an awareness of the historical flow of the interaction between music and liturgy, as well as the changes and controversies of the past, can only help inform and develop decisions and choices made in the present. Section 2 of the Toolkit is intended to make the topic more accessible to those who might never pick up even a slim volume on the subject.

It is necessary to set liturgy and music in the contemporary social context, in particular looking at the impact of technological developments on musical taste, at how these have affected consumer choices and expectations, at possible conflicts or mismatches of expectation, and not least at how alternative forms of worship and musical style have been influenced by new technology. In the Toolkit, Section 2, dealing with History, covers some aspects of these, while Section 4 on Choosing Music addresses the ways in which these factors might influence the choices made by ministers.

In examining liturgy and music in the contemporary context, specific needs and interests have been identified: the needs of both regular and occasional worshippers in church, those attending for specific occasions and those who are part of a minority group or have specific concerns and interests. There is also the question of how both personal and collective taste impacts on decisions and choices about music as part of worship. The latter is partly dealt with by the inclusion of the questionnaire used with members of the Epsom Deanery Chapter for users of the website to tackle themselves, while the former is addressed in Section 4 on Choosing Music.

Chapter 3.1 explored the present situation regarding music as a part of liturgical formation, and the available resources both within the Church of England and more widely. In the Toolkit, Section 3 provides advice to those making musical choices, while Section 5 offers a range of currently available resources. Chapter 3.2 and 3.3 contained a broad overview of current research and writing on liturgy and music in liturgy. These contribute to Section 5 by highlighting the resources which direct website users towards a more in-depth coverage, analysis or treatment of a particular topic.

In chapter 2.3 the investigation moved to a more detailed review of the responses of two recently ordained or authorised ministers, which reinforces many of the issues above, including the development of personal taste and the factors which determine how wider cultural tastes change. Combined with Chapter 2.4, interpreting the responses from a wider group of clergy, the concept of an easily updated formational tool started to emerge, allowing ordained clergy and other ministers to update their knowledge of liturgy and music at their point of perceived need, and providing them with an overview of currently available resources, and insights into how they might use these to enhance a variety of forms of worship. It also addresses the potentially damaging issues of relationships with musicians (paid or voluntary) and formal matters of employment, job description and terms and conditions.

The overall aim is to offer a resource which is attractive and readable, simple to access and navigate, offering users the information or help they need with a minimum of fuss. A list or a series of bullet points organises information in a clear, tabulated form, but provides limited opportunity for commenting on the resources and points made, or enabling users to grasp of the issues. Therefore, neither a prose booklet nor a tabulated online format is the ideal format for a Toolkit - the former is easily left on a shelf or mislaid, while the latter rules out a commentary on or description of the background and resources it contains. A website with verbal descriptions and advice as well as information can be revised and updated as necessary, either with updated products and publications, or new liturgical and musical resources. Links to other websites and resources will be incorporated, and internal links between sections enable users to access straight away the most useful pages of the Toolkit for their enquiry.

Clearly the online version of the Toolkit will need to be trialled before going live, to assess whether any parts of the format need further amendment or development, and to ensure it is both user-friendly and effective for all users. Ease of updating and reviewing will be a key feature, as



the flow of new worship resources, both liturgical and musical, will seem set to continue unabated, many available primarily in digital format.

# A Musical Toolkit for Ministers of Worship

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## INTRODUCTION

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Thank you for choosing to investigate this website – a Toolkit for busy ministers looking for straightforward answers to questions about music and musicians in church, or wanting to find out more about music and worship, but don't have much time for detailed study. Please click on whichever heading matches your question or concern most closely:

- The Origin and Purpose of the Toolkit
- Some basic definitions
- The brief story of music as part of liturgy, particularly within the United Kingdom
- Some issues concerning relationships between musicians, ministers and members of the congregation
- Making choices about music as part of worship and initiating change
- Resources currently available to enable and enhance music in worship
- A simple questionnaire for you to tackle if you would like to understand more how your own tastes have been formed, and how these might affect the choices you make

All of these will be updated regularly as necessary, with new resources or studies highlighted for you to explore in greater detail if you wish to.

## USING THE TOOLKIT

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If you prefer, you can read through the whole Toolkit consecutively, but you will probably want to explore a specific topic or find a specific answer, in which case simply click on the headings or sub-headings which seem most relevant. The Toolkit was designed primarily to provide help about for ministers in the Church of England and the investigation was based on current practice in the Church of England. However, many of the concerns and issues raised are common to all Christian traditions and denominations, so whether you are a Church of England minister or

worship leader, or belong to another Christian denomination, much of what is in this Toolkit will apply equally to you.

This Toolkit came about as a result of three factors:

1. many years working with ministers of all levels of experience and every conceivable tradition;
2. an investigation into current patterns of training and formation for ministers, and other help and resources currently available to them
3. an analysis of needs identified by ministers themselves, from a wide range of experiences and traditions, and specifically from new ministers

No-one is likely to dispute the powerful influence music that music exerts on our lives, individually and as a community. In some contexts it draws people together in a common cause – celebration, lament, anger etc – but used inappropriately it can equally create division and contention. Stories are rife of church musicians falling out with ministers or congregations, of conflict between supporters of ‘traditional’ or ‘modern’ musical styles, of disgruntled organists, ageing choirs and congregation members caught in the crossfire. When tensions boil over and people start to take sides, the ensuing fall-out is likely to hit the press, locally and at times even nationally. No-one’s reputation is enhanced by such reports, but in many instances the problem might have been avoided had those involved been better informed and equipped to handle the situation.

Another part of the study confirmed that ordination training at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is hardly overloaded with liturgical input, still less any specific focus on music in that context. Only four training institutions now employ a tutor dedicated to liturgical formation; the remainder add it to someone else’s workload or import a local minister with suitable background and expertise. As a result many newly-ordained or licensed ministers of worship find themselves at a loss to know how to respond when confronted with decisions and challenges around preparing and conducting worship. The survey also asked some more experienced ministers about their confidence levels in dealing effectively with the musical aspects of worship – and even they expressed very similar views.

No on-line Toolkit can make up for more extended reading and study, but this one aims at least to supply a basic resource which will also act as a springboard for more detailed local work. Its main focus of this website is the Church of England, since that was the basis of both the long-term training work and the investigations for the thesis. However, while some sections and comments have particular relevance for ministers in the Church of England, much is also applicable more widely across all Christian traditions.

## BASIC DEFINITIONS

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To help you as you explore the various sections of this Toolkit, these are a few definitions of the terms in use:

**Liturgical Music** – music which ‘carries’ a liturgical text, often (though not invariably) ‘through-composed’, i.e. based on a common melodic theme and/or rhythmic pattern. It covers both Eucharistic texts and those for Morning and Evening Prayer.

**Worship music** – music other than that to accompany a liturgical text, but written solely for use in a church service. Hymns, worship songs, Psalms, etc all fall into this category.

**Church music** – music written and intended for use as part of an act of worship, but which could be performed or produced in other settings. Anthems, oratorios and motets gather under this heading, as do, for example, Bach’s Chorale Preludes for the organ.

**Sacred Music** – all of the above categories, with the major addition of works with a Biblical or religious text composed primarily for public performance or the concert platform, such as Elgar’s *Dream of Gerontius*, or works written with a spiritual motivation. These works may not reflect either a strong church affiliation or a profoundly Christian faith on the part of their composer – Elgar’s Roman Catholic theology became very uncertain towards the end of his life, while Vaughan Williams, although brought up in a parsonage, remained agnostic throughout his life.

There are also questions for many about ‘hymns, psalms and spiritual songs’ to quote Paul’s letter to the Colossians. There are inevitably disagreements over which texts belong in which category, but for this Toolkit the following is a guide:

**Psalm** – a setting of the text of a Psalm, or part of one, to either to a non-metrical text with a chant, or a metrical text from the last four centuries. Some metrical Psalms are widely regarded as hymns or worship songs

**Hymn** – a more or less extended reflection on a Biblical passage, a theological concept, or an aspect of Christian living. Worth noting that for many the term ‘hymn’ refers to the kind of tune that accompanies it, or at least its capacity to be played on the organ. A hymn is often expected to have several verses (with or without a refrain), though much of this is convention rather than accurate definition. The now immensely popular works by Stuart Townend or Keith Getty qualify as hymns on this definition though are frequently described as ‘worship songs’ because of their recent provenance or capacity to be accompanied by an instrumental group. On the other hand, John Bell and Marty Haugen are contemporary writers generally described as composing ‘hymns’.

**Worship Song** – generally agreed now to refer to a shorter song, sometimes quoting Scripture directly and probably written in the last 30 years with texts often very personal and experiential in style. Traditionally accompanied by a band rather than the organ, worship songs are likely to reflect musically modern pop/rock culture in a way some Christians find uncomfortable. Sometimes unfairly, the music assumed by some to carry banal texts, although it would be unjust to apply this universally.

**Chant** – a short musical setting of a spiritual, often scripture-based text, usually more reflective and contemplative than boisterous or overtly contemporary. Although often associated with Taizé worship, there are many chants from other traditions (not least the Celtic), some of which can enhance worship in a predominantly different style (e.g. as a prayer response)

Please note that this Toolkit was written primarily to help Church of England ministers in making informed and positive musical choices. However, the trend in hymnody is now increasingly non-denominational, possibly even ecumenical. Many popular resources claim no particular denominational origin, though some clearly originate in the various ‘New Church’ movements of the last three decades. Attendance at major events (e.g. New Wine, Spring Harvest, Greenbelt) is drawn from all of the major Christian traditions in the UK, and the music written for these is now penetrating into their musical heartland. So if you are not minister or worship leader in another Christian denomination or tradition, much of what is in this Toolkit will apply to your situation too.

## THE STORY OF MUSIC AS PART OF CHURCH WORSHIP

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There is no shortage of views about church music ‘traditions’, but many of those expressed demonstrate little awareness of how music as part of worship has developed over the past 2000 years. Yet an understanding of that story, even in outline, can only enhance the process of decision-making and musical choice for almost any church service. The Church has had to adapt to social changes and demands throughout its history, which have affected its worship and music not least.

So it is no luxury to include this section in a Toolkit – the Church of England, like many others, is a historical church, and has always had to live with the tension between honouring its past and adapting to the present. Many church buildings, for example, date back to medieval times, others to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but if their essential fabric has been preserved, much else will have been changed radically, perhaps several times. The same is inevitably true of both liturgy and music, and understanding that process of change and adaptation in the past inevitably adds a new dimension to choices made in the present – however progressive worshippers might believe they are, many of the assumptions they make will be rooted in the story of the past.

This section of the Toolkit is divided into a number of ‘time zones’, which can be tackled consecutively or by focusing on one specific period.

1. 1. Time Zone 1 - the first 1500 years
2. 2. Time Zone 2 – the Reformation
3. 3. Time Zone 3 – the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries
4. 4. Time Zone 4 – the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries
5. 5. Time Zone 5 – the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day
6. 6. Time Zone 6 - contemporary concerns

### TIME ZONE 1: THE FIRST 1500 YEARS

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Music undoubtedly played a significant part in the worship of the Early Church. Detailed knowledge is limited, but the Scriptural references we have indicate that the whole shared in

singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, as mentioned by St Paul in his letter to the Colossians (chapter 3:15). Many early Christians would have been Jewish converts, who brought their knowledge of the Psalms into the new Christian communities, and the likelihood is that the whole gathered assembly would have participated in the sung elements of worship.

In the later 4th century Egeria, a holy woman from Spain who was visiting Jerusalem, described her experience of monastic worship there, painting a picture of a liturgy with sung music already largely led by monks, nuns, or even clergy from outside that monastic tradition.

From three centuries later comes a detailed description of the Papal Mass in Rome, found in *Ordo Romanus I* (c AD 700). By this time it seems clear that the clergy were dominating all aspects of worship, including the music. The Papal Mass was held in various churches across Rome throughout the year, and for this the musical responsibility lay with the *schola cantorum*, a specialist clerical body which included boy singers and was placed in the area in front of the altar.

