



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an interpretation of the ritualistic and storied behaviour of two Christian congregations of the Charismatic ‘house-church’ or ‘New Church’ genre, established within the last thirty years in Glasgow, West of Scotland. The exercise is framed by the field of research and commentary on the global rise and impact of the Neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic Movement in the latter part of the twentieth century, from which the ‘house-churches’ derive motivation and ritual, and by the growing field of Congregational Studies pioneered by James F. Hopewell (1988) in *Congregation: Stories and Structures*. The congregations which form the locus for the fieldwork are *Bishopbriggs Charismatic Church* (BCC – a pseudonym) in the northern suburbs of Glasgow and *Bridgeton Charismatic Fellowship* (BCF - a pseudonym), an inner-city congregation in the East End of Glasgow.

PART ONE: *Charismatic Renewal, Congregational Studies & Two Churches* provides the background in terms of general history, methodology, and interpretation of the two congregations. Chapter One charts the history of the Charismatic Movement and the rise of the ‘house-churches’, with particular focus on its history in Scotland. Chapter Two explores the literature relating to the ethnographic axis of *ritual* and *narrative* as used in this thesis. Chapter Three explains the rationale for the ethnographic methodology practiced, and its relationship to the theological interpretative schema in which it is framed. Chapter Four is a description of the fieldwork sites and a full picture of the two congregations. Chapter Five is a primary parabolic interpretation of the two congregations.

PART TWO: *Rituals that Live* is a series of themed essays that explore and interpret the essential *habitus* of the two congregations. Chapter Six argues that music acts to catalyse the Divine-human encounter, turning ‘secular’ space into ‘sacred’ space. In Chapter Seven I observe and interpret the somatic nature of the ritual field. Chapter Eight explores an imaginal process which weaves its revelatory efficacy. Chapter Nine explores the symbiotic relationship of *ritual* to *narrative* and Chapter Ten turns ethnographic observation from the central ritual matrix of Sunday morning to the missional activity of the congregations. Chapter Eleven argues for a particular missiology based on motifs and themes arising from the previous six chapters.

PART THREE: *Beyond the Written Word* concludes the thesis by arguing that the Charismatic *habitus* of the house-churches indicates a surprising turn of Protestant congregations to semiotics and orality. Following Catherine Pickstock (1998) and Walter J. Ong (1969) I contend that this turn is a pursuit of *presence* against the distancing effects of the written and propositional dogmas of Protestant ancestry.

Declaration

I declare that the PhD thesis:

Scottish Charismatic House Churches: Stories and Rituals

Has been composed by myself

Is my own work in its entirety

Has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification

Alistair W. Macindoe

Date

Statement on research involving human subjects

All respondents and specified participants in the observational analysis of the two congregations are anonymised, as are congregations to which they belong. The only exception to this is the Rev David Black who is named because he is a significant historical figure in the early Charismatic movement in Scotland as well as being the founder of BCC, one of the fieldwork sites in the thesis. Written permission was granted from his widow to name him in this thesis: this can be viewed on request. A level two application for ethical clearance to research youth work at Bishopbriggs was applied for and granted. Permission was gained from Disclosure Scotland to observe and if necessary to converse with the young people at the BCC Youth Café. The PVG Scheme Record can be viewed on request. Congregations who were the locus of the fieldwork are aware of and have given consent to being part of the research programme.

Alistair W. Macindoe

Date:

Scottish Charismatic House Churches: Stories and Rituals

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an exercise in interpretation: namely an interpretation of the storied and ritualistic behaviour of two Christian congregations of the Charismatic ‘house-church’ or ‘New Church’ genre which have been established within the last thirty years in or around Glasgow in the west of Scotland. The first I call *Bishopbriggs Charismatic Congregation* (BCC – a pseudonym) and the second *Bridgeton Charismatic Fellowship* (BCF - a pseudonym).

Two major fields of scholarship frame and influence the approach to this exercise.