The clerical body formed the assembly in medieval cathedrals and monastic establishments: they all formed the choir, the body which sang the text. At this stage all audible texts would have been sung, whether intoned by a single voice or shared by the whole body of assembled clergy of that cathedral or monastery. In practice, sing chant - whether prayers on a monotone, simple settings of psalms and canticles, or a more elaborate melody setting responsories and other chants for soloists – became almost the only means of hearing a liturgical text clearly and audibly expressed,

On major feast days, especially though not exclusively at Christmas and Easter, it became the practice in some places to embellish these chants elaborately with additional voices: this signalled the advent of polyphony, more than one musical line being sung simultaneously. In certain ecclesiastical settings – especially court chapels such as the Pope's in Rome or various monarchical Chapels Royal - polyphonic singing increasingly became the predominant form, with an ever-decreasing dependence on the chant.

By the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the choir gradually ceased to be a term referring to the whole assembly singing, and began to imply instead a specialist singing group, sometimes located separately in singing gallery, as in the Sistine Chapel. The disconnection between the music sung in such a gallery and the liturgical action below is clear from notes made in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century by a master of ceremonies. By this time also lay singers and organists were playing an increasing role even in monasteries and cathedrals, as well as in royal and aristocratic chapels, as in 17th

century France, where by the time of Louis XIV even a 'low Mass' would have been celebrated with the richest and most intricate of musical settings.

Even in parishes the medieval liturgy was primarily if not exclusively conducted by priests and their assistants within an enclosed chancel and presbytery: 'lay participation' was minimal, and if the Mass was 'heard' at all, this would have been as a background to personal devotion. Wealthier parish churches, frequently located in towns or areas where lucrative trade was conducted, aspired to expand their liturgical provision with additional chapels and observances, and to enhance this with new or enlarged musical resources, including clergy and lay singers or players, in order to emphasise their status and power to the wider community.

## TIME ZONE 2: LITURGICAL MUSIC AND THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

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The English Reformation was motivated as much by economic as by ecclesiastical concerns, impacting on daily life in countless small ways. But the publication of the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549 marked a radical change in worship practices for the Church throughout England and Wales. For many, the most noticeable difference was that all worship was now in English, with the expectation of a rather simpler musical style to match these new values. Earlier polyphonic compositions and chants had accumulated over the preceding centuries, forming the heart of music for the liturgy, but these became redundant in a short space of time, and church musicians were forced begin again virtually from scratch.

An equally serious change arose from Henry VIII's need to raise money for the Crown. Between 1534, when he finally separated the Church in England and Wales from the authority of the Pope, and 1549, when the first Book of Common Prayer appeared, the resources of the Church had been drastically reduced. Monasteries large and small were dissolved between 1536 and 1541, and most collegiate churches were dissolved between 1545 and 1550, together with all guilds and chantries, which had provided funds and resources for much of the music in parish churches. Only cathedrals and certain educational colleges retained some resources to sustain sung services, as did a relatively small number of parish churches. However, this was rarely at the same level as before. Where previously several thousand places had had the resources to sustain sung services, by about 1550 there were probably no more than 100, and even here the singing body was much smaller – typically 8-12 boys and 6-12 men, mostly ordained clergy but with a gradual increase in lay participation.



There were also major changes in theological thinking. Most significant among these was the reformed theology of the Eucharist, but the new wave of Protestant and humanist thought permeated the whole liturgy and its music. The new emphasis on Scripture resulted in a radical simplification of the Christian Calendar, and the suppression of most feast days, especially the hundreds of saints whose festivals were previously observed during the year. All this was embodied in the second Book of Common Prayer of 1552, with its predominantly Calvinist Eucharistic theology, but also with forms of Morning and Evening Prayer which drew heavily on medieval liturgical patterns and texts. This 1552 Book of Common Prayer formed the basis of all subsequent versions (published in 1559, 1604, 1662).

More radical thinkers were by now challenging the role of music in worship, questioning especially the place of elaborate musical settings and the use of organs. Above all, these new theological and liturgical emphases focused on people's capacity to hear and understand: all texts were now voiced aloud (whether spoken or sung) rather than said privately by the priest, especially in the celebration of Holy Communion, and these had to be said or sung in a language understood by those present (including Latin in places like the two universities).

Morning and Evening Prayer now replaced the Mass as the normative and primary Sunday services. Where Holy Communion was celebrated it often followed immediately after Morning Prayer, but only those intending to receive Communion remained after the Prayer for the Church.

For musicians working with a choir, this completely changed what was required of them. Instead of a whole Mass setting (including the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei) they now had to provide only the Responses to the Ten Commandments and the Creed. Instead of a separate setting of the Magnificat for Vespers, they were now required only to produce pairs of canticles – Te Deum and Benedictus for Morning Prayer (sometimes with the Venite), and Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis for Evening Prayer.

For the most part the people still heard the service, but now it was all said or sung aloud. Few had books (and fewer could read), but they learned by heart the Lord's Prayer and Creed, reciting these and the Confession line by line after the minister. The rest of the service – versicles and responses, psalms and canticles, readings and prayers – was led by the minister and the parish clerk, or (where there was choral provision) the minister and choir.

Only the texts in the Book of Common Prayer or the Bible were permitted for use in worship, and then only in the forms presented in those books. This did not apply, however, before and after the service, when the people were allowed to sing metrical Psalms or other texts from Scripture, as they were also before and after the sermon. Choirs most often sang an anthem at the end of Morning or Evening Prayer (the three collects marked the formal end of these), but any music had to support and respect the text, while even choral items were expected to be in a style that enabled the words to be heard and understood.

Neither the Book of Common Prayer, reinstated at the beginning of Elizabeth I's reign, nor an Act of Parliament, governed the regulation of music before and after worship, or the protection of choirs where they still existed. Instead this was embodied within a set of Royal Injunctions issued in 1559. They give an indication of the tensions surrounding worship and the use of music in worship that were evident within the Church of England by that time, and the different theologies of worship which lay behind the different views expressed.

On one side were those striving to promote more elaborate, technically demanding music in church, using choirs and organs where possible; at the opposite extreme stood those who regarded such practices as popish abomination, and campaigned for the abolition of all choirs and organs, or even to have no music at all within worship.

Understanding something of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Reformation is not just a matter of historical interest. Its profound impact on worship and how it was understood, and the place of music within worship in particular, is an essential foundation to understanding many of the issues that continue to create tension and controversy within the Church of England.

### TIME ZONE 3: FROM THE 17<sup>TH</sup> TO THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

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Despite the new restrictions and limitations placed on musical style and practice within worship, the later 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries saw a flowering of magnificent liturgical music by great composers from Tallis and Byrd to Tomkins and Gibbons, often created for use within the Chapel Royal and therefore encouraged by the Crown. However, the continuing rise of radical Protestantism increased opposition to such practices, and led eventually to the suppression of the Book of Common Prayer in 1645. After Charles I's execution in 1649, and the dissolution of all cathedrals, there was an immediate and complete suppression of all liturgical provision, and of all music in the context of worship. Those 11 years must have seemed long enough at the time, but

with the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, the pre-Commonwealth liturgical and musical provision was very deliberately restored too.

In the late 17th-century and into the 18th century, the singing of psalms in parish worship was improved and enriched by the re-introduction of organs, notably in town churches and wealthier parishes – elsewhere bands of instrumentalists began to form which would have included some singers, a practice which survived through until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This period also saw the promotion of hymnody as a means both of teaching the Christian community and enabling it to express itself musically. The independent Non-Conformist minister Isaac Watts became one of the earliest and most prolific hymn-writers, leaving a legacy of more than 650 hymn texts, many of which remain among today's best-known and loved. Later in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the growth of Methodism exercised a powerful impact well beyond the bounds of the established church – it is often described as being 'born in song', not least because of the prolific and poetic pen of Charles Wesley. The powerful effect of music was not lost on them during a stormy crossing of the Atlantic, when a group of Moravian brothers with whom they were travelling calmly sang hymns instead of panicking. This experience contributed much both to the formation of new Christians and to the development of Methodist worship practice, with hymns as a central feature. Hymns were also used outside of regular worship, for example in early Methodist meetings, which held a great popular appeal, much to the chagrin of the established church.

Although metrical psalms had been allowed from Elizabethan times, the Church of England had decreed that no other hymns were allowed to be sung during acts of worship. But a test case in Sheffield in 1820 established that hymns should also be allowed before and after a service, or before and after sermon, in exactly the same way as metrical psalms. Initially this was permission was restricted only to the hymns of Moravian poet James Montgomery, but the floodgate had been opened, and only 4 decades later a collection of hymns of suitable quality for parish churches was published – *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. This was certainly a major development, although the words of Book of Common Prayer remained as the only texts authorised for use in worship.

## TIME ZONE 4: THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

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By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century most developments in worship and music were taking place in the growing Non-Conformist tradition, notably Methodism. The Church of England, however, proved resistant to such changes, and by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century could be said to have lost its way somewhat. Only the Evangelical Revival of its early decades matched the social commitment of the non-established churches, although its prime movers made few attempts at liturgical or musical development. The first major changes in worship took place towards the middle of the century, when the Tractarian or ‘high church’ movement began to grow rapidly, inspired by Newman and Keble among others. Strongly led, it encouraged a far more extensive use of music in worship alongside a return to many of the rituals left behind with the Reformation.

In a society transformed by the technological advances of the Industrial Revolution and a massive population shift to great industrial cities, it must have seemed both stabilising and attractive to attempt to re-connect the Church of England with its pre-Reformation history. According to this view the Church of England needed no longer to look back just to the 1549 Prayer Book, but should be encouraged to recognise its part in the continuing story of the Church *in* England and Wales. Musically this included a revival of chanted plainsong psalms and plainsong hymns, though these were now intended for the participation of the whole assembly, usually with four-square harmonies provided. Merbecke’s setting of the 1549 Prayer Book was rediscovered and re-introduced, even though it had barely been sung since its publication in 1550, having already become redundant after the introduction of the 1552 Prayer Book.

There was also now an increasing and major emphasis on the mission of the Church. The Sunday School movement had its roots in 18<sup>th</sup> century Gloucester, but as it spread and grew, resources were needed to support and develop pupils’ spiritual education. Among these were numerous children’s hymns, mostly with an instructional or catechitical theme. Some of Mrs CF Alexander’s hymns are just as familiar today as when they were written (such as *All things bright and beautiful* and *There is a green hill far away*) though few now would associate them with a collection of material written specifically for the catechesis of young people – in this instance three articles of the Nicene Creed.

While these attempts to nurture young people spiritually reflected a wider concern for their education within society, many more Mission movements specifically addressed those who had no familiarity or connection with the Church. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the origins of the Methodist

movement lay in the Wesley brothers (both High-Church Anglicans) meetings held for the unchurched poor, often in the open air. A century later the Salvation Army fulfilled a not dissimilar role in drawing attention to the plight of the poorest members of society and focusing on their care. They too established a very distinct musical tradition using popular musical styles and brass instruments, whose sound carried most effectively out of doors. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the many hymns and songs of the American evangelists Sankey and Moody appealed widely to the huge gatherings attending their large-scale 'Missions'- their more accessible musical idiom no doubt helped reinforce the message they proclaimed, even if it now seems marooned in its social context.

Theirs was a major contribution to a broadening of the style of music used for worship and wider religious events, reflected in texts more direct and emotional in their appeal than those usually found in more formal worship. The Roman Catholic community, since 1829 allowed to gather for worship without fear, brought their own style of devotional song. The growth and popularity of sentimental songs during the Victorian era surely influenced much of the great increase in the publication of hymns and sacred songs during that period. An inevitable consequence of this was the gradual erosion of authorised texts, alongside an increasing eclecticism of styles thereafter.

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century also saw the restoration or establishment in many places of organs and parish choirs at the east end of the church, in some instances transferred from a west end gallery. Parish music increasingly looked towards cathedral choir provision, such as the Cathedral Psalter, choral settings of the liturgy and large scale anthems. This was in marked contrast to the more congregational emphasis experienced elsewhere, especially in the Non-conformist tradition, leaving hymnody as the congregation's sole opportunity for musical participation. Worship was also significantly impacted by developing industrial technology, allowing many more churches to afford the installation of a new organ.

## TIME ZONE 5: THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

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In all parts of the Church of England music flourished during the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, before long matched by a concern for more widely available musical education. Continental music was seen for the most part as the model to adopt, especially the symphonic tradition of the Germany and Central Europe. However, the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the growth of distinctively nationalist schools of music, often absorbing and reflecting the idioms of local folk music. Around the

beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a new impetus emerged to promote Englishness in music – specifically in the Church of England the English tradition of liturgy based especially on the medieval practice of the Use of Salisbury Cathedral (the Use of Sarum), and with it English music, especially for congregation. This is reflected in the publications of the time, most notably in The English Hymnal of 1906, edited by Percy Dearmer and Ralph Vaughan Williams. However, this was only one part of a wider liturgical movement, another aspect of which was an increased emphasis on Eucharistic worship. The earliest examples of simple musical settings for Parish Communion for the whole congregation to sing date from the earliest years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, though this was a service often celebrated relatively early on a Sunday morning, especially in parishes with a predominantly working-class population.

These trends continued after the 1<sup>st</sup> World War when a number of attempts to restore a simpler and more accessible style of parish music for both congregation and choir were led by figures such as Martin Shaw and Sir Sydney Nicholson. Church choirs, mostly formed of boys and men, started to increase in number, while the formation of the School of English Church Music founded to provide training and support, soon proved to be a key influence. Although educational and liturgical in motivation, these movements also played an equally important pastoral and social role, and the continuation of this work during the Second World War earned the personal patronage of King George VI, who declared the School of English Church Music to be The Royal School of Church Music (RSCM).

During the years following the Second World War pressure grew on the whole Church to adopt a more popular and accessible approach, with a broader range of musical styles on offer in church as part of its mission and greater engagement with society - Geoffrey Beaumont wrote a number of popular hymn-tunes in a deliberately ‘light music’ style, some of which have retained their popularity. At the same time this increasing demand for accessibility led to fundamental changes in approach both to liturgical text and Scripture translations for reading in public. Above all there was a steady shift from the norm of Morning and Evening Prayer as the mainstay of Sunday worship to Parish or Family Communion. The spiritual and pastoral needs of an increasingly suburban Church became ever more pressing, while the contemporaneous thinking of the Liturgical Movement started to challenge the purpose and nature of parish worship.

It is important also to recognise the wider effects of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council held in Rome between 1962-1965. This was called by Pope John XXIII in order to promote a serious debate about how the Roman Catholic Church might relate better to the post-war world and retain its

influence and involvement. In particular the discussions about the nature of the Church, as the Body of Christ and the People of God, led to a significant redefinition of the 'assembly', and the role of both priest and people within it. This radically different attitude towards worship included the participation of the whole assembly in the liturgy. It inevitably brought with it a participatory view of music in worship, with texts in the local language of the people. These changes reflected similar debates and new directions happening in many denominations, not least those of the Church of England's Liturgical Commission.

The life and worship of the Church of England has been increasingly challenged over nearly two centuries. Freedom of religious practice was achieved in full by 1829, allowing individuals and families to choose to worship instead in the new Methodist, Baptist and Congregational chapels, or in the Roman Catholic Church. However, the intellectual challenges to Christianity (especially those rooted in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Enlightenment), combined with the demands of life in an industrial and scientific age turned many away from church attendance or affiliation. By 1945 Christianity in general had been in numerical decline for over 150 years, and the Church of England in particular reflected this. Mission and evangelism became key priorities for all Christian traditions, not least the Church of England, focusing both on bringing people to faith and retaining their allegiance and commitment. Many of these initiatives have used music both as a mission tool and a contemporary expression of spirituality. They have surely had a profound impact on both liturgy and music in church worship, whether this has been to enhance it or challenge it.

Familiar patterns and texts have changed from being obligatory to offering a range of options, from the formality of set patterns and texts to the flexibility of selecting from an ever-growing range of alternatives. A plethora of alternative texts and rituals, both from within the Church of England and non-denominationally produced, are now available for constructing a liturgy suited both to the season of the Christian year and to local circumstances, reflecting the expectations of choice and variety in society. This has also affected the way in which appropriate music is chosen for worship, with liturgical text settings, psalms and hymns in many different styles – though not always the resources needed to produce them.

## TIME ZONE 6: CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS

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The rapidly changing social climate has led on from 'light sacred music' to a many hymns and songs being written and published in a much more popular and contemporary idiom. Initially aimed at mission among young people (in *Youth Praise*), the ensuing explosion of song-writing has brought a vast range of material into circulation, now often disseminated into churches through members' attendance at conferences and similar events. This has been compounded by a continuing demand for liturgical and musical accessibility, even if not every church is able or willing to meet it.

### THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF SOUND TECHNOLOGY AND REPRODUCTION HAS TRANSFORMED WORSHIP IN MANY WAYS

- For many churches a new pipe organ would prove impossibly expensive, while others struggle to raise funds to maintain the one they have. The development of the electronic organ has enabled many churches to provide a very acceptable alternative, although the decline in the number of organists has left some churches, even in more populous areas, with an instrument they can use only rarely.
- The shortage of available musicians to accompany worship has led to a rapid growth in the number of churches making use of professionally produced pre-recorded accompaniment tracks. While many regard this as far from ideal, in practice it enables many Christian communities to join together in singing their faith.
- groups are able to achieve a better balance between the various instruments Instrumental.
- The Worldwide Web has enabled almost everyone to access any kind of music, contributing to a much greater awareness of musical styles from around the world, and a higher expectation of standards to be achieved.

### THE DECLINE OF THE TRADITIONAL CHURCH CHOIR

- A serious lack of commitment to and investment in musical and liturgical training (for both ministers and musicians) has made a significant contribution to current concerns, as have the vagaries of music publishers' exposure to market forces.



- The local church is no longer an assumed venue for good local musicians to make and enjoy music together – the availability and use of other local facilities for music making (e.g. schools) has seriously weakened relationships between church and community
- The reduction of time in school devoted both to music and religion has left many pupils with little or no connection either with church worship or music of any kind, unless through family involvement.
- While there has been a recent surge of interest in singing as part of a choir, many ministers have received little or no training in the basic skills of singing or vocal production, and therefore have little confidence in their ability to lead a congregation in new material, for example.

#### MUSIC IS NOW REGARDED AS ONE OF MANY ‘ENTERTAINMENT STREAMS’, GENERALLY TO BE RESTRICTED TO EXPERTS

- Sound reproduction and technology skills are regarded by some as almost the equal of musical skill, while personal musical taste can now be satisfied almost exclusively through iPods and downloads.
- The internet has opened up a diversity of possibilities and resources for every ability level and preference, but focused primarily on the individual or nuclear family rather than on collective or community co-operation.
- Cheap and safe travel has also opened up for many an exposure to very different cultures and musical traditions,
- Church attendance itself is now seen as a matter of personal choice rather than duty or social obligation - Sunday worship now has become just one of many possible leisure activities.
- Intra-Church debates and controversies over issues such as the role of women in ministry have created unhelpful internal divisions and deterred some from greater involvement.

## CONCLUSION

All of these have affected profoundly the role music in church and as part of worship, so that rather than assuming support and commitment, churches have to work very much harder at both publicity and accessibility if they are to develop and grow in expressing worship musically.

At the same time, and in marked contrast to the decline in traditional church life and attendance, spirituality in a general sense is now very much on the wider agenda, with a rapidly growing interest across society in finding ways to make sense of a fragmented and confusing world. Churches are responding to this in different ways: many have introduced new liturgical texts or collections of hymns and songs; many are experimenting with ‘fresh expressions of church’ as a (e.g. Messy Church) as a means of reaching those not attracted by traditional church; others have used the resources of the Taizé or Iona Communities to offer worship that is both reflective and engaged with the realities of the wider world. Whether all of this will lead to a more inclusive approach to Christian worship or create further fragmentation and division, only time will tell.

## BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MINISTERS AND MUSICIANS

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The local church is a formal and regulated body, and in the Church of England, as in many Christian traditions, one part of a much wider institution from which it derives its identity and authority. It is also an informal and often very diverse group of people whose common purpose is to come together in the presence of God, to grow in faith and love, to offer prayer and praise, to enjoy fellowship, and to go out strengthened and equipped to live the Christian life. Its primary purpose is spiritual, but it is equally a pastoral and social body, a self-evident point which nonetheless needs to be reinforced when discussing relationships between ministers and musicians.

Ministers come from a range of backgrounds, bringing many different views and experiences of Christian theology and worship, but all will have undertaken a common core of training and formation (although current provision is far more diverse than even 20 years ago), and work within specific formal church structures. Church musicians represent a similar variety of backgrounds, experiences and outlooks, but in Britain there is for them no common core of training or formation.

As a result the music director, pianist, organist, music group leader or choir trainer may be very inexperienced and lacking in confidence or even in adequate training (regardless of their age). On the other hand they may be confident, highly qualified and demonstrate a mature understanding of liturgy, music in worship and theology. Some will demonstrate rather more confidence than competence, while others will hide considerable talent behind a mask of diffidence, but whatever their background, ability, experience or temperament, a church musician can very easily feel like a threat to a minister, just as a minister can appear equally threatening to a musician, a reality which often goes unrecognised. A lack of training in liturgy and music for ministers, or a corresponding lack of liturgical and theological formation for church musicians can both become a serious handicap.

Behind these are the subjective and sensitive issues of taste, preference, and prejudice. Any minister, church musician or congregation member can say ‘I know what I like’, or ‘I like what I know’, but that is no sound basis for passing judgement on those who do not share the same view. Establishing trust and a good working relationship requires all parties to recognise the opportunities presented while observing the necessary constraints if it is to result in fruitful collaboration in Christian worship and service.

The most basic and significant of these is to distinguish clearly between the person and the office or post they hold. Just as the local church is both formal in organisation and informal in operation, there is a similar grey area between the office and the person holding it, between what they are required to do and who they are. Minister and musician may be competent and capable in their own field, yet fail to work together successfully because they are unable to gel as people. Equally, others with less qualifications or obvious skills might in different circumstances be enabled to work together and achieve goals beyond their expectations.

A clear understanding of authority, responsibilities and boundaries underpins all positive relationships between ministers and musicians, and has to be re-established whenever a new minister or musician takes up their role. In places with more than one minister or musician, the whole team has to share that understanding. Time spent on establishing the nature of the office at the outset provides a vital foundation for future , decision-making, or when necessary and resolution of conflicts of opinion or temperament. This is most important when musicians offer their services on a voluntary basis, or take on responsibilities informally, often ‘just to help out’ – an arrangement that all too often stretches into a long-term commitment. In a personality-driven

culture, it is essential to know which conversations take place between Vicar and Organist, in their respective roles of office holder, and which are held between ‘Bill and Jane’.

This section has a number of shorter paragraphs covering important issues:

1. Making decisions – who should be involved?
2. Making music – who does what?
3. Making theology and music co-exist – can there be a level playing field?
4. Making the most of resources – how to manage experts and volunteers?
5. Making peace – how to handle disagreement and conflict?
6. Making allowances - how to deal with contracts and pay?
7. Making conversation – how to open up and maintain communication?
8. Making music – how to work with choirs and instrumental groups?
9. Making changes – how to introduce new material?

## MAKING DECISIONS – WHO’S INVOLVED?

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The crux of all decision-making processes lies in finding agreement about where authority resides. The Church of England is clear that the incumbent bears final responsibility for all matters concerning parish worship, including choice of music: Canon B20 states that “at all times the final responsibility and decision in these matters rests with the minister”, although the latter ‘shall pay due heed to the advice and assistance’ of an organist or director of music ‘in the choosing of chants, hymns, anthems and other settings’. And however choices are made, the incumbent, or the Rural Dean during a vacancy, also has the duty of ensuring that what is chosen is “appropriate, both the words and the music, to the solemn act of worship and prayer in the House of God, as well as to the congregation assembled....and to banish all irreverence in the practice and performance of the same”.

If only the worshipping life of the Church of England were so straightforward! Whatever the particular style of worship, those invited to contribute their musical gifts to the liturgical ministry of their church usually have greater musical expertise or skill. Ignoring their advice and assistance may well devalue what they offer and diminish their willingness to help. For many ministers, however, the availability of competent and knowledgeable musicians may instead lead

them to devolve all responsibility for choosing music. This can be particularly pressing in a multi-parish benefice, for example, or where ministers bear additional liturgical responsibilities for a Fresh Expression of Worship or nearby church plant – a lack of available time added to a perceived lack of competence can lead them to defer unhelpfully to those with greater expertise. Ideally all decisions about liturgy and music will be shared, so that everyone involved understands and owns the choices made.

An increasing number of churches convene a ‘worship working group’ or similar, to give all parts of the Christian community a voice in planning and ordering worship. In many instances the Christian Year and the Lectionary establish a framework around which more detailed decisions can be made, but it would be tedious and impractical to ask such a group to choose all music. In practice, much music performed by the choir or music group is likely to be selected by the director of music or group leader, leaving congregational hymns and settings to be decided jointly.