Firstly, the exercise is framed by the field of research and commentary on the global rise of the Neo-Pentecostal, Renewal or Charismatic Movement in the latter part of the twentieth century, and its national impact, from which the house-churches derive the narrative, vitality, and rituals peculiar to their genre. Study into the Movement was pioneered by Walter J. Hollenweger in the 1970s (Hollenweger, 1972). More recent attempts to document its history and its various manifestations have been made by Hollenweger (1997), Harvey Cox (1995), Fr. Peter Hoken (1994) (within the Catholic Church), and by Andrew Walker (1988) in the house-church movement. Serious studies to document and interpret the Charismatic movement have been undertaken by David Martin (1990, 2002: South America, Europe and the U.K.), Thomas J. Csordas (1997, 2001: Catholics in the USA), May Ling Tan-Cow (2007: Singapore and the Far East) and Amos Yong (2000), who invites his readers to conceive how a pneumatological approach to religions can invigorate the wider ecumenical debate. Additionally, Karla Poewe (1994) brings together a number of scholars in a volume in which the phenomenon of Charismatic Christianity as a global culture is examined, and the Reformed Pentecostal scholar James K.A. Smith (2010) adds philosophical and theological reflection to the conversation in his book *Thinking in Tongues*.

Secondly, it is framed within the growing scholarly field of congregational studies pioneered by James F. Hopewell (1988), who studied and adapted ethnographic methodologies for this purpose. This was followed by Nancy Ammerman (1998) and others in the United States. In the United Kingdom Timothy Jenkins (1999), Peter Collins (2004), Matthew Guest, Karin Tusting and Linda Woodhead (2004), and Al Dowie (2002) have followed this lead.

These two fields of research, although independent of one another in most fields of scholarship, find a symbiosis in several volumes of congregational studies. Studies in Charismatic congregations, and in particular house-churches or New Churches (as they are now being termed)¹, appear in the general field of congregational studies on both sides of the Atlantic. In America for example, Daniel Albrecht (1999) has explored the rituals of three Pentecostal/Charismatic congregations in California, two of

¹ See Brierley, P. (ed.) 2004: 9.10 – 9.11

them being of the recently formed house-church genre. In England, Matthew Guest (2004) has explored the public discourse of a Charismatic Anglican congregation and Simon Coleman's (2000) study of the 'Word of Life' in Sweden gives insight into the "embodied disposition" and global impact of a burgeoning independent Charismatic congregation. In *On the Perception of Worship* Martin Stringer (1999) pays particular attention to the matters of ritual, worship and performance within congregations in Manchester, one of which is an Independent Charismatic Fellowship (i.e. a house-church) and Mark J. Cartledge (2003) has included a case study on a similar congregation, the Aigburth Community Church in Liverpool in his volume *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives*. These and other studies will be given greater consideration in Chapter Two. As I argue in Chapter One, the house-church movement in the United Kingdom is a twentieth century re-emergence of independent 'free church' Christianity. The origins and growth of this movement in the late 1960s and on into the 1980s is documented by Andrew Walker (1988). For Walker (1988) the term 'house-church' was already a misnomer, as many of the Charismatic groupings he describes in his book had outgrown members' homes as their principle meeting place and were moving into rented halls or into their own buildings. In Peter Brierley's (2004) helpful U.K. Church Census of 2003/2004 (Scottish Edition), these congregations are termed 'New Churches' and their statistics are considered along with other Free Church data. For the sake of clarity and consistency however, I remain with and use the term *house-church* throughout this thesis to denote this genre of faith community generally, and the congregations which inform my study in particular.

Congregational Studies: Ethnography and Theology

For Guest/Woodhead/Tusting (2004) the objective of congregational studies, following Hopewell, is to focus discovery on the nature and characteristics of congregations as organic and cultural phenomenon in their geographical and socio-economic settings. In this study I propose to do something similar and observe and interpret the character and identity of these recently formed congregations in Scotland, a nation which hitherto has been resistant to free-church movements such as those represented by the house-churches.

For Peter Collins (2004: 99), the central question of ethnographic research is "What does this group do, and how do they make sense of what they do? (and here *doing* includes *saying*)". Collins' (2004) statement begs more fundamental questions: 'What is ethnography?' and 'Why use it for Christian congregational studies?'

Ethnography

Ethnography is the favoured means of exploration in congregational studies. For Frances Ward (2004:99) it is a difficult methodology to define and a "messy" one at that. It is a catchall title for a particular kind of *qualitative* research and writing which stands in contrast to the *quantitative* methods

of research whose concern is statistics and numbers. Its primary concern is not to ask ‘how many?’ or ‘how long?’, but ‘what is it?’, ‘what does it look like?’, and ‘what does this mean?’