It is unwise to forget that most church musicians in the Church of England are volunteers who see their service as part of their Christian giving to the church. Many will be employed elsewhere during the week and just as pressed for time as their ministers. Some may receive an honorarium, or limited recompense for their efforts, but even those who work as professional musicians will most likely teach or perform music as their primary income source, and endure similar time constraints to everyone else.

## MAKING MUSIC – WHO DOES WHAT?

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A parish church is a local community of Christians, who each have gifts to contribute to one another’s spiritual formation and growth in the ways of Christ, and to proclaiming of the good news of his kingdom. In theological terms any distinction between forms of ministry is focused on individual gifts, given by the Spirit for ‘the building up of the body of Christ’ (1 Corinthians 12). In a practical sense the differences are clear enough – ordained and authorised ministers are responsible for the whole act of worship, and its impact on both the congregation and the community around, while church musicians are primarily focused on providing one element of worship to the highest possible standard. Most church musicians will be content to leave the tasks of preaching, leading intercessions or administering the Eucharist with recognised ministers. By the same token many ministers gladly leave music to those they see or employ as specialists.

But even if the nature and scope of the liturgical tasks each fulfils are quite different, the overall objective is shared. One announces the next hymn while the other accompanies its singing, but both need to understand why this hymn fits this point in the liturgy, how the congregation may respond to it, and how it might impact on their spiritual formation. If a new or unfamiliar hymn, song or setting is to be introduced, both should be agreed on how this might best be achieved. Both have delegated authority to fulfil their respective ministries, so that rather than vying for power or influence, there should be a strong sense of shared mission and service.

## MAKING THEOLOGY AND MUSIC CO-EXIST – CAN THERE BE A LEVEL PLAYING-FIELD?

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On the surface theology and music are quite different disciplines, one being more ‘theoretical’ in nature, the other more skill-based, but such clear definitions quickly become blurred. There are inevitable academic and practical aspects to both disciplines, but at a more profound level music expresses and affects the deepest reflections and aspirations of the human spirit, areas explored and nurtured in specifically Christian terms by theology.

Music and spirituality not only have strong conceptual interconnections, but also function together at a deeper level – the text of a much-loved hymn such as ‘Dear Lord and Father of Mankind’ works effectively enough as written or spoken poetry, but is made far more memorable and searching when allied to a tune (in this instance Sir Hubert Parry’s *Repton*) that somehow ‘expresses the inexpressible’. Not every composer of liturgical music writes from an overtly Christian faith, but the capacity of music to influence human emotion and response has been harnessed by the Church from its earliest days – St Paul exhorted the Colossian Christians to “encourage each other by singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” (Col 3:16). Fear of this has led Church leaders over the centuries to try to ban different musical styles from Christian worship, though rarely with any long-term success. Worship can only be enhanced when theology and music are in constructive dialogue, each learning about and from the other.

Church musicians in the Lutheran tradition are mostly employed professionals, who will probably have studied a module of theology as part of their qualification. While in the Church of England has few full-time professional musicians outside of cathedrals and major churches, it is nonetheless a serious omission that ordination studies in the Church of England barely include music, even as part of an already limited study of liturgy. Some dioceses incorporate an

occasional session on liturgical music within their IME and CME programmes, but evidence suggests that those attending already have a strong interest. Many more think of these as only for ‘experts’ and aficionados, assuming that a lack of expertise or knowledge makes their attendance pointless.

There have been a number of diocesan initiatives in recent years to provide training and information to ministers as well as musicians. Diocesan Music Days have spread widely from their origins in Exeter, and showcase a variety of styles and alternatives now available in music for worship for clergy and musicians together, led by well-known Christian musicians – Salisbury, Norwich, Guildford, Chester, Lichfield and Blackburn are among dioceses which have already benefitted from these very popular events, although the primary aim is to give attendees a picture of what is possible rather than offer long-term musical formation. Sheffield Diocese has its Worship4Today Course aimed at all who are interested in liturgy, though especially at would-be leaders of worship, as on a more local level does Guildford Diocese – while these short-term events focus largely on liturgy, music is given a much larger proportion of the time available than any residential courses. However, evidence still suggests that the majority of those present at all such events are those already interested and well-informed about worship and music, while devoting the whole of a Saturday or a series of evenings to formation is not always an easy option for ordained ministers. A scheme of training available throughout the Church of England to enable ministers and musicians to understand each other’s expectations and responsibilities better would offer a far greater coverage of available candidates and go a long way to securing a more ‘level playing-field’.

## MAKING THE BEST OF RESOURCES – HOW TO MANAGE EXPERTS AND VOLUNTEERS

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Liturgical responsibilities and decisions about music for worship come into conflict all too easily, and collisions can only be avoided by building up a basic level of mutual respect. Too often musicians are accused of insensitivity in accompanying, of performing to the congregation rather than leading it, or of undermining the work of other ministers through inflexibility and negativity. No doubt such criticisms are sometimes justified, but problems more often arise from unsuitable choices of material, a lack of understanding about skill levels and appropriate style, or a lack of communication between ministers and musicians. Underlying all of these lies a mismatch of expectations and misplaced assumptions. Nor are musicians always immune from negative

assumptions and judgements, regarding ministers as cultural philistines without sensitivity and respect, or as local autocrats interested only in imposing their own agenda on others – on occasion, they too may have a point!

Musicians offering their skills to assist the worship and mission of God's people deserve respect, whatever their technical standard or level of remuneration. Ministers should have a realistic assessment of what they can achieve, and optimise this rather than impose standards or material beyond their capacity. Incompetence is less often an issue, though beyond a certain age fingers, feet and voices start to deteriorate, and it may be kinder to suggest that someone relinquish their duties gracefully rather than risk embarrassment by 'soldiering on' for too long. Nor are higher-level skill and expertise any excuse for unpleasant or destructive behaviour, and while this is relatively rare it should be addressed firmly so that the witness of the Church is not damaged.

## MAKING PEACE - HOW TO HANDLE CONFLICT AND DISAGREEMENT?

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From its earliest days the Christian Church has been scarred by dispute and controversy, and in worship there is a long if undistinguished history of ministers and musicians falling out acrimoniously and publicly. To assume otherwise would be naïve, since both are all too human. Whatever appears to be the presenting symptom of a conflict, it will more than likely be masking a deeper-rooted problem, one possibly ignored or glossed over for too long. A few simple questions might help with identifying these sources:

- Is differing theology the underlying cause?
- Is there an issue about who can make which decisions?
- Are there conflicting perceptions about the nature of the Church, worship or the place of music within it?
- What are the expectations of the protagonists, and how do these match up to those of others within the Church community?
- Is this simply a clash of tastes, or something more destructive?

A short-term 'peace' may be reached by agreeing not to implement certain changes for example, but this may well simply postpone the day when future direction has to be addressed honestly. Occasionally musicians also become alienated from their congregation, robustly promoting their



preferred style or approach and alienating those with less of a voice to ‘vote with their feet’. As above, regular and ongoing dialogue increases the prospect of potential controversy or tension being addressed before it becomes focused on personality, and helps limit the damage both to the individuals concerned and the reputation of the church.

## MAKING ALLOWANCES - HOW TO DEAL WITH CONTRACTS AND PAY?

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Those who offer musical skills and an above average time input to church worship deserve to be acknowledged and adequately rewarded. For some professional musicians payment for church duties forms a significant element of overall income, others may have a professional or higher-level qualification in music, and there will be wide variation in levels of responsibility, time commitment and range of duties. Whatever is expected in each situation, it is good practice for incumbent and Church Council to produce either a contract of employment, or in many situations more likely a written agreement, establishing what the church will offer in terms of pay or remuneration and terms and conditions of employment, and in return what will be expected of the postholder in terms of standards, work patterns, times of duty and personal behaviour. Clearly all these will reflect the particular responsibilities of the post: the size of any choir or music group, frequency of extra services and rehearsals, qualifications demanded, and reasonable comparisons with similar posts locally and nationally. Fees for additional duties required of musicians (e.g. weddings, funerals and other special events) should be clarified and reviewed regularly. The ISM publishes suggested pay scales and draft agreements which are at least a very good starting point and guideline. Resources may be meagre in many places, but generosity of spirit is equally important in nurturing good relations, though care should be taken not to let this result in payment levels which might embarrass other local churches.

Many musicians are volunteers who expect no financial recompense, but while a contract will not be appropriate for them, a written agreement is always good practice. For everyone from the outset there must be absolute clarity about church policy on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, and a CRB disclosure is now required for any new official appointment. Many parishes now ask all adult choristers to complete this as a matter of policy. A written agreement is no guarantee of avoiding clashes, but may play a part in mitigating them if reviewed annually and updated to meet changing circumstances. It is worth noting that times of change or transition are often flashpoints when tensions can boil over, especially during vacancies, while a new minister is settling in, or when an established team has to cope with new members arriving.

## MAKING CONVERSATION – HOW TO OPEN UP AND MAINTAIN COMMUNICATION?

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Good communication happens when each party involved speaks and listens in a way the others can understand. Those with specialist skills readily fall into the habit of using professional or habitual jargon in a way which excludes others from understanding or entering into dialogue – musical ‘shorthand’ is acceptable in rehearsal among those of like mind, but not in a planning meeting or discussion, where it will probably disadvantage many of those taking part. If music is to play an effective part in the liturgical and spiritual formation of the congregation, it should be expressed and explained in a way all can grasp – casual references to ‘the Sursum’ or ‘Stanford in B flat’ are likely to irritate rather than illuminate. Equally, ministers drop into ‘the language of Zion’ unawares, leaving their hearers groping for a concept they can understand. Language used to promote exclusivity or establish superiority invariably undermines good relationships. Used in a way that all can access, whatever their place and role in the church community, it enables each to contribute their particular gifts to the enrichment and spiritual growth of the whole congregation, to building strong relationships, to strengthening the Christian community and equipping its members to serve God in the world.

## MAKING MUSIC - HOW TO WORK WITH A CHOIR OR INSTRUMENTAL GROUP?

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A choir or music group will have specific roles and responsibilities within the wider congregation, but it is still a part of that congregation, a smaller sub-group which nonetheless reflects the variety and humanity of the assembly it serves. It meets for rehearsal but enjoys fellowship at the same time; it leads or helps the whole congregation with sung worship, but with them hears Scripture read and explained, shares in the intercessions, and partakes in Communion. A music director, choir leader or worship group leader has to understand this reality and recognise responsibilities beyond performance which are delegated by the church with this role - management, training and formation, and not least the pastoral care of all members, in which they will be grateful to have the full support of their ministers,

Clear boundaries are helpful in avoiding misunderstanding and conflict. It is best that ministers avoid intervening in matters of rehearsal technique or teaching new repertoire (even if they have the appropriate skills), but remember that choristers and band members have equal status with the

wider Christian community, and an equal right to appropriate pastoral care. It is good ministerial practice to spend time with all musicians, at whatever level, listening and showing care to them, and encouraging them to do the same for each other. Occasionally care will be required beyond routine needs, and beyond the scope and duties of the music director; such sensitive situations must be referred directly to those with pastoral responsibility, and handled with discretion and confidentiality.

Every choir develops its own characteristics: smaller groups consisting primarily of older members should not be given material beyond their natural scope; younger members should not have their voices or techniques pushed excessively; choice of material should not be so ambitious as to create unattainable standards, and cause discouragement. Ministers and music directors or worship leaders together take responsibility for adherence to these. They should likewise be in clear agreement about workloads and expectations, though with a generous approach when members fall ill, sit exams, or encounter a life crisis which limits their availability for a while - the friendship and mutual support of a choir may become a vital lifeline at such times for choir members.

Instrumental and singing groups may often play in a different style, but there is equal need for ongoing dialogue about expectations, workload and standards. Allowances will need to be made for different standards of competence achieved by instrumentalists, so that less advanced members are enabled to play their part without feeling ousted by those with greater skills. There should be an expectation of regular rehearsal and careful tuning of instruments, especially if playing with an organ or piano, which cannot be retuned. And just as choristers are reasonably expected to store robes and scores carefully away from the worship area, so instrumentalists should clear their instruments, music stands and scores when not in use. Storage of larger items such as a drum kit can be perplexing where space is limited, but the wrong message is given when visitors to a church outside of regular services are immediately confronted with a slew of musical equipment blocking their view of the altar and other parts of the church. Over-prominent positioning of a band during worship gives an equally unhelpful message. Again, it is the responsibility of musicians and ministers to work together to ensure that these parameters are understood and respected as a part of the musicians' place within the wider congregation.

## MAKING CHANGES – HOW TO INTRODUCE NEW MATERIAL?

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The first consideration is the reason for the change in question:

- to refresh and expand repertoire?
- to encourage the congregation to explore new material and grow spiritually?
- to underline a new vision or direction in the church's ministry?
- to ensure the provision of varied material within the compass of most musicians, enabling them to enjoy their ministry of music?

All of these are valid, but minister, musicians and congregation need to understand the purpose of the new material in the wider scheme of things so that all are committed to it and open to learning and growing spiritually as a result. A perception of 'change for change's sake' will most likely lead to resistance being encountered, even more so when it feels imposed from 'on high' rather than discussed and understood.

The next stage is to teach new material effectively to the congregation:

- ensure any new music is placed to best effect in the liturgy – new liturgical settings will retain their familiar place, but hymns and songs should be placed so that their liturgical purpose is clarified
- ask the musicians to play or sing it through before worship begins, or even in previous weeks, so that teaching does not become a distraction at key liturgical points
- ensure that all are able to see the text and if possible have access to the melody line; repetition over a few months soon breeds familiarity;
- ensure that there is agreement on how tricky rhythms should sound or unexpected melodic twists negotiated.

The final stage is to review whether this new material has achieved the aim agreed at the outset. If it has there will probably be a tacit acceptance by all concerned that this is a welcome development – even if not expressed overtly. If resistance levels have been encountered above normal levels, or across all groups, it may be that the material was culturally inappropriate, unsuitable for the context or acoustics, or not introduced at the right time. This is not a failure,

simply a spur to discover more suitable material - it certainly is no excuse for avoiding new material or change in the future.

## KNOWING HOW TO CHOOSE MUSIC FOR WORSHIP

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When seeking advice on music in worship, many ministers will ask first about the resources available to them – where a particular item can be found, for example or whether there are alternatives to be considered. While this is an entirely reasonable approach, there are other considerations to take into account before making a decision: a song which has proved popular at a conference, for example, when sung in a lecture hall and accompanied by instrumentalists, may not transfer well to a large resonant space with poor sightlines. This section tackles the major issues to take into account, and while these cannot be comprehensive, they will hopefully offer pointers for those making decisions.

Part 1. Eucharistic Texts

Part 2. Non-Eucharistic Texts

Part 3. Words and Music

Part 4. Data Projection

Part 5. Style and Accompaniments

Part 6. Listening

Part 7. Hymn-singing and non-churchgoers

Part 8. Space and environment

Part 9. Singing the faith

### PART 1. EUCHARISTIC TEXTS

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Apart from hymns and songs, the shared texts of the Eucharistic liturgy are constant, offering the opportunity for singing, whether by a choir, a singing group or the whole congregation: Kyrie Eleison, Gloria, the Creed, Sanctus and Benedictus, the Lord's Prayer, and Agnus Dei have all been set to music over many centuries of worship.

From plainchant settings of the Mass to the most recent jazz or minimalist versions, the ‘Ordinary of the Mass’ has inspired some of the greatest music written for the human voice. Renaissance settings of immense complexity by Victoria, Josquin or Palestrina can be heard today in cathedrals and other churches with a skilled choir able to do them justice. The same is true of equally elaborate late 18<sup>th</sup> century settings by composers such as Haydn and Mozart. Indeed, the Church authorities, often vexed by such skill and beauty in public worship, would issue restrictive instructions from time to time in an attempt to keep these musical glories under control.

From 1559 until the mid 19th century, the Church of England emphasised Morning and Evening Prayer rather than the Eucharist, treating Holy Communion as a service in two parts, in which only those receiving communion would remain after the Prayer for the Church. From that era there are almost no settings of the Gloria, Sanctus and Agnus Dei, simply some choral settings of the Responses to the Ten Commandments and the Creed. The words of Kyrie, Benedictus and Agnus Dei, were eventually included in the ‘unofficial’ 1928 Book of Common Prayer, and authorised formally only in the 1960s, so there is a relative dearth of English language settings for Holy Communion from before the 20th century, either for choir or congregation.

John Merbecke had produced the first setting of the Book of Common Prayer Eucharist in 1550, adapted from and written in a simplified form of Gregorian Chant. Hardly heard in its day, it was rediscovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and can be heard today, adapted either to the traditional language of Common Worship Order 2, or the contemporary language of Order 1.

English language settings increased in both popularity and number from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on. Mostly choral settings, some of these (e.g. by Stanford and Darke) are well within the compass of a competent parish choir. With the rise of the Parish Communion movement from the 1930’s, less complex settings have been composed for the whole congregation to sing. A notable example is the *Anglican Folk Mass* by Martin Shaw, in a style comparable to Merbecke (‘folk’ referring here to the people rather than a musical style).

Making choices from all these to suit each service or occasion will depend on various factors, textual and contextual. In traditional language services, a contemporary setting is less likely to sit comfortably with the text, and may jar with the overall ‘feel’ of the liturgy. Many churches are uncomfortable with using Latin texts for a liturgical setting – though if accepted these may blend in well with traditional language texts.

Equally, a setting in traditional language may sit uneasily with a liturgy in contemporary language. For the latter a vast range of settings is now available for all to sing, from ‘modern classical’ (e.g. James MacMillan, John Rutter) through folk idiom (e.g. Patrick Appleford, or various ‘Celtic’ versions) to jazz and rock/pop (although some of these are a collection of separate items rather than ‘through-composed’ on a common theme).

In churches where the congregation is content to listen to the text sung by a choir, the choice of setting can be determined by the competence of the singers. Where the choir leads the congregation in singing the liturgical text, it will be important to choose a less complex setting written for congregational use which is memorable, straightforward to learn, durable, and in keeping both with the season and the worshipping environment.

Some churches vary their congregational setting, either on a monthly pattern or according to the liturgical season – a more reflective style for the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent, a joyful, exuberant style for Christmas and Easter, and maybe a couple of alternatives for Ordinary Time. For a Family Eucharist, a simpler, shorter Eucharistic Prayer might best be complemented by a setting which is both shorter and more readily sung.

## PART 2. NON-EUCHARISTIC WORSHIP

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Be it a traditional service of Choral Matins or Evensong, or a family-friendly all-age act of worship, the shape and structure of non-Eucharistic worship is noticeably different. Hymns and psalms may be common to all, but with a focus on Word alone rather than Word and Sacrament they will be put together to make a different impact. A more traditional liturgy will probably cohere around a specific musical setting of the canticles and responses, but a less formal service may come across as disparate and poorly coordinated if not carefully planned. There is likely to be an underlying theme to any non-Eucharistic service, determined either by the liturgical season, the lectionary readings or a locally devised formation programme. It is not usually necessary to adhere rigidly to such themes, but connections between the music chosen and readings, preaching or other formational activity will help worshippers respond more readily as their understanding and faith are increased.

Psalms and canticles offer a greater challenge, because their prose texts are irregular, and traditional forms of chanting them, either to a plainsong tone or an Anglican chant) may present a major challenge to a whole congregation. However, these are core liturgical texts, continuously

used in worship throughout the Christian centuries. There is a range of different ways to encourage the whole congregation to engage with and share these texts – even if they do not sing every word.

### PART 3. WORDS AND MUSIC

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Traditional hymnody, at least in a musical sense, will find a more natural place in a formal liturgy, even if contemporary words are fitted to a familiar tune, but worship songs in a more recent musical idiom may better suit a less formal context, perhaps where a significant proportion of the congregation are occasional worshippers or has little familiarity with liturgical and musical traditions. A chanted psalm may be sung as part of a more formal liturgy, whereas a more contemporary metrical version may be preferred for more ‘user-friendly’ worship. It is worth noting that not all worship songs sound effective in a very resonant acoustic, and many are specifically written for an instrumental group, making them sound uncomfortable when played on an organ. Thematic connections and ‘on-message’ texts lose their impact if the congregation is struggling to work out rhythm or melody.

Every congregation develops a ‘repertoire’ of favourite hymnody, and choices made inevitably reflect this. Traditional or contemporary in style, a manageable balance between more and less familiar material helps the whole worshipping community to mature – going too far in either direction impedes formation and spiritual growth by creating a sense either of déjà-vu or disorientation. Whichever hymnal is in regular use imposes certain limitations, meaning that any unfamiliar texts will have to be included in a service sheet. Collections such as *Hymns Old and New* and *Songs of Fellowship* contain a mix of traditional hymns and more recent worship songs, and while *Common Praise* focuses on the former, there is a range of more recent material in its supplement volume *Sing Praise*.

### PART 4. DATA PROJECTION

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An increasing number of churches of all traditions are investing in a data projector and screen(s), enabling repertoire to be extended without investment in a new set of hymnbooks – it also improves the quality of congregational singing as people’s heads are raised. However, older buildings particularly may have awkward sightlines or lengthy naves, necessitating the



installation of more than one screen and projector. This tension between practical arrangements and aesthetics may raise wider questions about the ordering of the building as a whole. Worshippers with limited vision will require all texts in a large print version, and not every congregation adapts readily to modern technology. An extended range of possible hymns or songs certainly offers benefits to a congregation with a smaller repertoire, but the temptation to choose too much new material too quickly risks losing their interest and engagement. Be aware that author and source must always be acknowledged, whether on screen or in printed service sheet, for any material still in copyright, usually within seventy years of the author's or composer's death, along with local copyright licence numbers either for CCL or Calamus (the body representing Roman Catholic and some American composers). The reproduction of any copyright musical score requires a separate licence provision.

## PART 5. STYLE AND ACCOMPANIMENTS

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Hymn choices are governed as much by the accompaniment available as by congregation size. A small congregation at an evening service will probably feel overwhelmed by the prospect of singing lengthy, high-lying upbeat hymns, while a lively younger group of worshippers may equally feel 'underwhelmed' if all the music is quieter, reflective and less extravert – although making generalised assumptions and stereotyping worshippers' tastes are to be avoided at all costs.

External circumstances sometimes make an impact on engagement with worship – local or national events, a sense of fatigue brought on by working hours and family pressures, or even weather conditions can dampen a sense of vibrancy. However, the largest single influence on congregational singing is the quality of leadership and accompaniment available. A retired stand-in organist, however capable, cannot be expected immediately to master a quite alien style of playing, nor can experienced choristers be asked to take on board instantly some of the complex syncopated melodies to worship songs. It is preferable by far for them to lead the congregation well in material they feel comfortable with.

The increasing dearth of organists has led some congregations to invest in pre-recorded accompaniment CDs or software. It is tempting to dismiss these out of hand, but all are recorded by competent musicians, and the recording quality is usually high. A potential disadvantage is that tempo and instrumentation cannot be changed, leaving worshippers to keep up with the pace

of the accompaniment, but the resources they offer include the blessing of a much wider range of choices than might otherwise be possible.

Whatever the mode of accompaniment, hymns in particular are sometimes set too high for a congregation to sing comfortably. Most hymn melodies fall in the range between middle C and D nine notes higher – some even higher or lower higher than that – but for children’s songs and an older congregation, the comfortable overall singing range is at least one or two notes below this. A regular accompanist, or even an instrumental group, might be encouraged to compile a collection of tunes arranged at lower pitches (whether collected them from other hymn books, or transposed versions using some of the readily available and affordable music software). Simplified versions of hymn accompaniments are also increasingly available, helping those with more limited keyboard fluency.

## PART 6. LISTENING

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Times of reflection and stillness during worship are encouraged in many churches, often enhanced by attentive listening. Most vocal and instrumental music - for solo voice, choir, or instruments - is chosen for congregational listening rather than participation, and consideration and care are needed if it is to enhance the themes and flow of worship. Despite the decline in traditional church choirs, there is some evidence of recent growth in numbers of secular amateur choirs and those singing in them, no doubt strongly assisted by recent TV programmes. There is also some growth in the number of anthems and choral pieces published for liturgical rather than concert performance. Some of these require performers of considerable technical skill, but equally many are composed for more modest singers, players and contexts, so that listeners are less likely to be distracted by the level of musical expertise needed.