This method of research was common amongst anthropologists, having been pioneered by Clifford Geertz (1973, 1993), Marshall Sahlins (1976) and others in this field. Its use by sociologists in social studies of Western as opposed to non-western cultures followed (see for example Robson 1993: 148,149), and its use by scholars in the field of congregational studies is newer still. Its approach is based on Geertz’s reorientation of the concept of society from a fixed and solid entity with a preconceived defined and objective identity that is ‘out there’, to that of social life as a “webs of significance” formed by human interactivity which is fluid and interpersonal. He first stated this principle in 1973 in his book *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Geertz, 1973: 5):

Believing with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental research of law but an *interpretative* one in search of *meaning*. (Italics mine)

The above reorientation in the concept of society is accompanied in Geertz by a reorientation in epistemology from one of *calculation* to one of *interpretation*. He argues that in an abandonment in social sciences of a “reductionist concept of what they are about”, models of interpretation now “come more and more from the contrivances of cultural performance than from those of physical manipulation – from theatre, painting, grammar, literature, law (and) play” (Geertz, 1993: 22). This kind of language makes sense if we consider that what Geertz is proposing is not a numerical or reductionist analysis, but a picture to be painted with “thick description” (Geertz, 1993: 6). Given this reorientation of our concept of what society consists of then, the task of the social scientist (and that of the practical theologian) is to *interpret* what a group does and says in an effort of expose the contextualised meaning-making of their speech-acts. In the first instance then, the purpose of ethnography is to lay bare the processes involved in the production and expression of meaning.

Participant Observation & Guided Interviews

For Hopewell (1988: 88), as for other ethnographers and theologians in congregational studies, the fullest and most rewarding way to study the culture of a congregation is to attend to and observe its life within its fellowship and learn directly “how it interprets its experience and generates its behaviour”. This approach is called *participant observation*; and as the name indicates, involves the methodological necessity for the researcher to observe events whilst being a part of them. As Dowie (2002: 91) argues, “interpretation is the interplay or fusion of the horizon of the interpreter with the horizon of the hermeneutical object”.

Much of the data for understanding a congregation’s symbolic nature comes then from observation. However a more detailed and informed understanding comes from “guided interviews” (Hopewell, 1988: 90). As Ward (2004: 125) points out, the production of ethnographic research can be fraught

and complex, and is often emotionally charged. This was particularly so in my case: as a Pastor of a congregation similar to those in which my fieldwork was conducted, it was difficult not to become emotionally caught up when story-telling disclosed harrowing tales of personal struggle and pain. However, briefing the respondents with a number of set questions before meeting to interview them allowed for a degree of objectivity and put people at ease. This process evolved continually as the reflective process deepened and extended. Furthermore, giving interviewees freedom to ‘ramble’ through their stories sometimes produced the most rewarding and interesting answers. As a result the interviewing process often lasted longer than was intended: however the hope is that the ethnographic process creates a “coherent text from the scraps and fragments of life” (Ward, 2004: 126).

Participant observation of the *Bishopbriggs Charismatic Congregation* (BCC) began in the autumn of 2007, following the acceptance of my PhD proposal by the academic board. However, the process was interrupted by health issues at the end of the year. Recovery from my heart-attack lasted over a year, and research at Bishopbriggs continued in the spring of 2009 through to 2013. I periodically attended their Sunday gatherings and interviewed a cross-section of the congregation over an extended period which included times of growth and transition in the congregation. Similar fieldwork was carried out in *Bridgeton Charismatic Fellowship* (BCF) in the latter part of 2010 and continued through to 2013.

Theology

In the introduction to *Congregational Studies in the U.K.*, Linda Woodhead, Matthew Guest, and Karin Tusting (2004) categorise congregational studies as ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’, both with a number of subcategories. Extrinsic studies typified early forms of congregational study and were overwhelmingly concerned with “some broader good”, such as the “generation of social capital” in which churches were considered as playing a significant part. On the other hand they insist that intrinsic studies typify research which undertakes the “study of congregations for their own sake and for the sake of understanding them” (Guest/Tusting /Woodhead, 2004:2).

My own study in the two Scottish congregations follows both Hopewell (1988) and Dowie (2002) who in different contexts fuse an ‘extrinsic’ interest in theological purpose on an essentially ‘intrinsic’ examination of the character of congregations for their own sake. Hopewell (1988:11) for example, believes that the unique story of each congregation (intrinsic) represents (extrinsically) “the immediate outworking of human community redeemed by Christ”. Dowie (2002) on the other hand, whilst presenting his ethnography as a study in hermeneutics, is able to use this as a bridge for practical theological reflection. However it is clear that for both Hopewell and Dowie their overriding interest lies in a narrative-symbolic (Hopewell) or cultural (Dowie) interpretation.

A more recent appraisal of the relationship of ethnography to ecclesiology is given by Pete Ward (2012) and his fellow contributors in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*. Here more

weight is given to the essential need for ethnographic methodologies to be employed in order for a realistic and meaningful theology of church and church life to emerge. Ward (2012:2) writes, “We believe the turn towards fieldwork and ethnography represents a vital element in the on-going debates concerning the practice of the church”. His argument that an understanding of the church that is “simultaneously theological and social/cultural “recognises the reality of the “situatedness of the church” (Ward 2012: 2) in its human and social/cultural context. The need for ethnographic exploration, he maintains, arises from a “growing sense that there is often a disconnection between what we say doctrinally about the church and the experience of life in a local parish” (Ward 2012: 4). A symbiosis then of ethnography with ecclesiology has the potential “to make a significant and urgently needed contribution to the contemporary discussion of the church” (Ward 2012:4).

Paul Fiddes (2012:20), one of Ward’s (2012) contributors, argues similarly that for genuine and realistic ecclesial statements to be made, concern must be shown to the “interplay between belief and practices”. In other words, beliefs about the nature of church need to take into account the reality of human culture and the practices of Christian communities in order to be genuine. To do this he proposes a flowchart in which, in first instance, received Christian beliefs are presumed to be embedded and locally interpreted within a Christian community, built up over the years, and “practiced in rituals” (Fiddes 2012: 24). The task of the theologian ethnographer is one of engagement with the community to discover and interpret ways in which these stories and practices affect and permeate religious experience, church life and everyday life. For Fiddes (2012: 25), who argues that theology presumes “we live in the presence of a self-revealing God” who reveals himself in the *koinonia* of his people, such engagement and discovery allows for reflection which takes the contextualization of theology seriously. This argues Fiddes (2012:28), constitutes a “two-way movement” between pre-existing theories or principles and the particularities of a situation in order to posit fresh ecclesial models and “reconstruct theory and achieve new generalizations or universals”.

Intent, Theological Framework, and Statement of Original Contribution

Ethnographic research, documentation and interpretation of the *habitus* (stories and ritual practices) of two Charismatic house-church congregations are therefore in conversation with socio-cultural contextualisation, philosophical commentary and narrative theology throughout this thesis.

In the first place this requires recounting the history and socio-cultural narrative of each congregation. The ethnography entails a ‘thick’ description of congregational rituals, in particular of their central Sunday gatherings. This, along with personal stories gathered from interviews, satisfies the requirements of ethnography which “is a facilitation of a more or less believable account of local or contextualised meanings” (Collings2004: 99).

Secondly, philosophical commentary and theological reflection follows ethnographic research. Following Paul Fiddes (2012), I adapt a flow chart in which the recording of ritualistic enactment and of stories, both corporate and personal, provides the data for philosophical, theological and ecclesiological reflection, and supplies a primary theological framework.

Ethnographic studies into Charismatic congregations have been undertaken in the United States and in England. Congregational studies have been undertaken in Scotland. However no studies of Charismatic congregations have been initiated in Scotland, either in the historic denominations or in non-aligned faith communities, and this presents a veritable lacuna. My interpretation of the stories and of ritual practices of two Charismatic house-churches in the west of Scotland makes an original contribution to knowledge and an understanding of such congregations in the Scottish context.

The Contents in Three Parts

The contents of this thesis are arranged in three parts.

PART ONE: *Charismatic Renewal, Congregational Studies & Two Churches* consists of five chapters. Chapter One outlines the emergence of the Charismatic Movement, its emergence in England and Scotland, and the subsequent development of independent non-aligned congregations or house-churches in both countries. In Chapter Two I explore the literature and methodology which underpins the axis of interpretation I intend to employ in the thesis: the twin ethnographic tools of ‘ritual’ and ‘narrative’. I argue for consideration to be given to ‘ritual’ not only in terms of regular and specifically marked performances but also in terms of the habitual expression of human and religious identity in everyday life.

In Chapter Three I give an account of the history and formation of the two congregations which are the focus of my research, taking into consideration their geographical and socio-economic settings.

Chapter Four gives a more detailed account of the ethnographic methodology used in the two fieldwork sites. This chapter takes into account the analysis and descriptions already given in Chapters Two and Three but with further details on the number and nature of participant-observation events and the nature and rationale of interviews undertaken. This chapter relates the chosen methodology to the theological framework as well as to the themes which form the substance of **PART TWO**.

In Chapter Five, following Hopewell’s (1988) understanding of the narrative quality of congregational formation and his use of external narratives to interpret the characteristics of his congregations, I do something similar. Whereas Hopewell uses stories from classical mythology, I make use of the Parables of Jesus in order to present a characterization of these congregations both in terms of ethos and theology.