Whether traditional or contemporary, there is much musical material of good quality available to cover the seasons of the Christian year, offering scope to choose vocal or instrumental music reflecting the themes and flow of the service. If there is no choir or singing group, instrumentalists may provide a similar interlude for reflection, whether during Communion or simply as part of the prayers. Solo singers and instrumentalists offer a valuable worship resource, although it is important for all to understand that this is an offering of worship, not a secular performance. Whatever the limitations, a collaborative approach from ministers and musicians

enhances ministry and spirituality as it reflects the wider themes of the service, and the congregation's spiritual formation.

## PART 7. HYMN-SINGING AND NON-CHURCHGOERS

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Services with a significant number of worshippers unfamiliar with hymnody present a problem for ministers and musicians alike: known repertoire is more limited, often to a few songs remembered from school assemblies, and expectations can be very different in congregations for a wedding, funeral or baptism. Some couples are content to pay an appropriate fee for musicians to take part in their wedding service, while others will see it as an unnecessary additional cost. The Church of England has recently invested in its 'Wedding Project' website, which suggests a wider range of music than many couples might normally consider, covering material both ancient and modern which will be familiar to singers and instrumentalists. As with funerals, requests for secular musical inputs, recorded or performed live, are increasing, not all of which are easy to integrate into an environment of Christian worship.

Outside of church funerals and memorial services, a growing number of crematoria have installed a pre-recorded music system, which both eliminates the need for musicians to be present, and also allows the possibility of suitable secular music to be used as a recorded addition or alternative to Christian songs, hymns or instrumental music. Some controversy has been aroused over whether it is appropriate for Christian ministers to preside over funerals with such secular components, and different viewpoints expressed. However, perhaps for some families and loved ones an apparently 'secular' piece of music is genuinely identified as having a 'sacred' quality because of its association with the deceased.

Where money and emotional energy have been invested into an occasional service as part of a family's life, it is far from easy to deny their choices, even when these are self-evidently not appropriate. Where possible, ministers and musicians can combine to offer guidance and help in making choices.

However, when those outside the regular church community are invited to a special or more accessible act of worship, other considerations apply, foremost of which is the potential of the hymns or songs chosen to encourage and enable a journey of faith. Whether a traditional or contemporary idiom is more likely to achieve will be for local discussion, but texts inviting a higher level of faith commitment may not reflect every worshipper's standpoint, and however

catchy, modern or well-played the accompaniment, banality, verbal or musical, is unlikely to make any spiritual impact.

## PART 8. SPACE AND ENVIRONMENT

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Musical choices for any act of worship have to take into account the acoustic and spatial characteristics of the church or worship area. Many church buildings are old, large and resonant, qualities often thought to suit choirs and organs rather than instrumental groups and worship songs. There is some truth in this – syncopated rhythms, especially when played by several instruments, can become lost reverberating around a high ceiling or awkwardly angled walls and pillars. However, some recent church architecture creates the opposite problem, with a deadening acoustic which reduces tonal variety to a characterless, bland mass of sound. By no means all organs are ideally suited to their buildings, or well situated within them. Singers and instrumentalists alike also suffer from poor positioning, so that neither they nor the congregation are able to see, hear or participate adequately. Organists can be isolated by their playing position from the liturgical action that is unfolding whilst they play, while instrumental groups are at times placed so that they have little concept of how they sound to the rest of the congregation. Sound reinforcement can help overcome these problems to some extent if set up correctly, but whatever music is chosen will seem out of place and lacking in impact if does not take account of the acoustics. Often it will simply be a question of playing an accompaniment faster or slower to accommodate the acoustic.

## PART 9. SINGING THE FAITH

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Even those with a musical background can find a hymnbook daunting if the mysteries of its compilation and layout have not been explained. In truth they are straightforward:

1. The index of first lines is almost invariably alphabetical, at least within themes – if the first line is familiar a hymn can be found easily enough.
2. Most hymnals also include a thematic index to enable a wider range of hymns to be identified for a particular occasion.
3. Many (though not all) also include an index of seasonal material, as well hymns for other festivals and occasions during the Christian year.

4. Some highlight material suitable for Eucharistic worship, Baptisms, Funerals or Weddings, and identify hymns and songs to fit in with lectionary readings throughout Ordinary Time.
5. Others focus on biblical or theological themes, or occasions common to all traditions.

## PART 10 TUNES AND METRES

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An index of tunes identifies each by its title, while a metrical index groups all hymn tunes written in the same metre. The numbers in this refer to the number of syllables in each line. ‘When I survey the wondrous cross’, for example, has verses of 4 lines with 8 syllables per line, making it an ‘8888’ or Long Metre tune, usually abbreviated in an index to LM. The tune most worshippers associate with this hymn is called ‘Rockingham’ - though other L.M. tunes may fit the text, most worshippers will expect to hear the one they know best. Many four-line verses have similar patterns of syllables – 8686 is known as ‘Common Metre’ or C.M., 6686 as ‘Short Metre’ or S.M. Where a verse in a frequently used metre has eight lines, this is indicated by a ‘D’ (for ‘double’) – thus ‘Crown him with many crowns’ is often sung to ‘Diademata’, a D.S.M tune.

Familiarity with the names of well-known hymn-tunes can be useful for ministers in negotiation with organists and choristers who often refer to them (unintentionally) as though they were old friends. A useful by-product of this familiarity is the capacity to ensure musical variety for both musicians and congregation. Four successive hymns in the same metre would become tedious, as would hymns with similar rhythmic patterns, melodic structures, or all written in the same key. Nor is it difficult to choose a sequence of worship songs which all sound rather similar – and many are written in D major, the key most guitarists learn first. While texts and their message are of prime importance, musical variety and quality will enhance and reinforce them as surely as dullness or unsuitability will undermine them.

## TOOLKIT RESOURCES

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There can scarcely be a Christian denomination or tradition that in recent years has not upgraded and updated its liturgical and musical resources to make them more accessible both to 21<sup>st</sup> century worshippers and to those in public ministry. Nor has such a range and variety of material ever been so widely available – and certainly not in so many formats. Gone are the days when every worshipper would expect to be handed a prayer book and a hymnal on arriving at church. While that may still occur in rural areas, there is a rapidly increasing trend either for churchgoers to receive a printed service sheet with all the necessary texts, or to see them projected on to a large screen.

This section covers some of the musical resources for worship currently available in the UK and Ireland. Simply listing publications, websites and DVD is already done more effectively in the producers' catalogues, so the focus is on those most commonly encountered in Church of England use, with reference to the rest of the UK, the wider Anglican Communion and other Christian denominations. Other churches in the English-speaking world are mentioned, but even if the language is in common, much of their material is unfamiliar here. An indication of editorial ambitions and musical content is offered for most publications and resources, although this inevitably has to be weighed against local tradition, context and circumstances in making specific decisions.

Part 1. Hymnbooks for the Church of England

Part 2. Hymnbooks for the rest of the UK

Part 3. Hymnbooks for the worldwide Anglican Church

Part 4. Hymnbooks for other Christian denominations

Part 5. Non-denominational and Ecumenical Hymnbooks

Part 6. Music for Worship from the Taizé Community

Part 7. Singing the Psalms

Part 8. Downloads and digital technology

Part 9. Other sources of help

Part 10. Music for the choir

Part 11. Useful reading

## PART 1. HYMNBOOKS FOR THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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The Church of England has never published an authorised hymnal. However, in 1861 *Hymns Ancient and Modern* was published, with the stated aim of gathering together in one collection hymns of good and consistent quality for parish worship. If it never became the Church of England's 'official' hymnbook, during the ensuing century and a half, it certainly became (and perhaps still is) the one most readily associated with parish church worship. It was published under that name in various revisions until 2000, when *Common Praise* appeared – “a new edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*” according to its Preface. A previous attempt at radical revision in 1904 was unpopular, but *Common Praise* has proved to be an acceptable mix of both the established and more recent repertory of hymnody, fulfilling the original Proprietors' aim to publish texts and music of a standard worthy of Anglican worship. Contemporary musical styles are not accepted in every parish church, but recently written texts in a more familiar idiom encounter less resistance, so in 2010 *Sing Praise* appeared as a supplement to *Common Praise*, which included a number of better-known worship songs, some new texts set to familiar tunes, and some fine new hymns with tunes written especially for them. The intention is to merge both of these in one volume, currently at the planning stage. Also in print for the first time in 2012 was *Ancient and Modern: Hymns and Songs for Refreshing Worship*, an entirely new collection of hymns, songs and chants drawing on many traditions beyond the Church of England. Even its title acknowledged the need for worship to be refreshed, and its eclectic nature, while not rejecting the musical tradition of the Church of England, very much reflects the blurring of traditional boundaries.

The other major hymn book associated almost exclusively with the Church of England is *The English Hymnal*, which first appeared in 1906, edited by no less than Percy Dearmer and Ralph Vaughan Williams - unsurprisingly the musical quality is exceptional (some of Vaughan Williams' own tunes such as *Down Ampney* or *Sine Nomine* remain among the most familiar today). From the outset its core was liturgically informed, and it has long been associated with 'high church' traditions and choral worship, but this too underwent a substantial revision and appeared in 1986 as *The New English Hymnal*, with its own supplement *New English Praise* following in 2006. On publication it was described in one review as “the Rolls-Royce of hymnbooks”, which may help explain why it's more likely now to be found in cathedrals and

major choral establishments than in the average parish church. It is worth noting the *Anglican Hymn Book* of 1965, directed largely at the Evangelical tradition of the Church of England but now more rarely encountered. It was largely superseded in 1982 by *Hymns for Today's Church*, notorious at the time for rewriting traditional hymns into 'modern' language, and updating texts the editors considered obscure – though inclusive language was not on their agenda.

## PART 2. HYMNBOOKS FOR THE REST OF THE UK

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From the *Scottish Psalter* of 1564 and the Scots Metrical Psalter of 1650, the churches of Scotland have pioneered hymnody. The Church of Scotland's *Church Hymnary* first appeared in 1898, and although a denominational hymnbook, its fourth edition *Church Hymnary 4* (2005) has achieved much wider popularity and use in recent years. Compiled by a representative committee under the editorial chairmanship of John Bell, as the title suggests, it builds on the three previous collections, but has attracted much attention through the inclusion of many of the most commonly used hymns and songs from the modern Iona community, published by the Wild Goose Resource Group across a number of smaller collections. In addition there is an stimulating selection of hymns, songs and chants from the 'world church', many of which have gained currency across the denominations, as well as some fine new hymns and a wealth of contemporary material. From a different tradition relatively few worship songs are included, and this has perhaps made it more acceptable to churches and musicians with a more formal and choral, or less emotionally overt style of worship. It was later rebranded by Canterbury Press as *Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise* (2008) - those who bought both soon realised that they had purchased the same book! A similar collection is *Common Ground* (1998), which draws material from a wide range of sources but is intentionally ecumenical in approach.

In Ireland the fifth edition of *The Church Hymnal* appeared in 2000, the first having been published in 1874, but as so many churches and publishers have discovered, the wealth of good new hymnody is requiring them to compile a supplement of additional and more recent material, although this is not yet collected in printed form.

A further Canterbury Press hymn collection less familiar to most worshippers is *Hymns of Prayer and Praise* (1996, revised 2011, edited by John Harper). Aimed specifically at monastic communities and churches which celebrate daily office, its hymns have been selected for the pattern of Daily Offices, the Calendar of Saints and the seasons of the Christian year. While it



may not often appear in parish worship, its influence on *Common Praise* and *Sing Praise* is considerable, reinforcing some of the most characteristic elements of Anglican worship. The revised edition contains substantial new material, a music edition with keyboard accompaniment and chord signs for zither or other instrumental support.

### PART 3. HYMNBOOKS FOR THE WORLDWIDE ANGLICAN CHURCH

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With the rise of the British Empire the Anglican tradition began to spread across the world, initially exporting its own liturgical and musical tradition. Over time these churches became established independently of the Church of England, and while still a part of the Anglican Communion began to develop their own liturgical texts and hymnbooks from within their own culture. The Episcopal Church of the USA first published *The Hymnal* in 1916; the latest edition dates from 1982, though as elsewhere the sheer quantity of new music for worship being produced has led to the publication of supplements such as *Wonder, Love and Praise* (2001), *Voices Found: Women in the Church's Song* (2003 – celebrating the work of women hymnwriters) and *My Heart Sings Out* (2004 – focused on all-age worship and including young people).

In Canada the first *Book of Common Praise* was published in 1908 (known as the 'brown book'), revised in 1938 (the 'blue book'). More recently, in 1971 *The Hymn Book* was published as an ecumenical venture with the United Church of Canada (the 'red book'), while *Common Praise* (1998) reflects more recent developments in hymnody.

The *Australian Hymn Book* of 1977 was also an ecumenical production, and achieved wide circulation throughout churches of different traditions in Australia. Here too rapid developments subsequently resulted in a new edition published in 1999, *Australian Hymn Book II*, incorporating inclusive language, more modern musical settings and worship songs, and removing material no longer in wide use.

Although the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia has no official hymnal of its own, being dominated for longer by European models, the ecumenical *New Zealand Hymnbook Trust*, founded in 1978 actively promotes the work of New Zealand hymnwriters. It published *With One Voice* in 1982, and most recently the supplement *Hope is our Song* (2009)

## PART 4. HYMNBOOKS FROM OTHER CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

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### **Roman Catholic**

The Roman Catholic Church also has no authorised hymnal in the UK, although *The Celebration Hymnal* (1976, regularly updated since) is a standard resource, containing a variety of settings of hymns, psalms and other liturgical texts. There is also the more recent *Laudate* (2002, published by Decani Music), positively reviewed by Roman Catholic church musicians. It offers a good balance of older and more contemporary material with a variety of settings. Hymn collections from the United States, notably those published by GIA and OCP, can also be found in the UK, containing increasingly popular items by composers such as Marty Haugen, while Decani Music publish useful collections of the songs and settings of popular writers such as Haugen and Bernadette Farrell.

### **Methodist Church**

Collections of hymns and sacred music inevitably reflect the particular theological and ecclesiastical emphases both of compilers and intended users. Thus many Non-Conformist denominations have authorised and produced their own collections of hymns and songs. Methodism is often said to be ‘born in song’, and John Wesley first published a collection of hymns as early as 1737 in South Carolina, during his American stay. Various smaller hymnals then appeared until in 1779 the *Collection of Hymns for the People called Methodists* became the authorised hymnbook for the whole Methodist Church. With the divisions of subsequent years, different strands of Methodism produced their own hymnbooks, with more limited collections published for specific purposes such as children’s worship. The advent of the Methodist Union resulted in the definitive *Methodist Hymnbook* (1933), reflecting the central role of music within the Methodist tradition from the outset. This was followed in 1983 by *Hymns and Psalms*, and most recently in 2011 by *Singing the Faith* - a collection of hymns and songs reflecting the many major changes that have influenced worship music over the past four decades. On their website the compilers emphasise that this is entirely in keeping with John Wesley’s original concept for his 1779 Collection, and he would doubtless have been delighted to learn that this is the only major denominational hymn compilation available in electronic as well as book form!

### **Non-Conformist Hymnody**

The United Reformed Church was formed of two smaller denominations in 1972, with a third joining in 1981. A decade later *Rejoice and Sing* appeared, containing the best hymns from all three, and became one of the first hymnals to adopt inclusive language. Just as the various Methodist collections reflect their particular concerns and emphases, so *Rejoice and Sing* brings together the different traditions which formed the URC. It is well-regarded, but like many denominational hymn books its primary appeal is to its members, with a lesser impact on the wider church.

Baptist Churches enjoy a loose affiliation under the Baptist Union umbrella, but they prize independence and local decision-making. As a result they have found it difficult to create a generally accepted consistent collection of hymns. From 1900 *The Baptist Church Hymnal* grew in rather piecemeal fashion until its 1933 revision, with *The Baptist Hymn Book* published in 1962 and supplemented in 1974 by *Praise for Today*. All were superseded in 1991 by *Baptist Praise and Worship*, although many Baptist churches today prefer to use non-denominational collections.

## PART 5. NON-DENOMINATIONAL AND ECUMENICAL HYMNBOOKS

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It is a sign of the times that many best-selling and widely available hymn and music resources for both church and individual worship do not come from any denomination. Some of these (e.g. the *Songs of Fellowship* and *Mission Praise* series) come from a network of writers and musicians, but the *Hymns Old and New* series, published by Kevin Mayhew (first Anglican edition 1996), has been specifically compiled for both Roman Catholic and Anglican worship.

The first major success among non-denominational hymnbooks was *Sacred Songs and Solos*, gathered predominantly from songs sung at the massive rallies organised by American evangelists Sankey and Moody in the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today's worshippers would find many of these at best typically Victorian, at worst embarrassingly sentimental, but they were immensely popular in their day for their familiar imagery, narrative texts, accessible musical style, and an unashamedly direct and personal approach to faith. Its most recent edition dates from 2005.

## **Songs of Fellowship**

There is still strong demand for accessible worship material in a contemporary style, making a direct emotional appeal, as the five volumes of the *Songs of Fellowship* series demonstrate (volume 1 was first published in 1991, Volume 5 as recently as 2011). Much of the contents consist of songs originating in a charismatic and evangelical background, though earlier volumes also contain many well-known traditional hymns. Inevitably in such a vast collection (2710 items), not all the material is of consistent quality or suitable for every context – care is needed in making suitable selections – but among churches of all traditions with a less formal style of worship *Songs of Fellowship* has made a significant impact across all Christian denominations.

The detailed scoring for guitar and instrumental arrangements make this a valuable resource for worship groups, while it is also worth noting that the RSCM has published settings of certain worship songs for choirs and singing groups – e.g. *Psalms, Hymns and Spirituals* (2011) and *Anthems from Worship Songs* (1993).

## **Mission Praise**

In many respects *Songs of Fellowship* runs in parallel with *Mission Praise*, and its sister publications *Junior Praise* and *Carol Praise*. Originally compiled in 1984 for Billy Graham's Mission England, it was arguably the first hymnal to bring contemporary worship songs into the mainstream worship of the Church of England and other denominations, although initially with only 284 items. By the time of its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition this had grown to 1250 songs in the core volume, and many more when collected together with those in *Junior Praise* and *Carol Praise*. There was also a fairly short-lived *World Praise* (1995) with material gathered from around the world. Like *Songs of Fellowship*, *Mission Praise* contains a significant proportion of traditional hymnody, and has additionally enjoyed wide circulation beyond the U.K. Both have made a major impact on music for worship over the past two decades, with some material becoming familiar across the spectrum of denominations and churchmanship.

## **The Source**

Among other compilations of recent worship songs is *The Source*, published in four volumes (1998,2001,2005,2010) by Kevin Mayhew Publishers as an alternative to *Songs of Fellowship* and *Mission Praise*. The musical arrangements are extensive (many for instruments in different keys, for example) and the collection benefits from being edited by singer-songwriter Graham

Kendrick. There is a noticeable overlap with the other two collections, but a good selection of original material too, and the quality level is perhaps more consistent. Reviews suggest that The Source is often seen as a back-up to other hymn and song collections, but its arrangements are clearly well-liked by musicians. Mayhew also produced a more traditional collection for the new millennium, *Sing Glory* (2000), liked at the time though less commonly encountered today. The two volumes of *Kidsource* (1999, 2001) are produced specifically for worship with children and young people.

### **Hymns Old & New**

Also from Kevin Mayhew Publishers comes the *Hymns Old and New* series, non-denominational compilations directed at specific denominations – the first Anglican edition appeared in 1996, followed in 2000 by the Complete Anglican edition, and in 2008 by *Anglican Hymns Old and New*, updated to incorporate the wealth of new worship music being published. New material from a wide variety of sources has been added with each new edition, and the quality of indexing received very favourably, but significantly, the most successful of this series to date has been the ecumenical edition, *One Church, One Faith, One Lord* (2001).

### **The Wild Goose Resource Group**

The Wild Goose Resource Group was initially a semi-independent project of the Iona Community and functioned not least as the publisher for its prolific hymnwriters John Bell and Graham Maule. Many of their hymns and songs, which have since become so familiar, first appeared in one of several smaller collections, such as *Love from Below* (1989), *Enemy of Apathy* (1998), *The Courage to Say No* (1996), *Heaven Shall Not Wait* (1987), and more recently *One is the Body* (2002), and *We Walk His Way* (2008). The later collections have emphasised the worship music of the worldwide Church, though all touch on themes and approaches more rarely encountered elsewhere. There is no comprehensive collection of all these, but many of the most popular hymns and chants from Iona can be found right across the range of regularly used hymnals from *Common Praise* to *Songs of Fellowship – Hymns Old and New* contains a good selection, but the broadest is to be found in *Church Hymnary 4*. The WGRG website lists all their material, some of which may be less familiar but is of no lesser quality than the best-known. There are collections focused on the Christian year (e.g. *Innkeepers and Light Sleepers* for Christmas), and on specific themes such as Christian Unity (*One is the Body*) or bereavement (*When Grief is Raw*), which are often sidelined by other collections.

## PART 6. MUSIC FOR WORSHIP FROM THE TAIZÉ COMMUNITY

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Originally written to supplement more traditional monastic chanting, and to engage the thousands of young people visiting the community, since the 1960s chants and songs from the Taizé Community have become accepted as part of the worship practice of almost every mainstream Christian denomination, in part because so many regular worshippers have taken part in a Taizé pilgrimage. Away from the specific context of the Taizé community's ecumenical worship, the simple, often-repeated melodies of the chants can be a challenge to integrate effectively into more formal worship, and some parishes prefer to organise a specific act of worship in the style of the Taizé community. Some chants can be used very effectively as a prayer response, and provided they are led by a clear voice, can be sung without instrumental accompaniment – some prefer the simplicity of this. As with WGRG and other Celtic traditions, the ecumenical *raison d'être* and focus on justice and peace provides material on issues not always touched on in standard hymnbooks. Taizé chants can be found in a number of hymnbooks, notably the *Hymns Old and New* series and *Laudate*, but their publishing arm, Presses et Ateliers de Taizé, has produced a number of inexpensive volumes easily obtained in the UK, from *Chants de Taizé* (1983) through *Songs and Prayers from Taizé* (1991) to *Christe Mundi Lux* (2008).

## PART 7. SINGING THE PSALMS

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Sung Psalms were a part of Church of England worship from its outset, long before hymn-singing was allowed. The 'characteristic' pointed chanting of psalms is thought to be an adaptation for English texts of the plainsong equivalent in Latin, designed to enable the congregation to sing texts not written in a specific metre. Psalms written to a 'single chant' (one short melody line for each verse) are known from the time of the Elizabethan Settlement and metrical psalms were also permitted as part of the Elizabethan Injunctions – the more familiar 'double chants' (two melodic phrases used for alternate verses) are a later development. Many more chants were composed as sacred music publishing grew at the end of the nineteenth century alongside the parish choral tradition, and these were gathered in collections such as *The Cathedral Psalter*, for worship in cathedrals and other churches with a strong choral tradition. Sir Sydney Nicholson adapted this for use in musically less well-resourced parishes as *The Parish Psalter* (1900), once handed out with the *Book of Common Prayer* and *Hymns Ancient and Modern* in many parish churches. Other than in cathedrals, choral foundations, and a few parishes with a strong musical tradition,

pointed chanting has become something of a rarity, but the Psalter is still a core element of Anglican worship, and more recent ways of singing it, whether in the cantor and response style developed by Joseph Gelineau (published from 1957) or metrically, are much in evidence. Those who remember the 1960's *Youth Praise* volumes may also remember *Psalms Praise* (1973), the best material from which can be found still in other collections. Composers such as Marty Haugen and Bernadette Farrell are producing excellent contemporary Psalm-based material, while many Taizé chants are based on a Psalm. Similar comments apply to the Canticles, especially those for Morning and Evening Worship.

As well as the many chants and settings from the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the advent of Common Worship has seen a wide range of material specifically produced by the RSCM and others, both for choir and congregation use, including a *Common Worship Psalter with Chants* (2002). Metrical Psalms can be found in every hymn collection, from *The Scottish Metrical Psalter* of 1650 to the latest *Songs of Fellowship* (2011), although now as then quality can be uneven.

## PART 8. DOWNLOADS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

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It is less than a century since the first Christmas Eve *Service of Nine Lessons and Carols* from Kings College Cambridge (1918), first broadcast by the BBC in 1928. The intervening years have seen recording and broadcast technology develop far beyond the imaginations of those overseeing these broadcasts, and in the last decade electronic availability of all forms of musical material has increased exponentially. Almost any material can be found on-line – if not always officially – while some hymnbooks (e.g. *Songs of Fellowship* and *The Source*) come with a CD of the text to simplify projected presentations or the production of one-off service sheets. Be aware that not all such CDs are incompatible with a Mac operating system, which will need suitable conversion software.

### Electronic Resources

There are a number of independent electronic music resources for worship, two of the most commonly encountered being *SongPro* and *HymnQuest*. *Songpro* (1999) was one of the first such resources to be developed, describing itself as ‘Song Lyric and Bible Presentation Software’. It simplifies the production of orders of service, and enables liturgical and biblical texts to be managed alongside those of the hymns and songs. *Hymnquest* appeared only a year later in 2000. It was sponsored by the Pratt Green Trust and focused exclusively on hymns – 26,600 from 441

different hymnbooks, with a comprehensive system of indexing to enable almost any connections to be made. It is supported by all major publishers and copyright agencies, and as with so many collections of worship most recent update appeared in 2012.

### **Downloadable Music Resources**

Into the future it seems increasingly unlikely that large-scale purchases of hymn books will feature on many church budgets. Most major publishers of worship music now offer at least some of their material in electronic form, some as downloadable files, making the production of ‘designer liturgies’ increasingly straightforward and inexpensive, and enabling ministers to tailor liturgies to specific occasions, circumstances or congregations. It is much more likely that ecumenical considerations will carry at least as much weight as denominational ones in the choices made. Unsurprisingly many of these initiatives come from the more contemporary wing of the Church, well versed in the latest technology. Useful websites can be reached easily enough via Google or some other search engine, and most major music publishers display their products clearly and attractively, since their survival depends on continuing sales.

Church House Publishing and Canterbury Press have a good range of liturgical titles, including music, while Kevin Mayhew Publishers still keep liturgy and music as their core business area. This is also largely true of Kingsway Publishing and their associates, who have a much stronger focus on CDs featuring solo artists or groups – there is little here for the choral tradition or organist. Oremus is a more helpful site for those churches less wedded to the worship song tradition, with an extensive list of possible hymns for the 3-year lectionary cycle. A web resource favoured by many musicians, church-based or otherwise, is Spotify – while not specifically Christian, almost any hymn, song or other piece of music can be accessed with it. However, by no means all web resources are so helpful. Some serve a merely polemical purpose, some reflect a more or less eccentric personal agenda, while others seem not to relate to the realities of ordering worship and choosing suitable music in any discernable way.

## **PART 9. OTHER SOURCES OF HELP**

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Given the vast scope of musical choice for worship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it may come as a surprise that the help available is relatively limited for hard-pressed ministers to identify or locate suitable music. Hymnbook indexing is of variable quality, tending to reflect the particular aims and theological emphases of the compiler. Those aimed at Anglican or denominational worship are



more likely to reflect the Christian year and centre on the lectionary, while ecumenically based collections are generally thematic, with extensive scriptural references - please see the section on indexing in *Choosing Music* for more detail. The most widespread of periodical publications dedicated specifically to musical choices is the RSCM's quarterly *Sunday by Sunday*, compiled by specialists and highlighting hymns from most major collections suitable for the lectionary readings each Sunday, with additional suggestions for anthems and organ music. Working on this together would help both ministers and musicians to make and own selections of music to enrich the whole congregation's worshipping life. Hymns and song selections are also included in other publications with a specialist purpose such as *Roots*, for children's and all-age worship, which lists a variety of material that might enhance the particular liturgical themes. It's worth noting that while much assistance can be accessed easily enough on the Internet, it is largely based on American usage, which apart from the most familiar 'traditional' hymns covers a quite different repertoire.

## PART 10. MUSIC FOR THE CHOIR

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Anthems are sung by a choir of more or less expert singers and thus fulfil a rather different musical purpose within an act of worship. In churches with a robed choir the director of music might expect to make the decision about this, but even here a lack of cooperation can lead to material being chosen which neither fits the season or theme, nor matches the capabilities of the musicians. Anthem collections range from the composer-specific to those ranging across six centuries, embracing choirs of every ability level. For choirs of reasonable competence former RSCM Director Lionel Dakers edited the *New Church Anthem Book* (1992); from Oxford University Press come two volumes of *English Church Music* (2010 - including motets, canticles and responses), while a number of smaller collections focus on the seasons and festivals of the Christian year. Useful sources for less confident choirs include *The New Oxford Easy Anthem Book* (2002) and *The Oxford Book of Flexible Anthems* (2007), as well as a large number of Kevin Mayhew publications aimed specifically at groups with a dearth of male voices, for example, or who struggle to sing in four parts. All have been arranged by distinguished liturgical musicians, many themselves composers, while Rutter and Chilcott, among others, have specifically written for choirs with 'average' or modest resources.

A similarly wide-ranging collection is *Season by Season* (2008 – an included CD-Rom facilitates adapting material to differing abilities and resources), and like the *Sunday by Sunday Collection*

embraces the whole liturgical year with material that can be photocopied. The second volume of this focuses on material that can be sung at the Eucharist. Most recently comes from Canterbury Press comes the *Choir Book for the Queen* (2011) – specifically for her Diamond Jubilee, with anthems from many familiar contemporary composers, though not all are within the range of a typical church choir. The RSCM itself produced a substantial volume of material to accompany the launch of Common Worship in 2000 and in specific supplements since then. Please note that apart from publications stating otherwise, a specific copyright licence must be obtained separately for copying musical scores. Choral singing has been raised recently to a much higher level in most people’s awareness, not least through television and media exposure of groups such as the ‘Military Wives’ and the enthusiastic advocacy of Gareth Malone. This presents a great opportunity for ministers and musicians to work together to use this new choral tradition to enhance their own mission and outreach to their communities.

## PART 11. LITURGICAL TEXTS

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The Church of England’s authorised Common Worship for liturgical use in Advent 2000, when its main *Sunday Services and Prayers for the Church of England* was launched, along with the book of *Pastoral Services*. The *Book of Common Prayer* remains the Church of England’s officially authorised liturgy, but it is incorporated into the main *Sunday Services* book in the form used commonly in parish worship. Volumes trialled before 2000 included *Daily Prayer* (2005), and *Christian Initiation* published the following year alongside *Times and Seasons* and *Ordination Services*. The final volumes to appear were *Festivals* and *New Patterns for Worship* (both 2008), although the latter had long been familiar in its previous format.

The style of most texts will have come as little surprise to most worshippers or ministers, and in general they were warmly received. However, the most significant change was the concept of a collection of resources rather than set liturgies, requiring a much greater level of prior planning than previously to put together an act of worship, although this is clearly facilitated by the use of electronic media such as *Visual Liturgy*.

Many churches are also extending their horizons towards material from outside the Church of England, including those from other denominations, but most notably from non-denominational sources. Of these the seasonal and thematic volumes from the Wild Goose Resource Group have

proved particularly popular, as have the liturgical resources and books of prayers produced by Kevin Mayhew Publishers, all of which also contain useful musical material.

## PART 12. USEFUL READING

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Beyond liturgical texts and musical scores themselves, plenty of background reading is available, from serious academic studies to accessible user guides. Often most helpful for a quick overview are Grove Books, which came into being primarily to help clergy adapt worship to a rapidly changing context, but have diversified since then into areas such as spirituality and pastoral care. The Worship Series has now encompassed more than 200 booklets, some of which have a practical musical focus. Recent examples include *Thirty Ways to Use Music in Worship* (no.209 – 2011), *How to Choose Songs and Hymns for Worship* (no.201 - 2009) and *The Place of Short Songs in Worship* (no.176 – 2003) and for those interested in the impact of technology, *How to Worship with Data Projection* (no.192 – 2007). The Grove Books slogan, ‘Not the last word, but often the first’, well describes their aim, to provide Christian ministers preparing and conducting worship with helpful insights and practical ideas into changing practice and context, as well as regular updates on the latest thinking and reading available.

More substantial works on liturgy and sacred music are also readily available, although many are in-depth academic studies for extended serious reading. On music in worship especially more academic work has been undertaken in the USA, which because less focused on specific practical issues conveys many helpful insights transcending national and cultural preferences. British scholar and musician Jeremy Begbie is now based in the USA, but *Resounding Truth* (2008) is rooted in his previous research work in the UK. Although not specifically focused on at Anglican texts, it tackles the history and spirituality of music in and for worship, incorporating wider sociological and psychological aspects. Most recently Begbie has edited *Resonant Witness* (2012), exploring the connections between music and theology in a series of ‘conversations’ offering thought-provoking insights.

Stephen Burns’ *SCM Studyguide to Liturgy* (2006) is a short general volume with a helpful chapter on the place and function of music in worship, and for those interested the broader context, Andrew Wilson-Dickson’s *The Story of Christian Music* (1992, republished 2009) is a readable and comprehensive musical-historical study. *Creative Chords* (2004) is a collection of essays edited by Jeff Astley, Timothy Hone and Mark Savage addressing the links between music,

theology and formation – an area also addressed by American scholars Don Saliers (in *Music and Theology* - 2007) and Mary McGann (*Exploring Music in Worship and Theology* - 2002), both books whose value greatly exceeds their length. Charlotte Kroeker's collection of studies entitled *Music in Christian Worship* (2005) contains much insight and theological background. The Church of England has also addressed its musical life through an Archbishop's Commission, most recently *In Tune with Heaven* (1992), the text of which can still readily be found.

On congregational singing in particular, John L Bell's *The Singing Thing* (2004) and *The Singing Thing Too* (2007) are perceptive, accessible and brief. Emanating from the South West Training Ministry Course, and thus only available locally, is *How can we sing the Lord's song? An introduction to singing for leaders of worship* (2012), by Patricia Robottom – a really helpful guide to the basics of singing and voice production in a liturgical context. From a different angle, Pete Ward's *Selling Worship* (2005), subtitled *How What we Sing has Changed the Church*, tackles specific concerns about the connections between sacred music and contemporary culture. Since disputes and conflict over 'traditional or modern' music have scarred many church communities in recent decades, Frank Burch Brown's *Good Taste, Bad Taste, Christian Taste* (2000) and Bryan Spinks' *The Worship Mall* (2010) both offer helpful thinking about what might lie behind such cultural clashes. In addition, Simon Reynolds contributes a helpful chapter on *Believing in a God who Sings* to a collection of essays celebrating ten years of Common Worship entitled *God's Transforming Work* (2011), while Peter Moger's *Crafting Common Worship* (2009) is particularly helpful on the broader topic of constructing a liturgy.

### PART 13. FORMATIONAL POSSIBILITIES

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Practical formation in the role of music in worship is in shorter supply. The RSCM runs many useful courses, but these are primarily directed at those involved in Church music at first hand. Particular mention should be made of the Sacred Music Studies course, which it ran until 2011 in conjunction with Bangor University. This has now been replaced by the Foundation Degree in Church Music run in collaboration with Canterbury Christ Church University, and can be undertaken either as a full-time or part-time course based on the previous modules written by John Harper – it provides church musicians with a sound background in wider issues of theology and liturgy. The Guild of Church Musicians runs one course recognising the need for ministers to be trained too in matters of music and worship, while with a more contemporary feel, the Music

in Worship Foundation and London School of Theology also offer specific training in music and worship for both musicians and minsters.

Otherwise, a minister's confidence in handling musical aspects of worship will depend on the level and extent of pre-ordination training, and whatever further educational events might be offered by Diocesan CME schemes. Those fortunate enough to serve a title curacy in a major choral establishment may well learn a great deal from those with whom they share in public ministry, and gain confidence in their musical tradition; many others will be less fortunate and have to seek musical insights elsewhere. Many dioceses have a music advisor, possibly shared with neighbouring dioceses, and some have a group of liturgical 'experts', sometimes known as a Worship Committee, who will be willing to offer their expertise to parishes, deaneries and other groups.

# APPENDIX A - QUESTIONNAIRE ON WORSHIP AND MUSIC

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- What has influenced your tastes and preferences in music, and how have these changed over the years?
- What preferences do you have in worship and liturgical music? Are they entirely different to your secular tastes, and if so, can you identify why?
- Who chooses the music for worship in your parish? What role do the minister(s) play in this?
- What expectations do the congregation(s) have about the music they'll experience? Are they different to yours?
- What musical resources are available to you (instruments and printed material)? Are they adequate, or what you would ideally want?
- Do you feel confident about handling the musical aspects of worship, or do you find it easier to leave it to an 'expert'? During your time in training for ordination (and IME 4-7) did you receive any help or guidance about music and liturgy? Have you had any since?
- What are the 'gaps' in knowledge or skill that you feel need to be filled? What would help increase your confidence in music and worship?

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