PART TWO: *Rituals that Live* forms the largest ethnographic and interpretative portion of the thesis and is a series of themed essays which explore the essential *habitus* of the two congregations. In the use of the term *habitus* I follow Csordas (1997:72) who has borrowed the term from Bourdieu (1977) who defines *habitus* as a “system of perduring dispositions”. For my purposes this is a useful overall concept as it synthesises ritualistic behaviour, practices, and general cultural environment in a single term.

In Chapter Six I argue that for the Charismatic congregations in this study, music and movement are an essential aspect of their *habitus* which act to catalyse the Divine-human encounter and thereby turn ‘secular’ space into ‘sacred’ space.

In Chapter Seven I observe and interpret the *somatic* nature of the ritual field of these congregations. I conclude that this leads to the decidedly embodied nature of the *habitus* which is to be considered as a function of *being-in-the-world* which promotes a “sacred self”.

In Chapter Eight I build on the multi-layered ritual matrix observed and interpreted in the previous two chapters, and explore the notion of an imaginal process which weaves its revelatory efficacy within the Charismatic *habitus*.

In Chapter Nine I explore further the symbiotic relationship of *ritual to narrative* arising from the ethnographic material gathered from the two congregations. I do this in relation to both the collective and personal narratives of the members of the two congregations. I argue that as a ‘gateway’ to the Divine, their ritual field amounts to ‘ritualised narrative’ which allows the Divine to become co-author of both collective and individual life stories.

In Chapter Ten I turn the ethnographic observation from the central ritual matrix of a Sunday morning to the missional activities of these congregations at other times during the week days. In this chapter I explore the notion of *permeable boundaries* and argue that an essential link is to be observed between their ritual field and their ability to impact their neighbourhoods with the gospel.

In Chapter Eleven I conclude **PART TWO** by arguing for a particular missiology arising from the themes explored in the previous five chapters. In so doing I abstract from the ethnographic account by reflecting theologically in a divergent mode rather than a convergent mode. Following Hauerwas, Lindbeck, Newbigin, Northcott and Bosch, I explore the idea that that the *witness* of a Christian community depends primarily on its character: that is, in its worship, behaviour, and lifestyle, and the essential inter-relatedness of these aspects of its *habitus*. I bring this missiological reflection to bear on the two congregations set in their wider communities of Bishopbriggs and Bridgeton.

PART THREE: *Beyond the Written Word* is a philosophical/theological interpretation of the Charismatic house-church *habitus* in its Protestant Scottish context, based on the ethnography of Part

Two. I argue that the Charismatic *habitus* of the house-churches indicates a surprising turn of these Protestant congregations to semiotics and orality. It is avowedly semiotic because encounter with their God consists of embodied rituals in dance, gestures, music, and poetic imagination. This is surprising because these groups have a heritage in Scottish Protestantism whose epistemology is firmly centred on a *written* text, namely the Bible. Following Catherine Pickstock (1998) and Walter J. Ong (1982) I argue that Charismatic doxological rituals function as a form of participatory ritual favoured by Radical Orthodoxy (Milbank, 1990, 1999) and a ‘secondary orality’ (Ong, 1982). I argue finally that although the house-churches follow assiduously the simplicity and the minimalist culture of their Protestant forbears, the turn to semiotics within this very minimalism is a search for *presence* which is ‘beyond the written word’.

PART ONE: *Charismatic Renewal, Congregational Studies & Two Churches*

CHAPTER ONE Charismatic Renewal: *The Emergence of House-Churches*

Introduction

The middle of the twentieth century saw two phenomena which have impacted Scotland and its churches: the accelerated rise of secularism with a corresponding erosion of Christendom, felt significantly within its European cradle, and the explosive rise of Neo-Pentecostalism or The Charismatic Movement in non-European countries, which subsequently impacted churches in the United Kingdom. The latter gave rise to ‘Charismatic’ expressions of Christian experience, motivating Christians both in and out with historic denominations to experiment with alternative forms of corporate identity.

The erosion of the national or historic churches in the United Kingdom, and in Scotland particularly, has a bearing on this study into the house-church phenomenon only in that following Callum Brown (2001) and Paul Heelas/Linda Woodhead (2005), a correlation between the two can be discerned. Callum Brown (2001) identifies the 1960s as the point at which secularism took hold of the popular discourse and began to seriously erode the Christianity which dominated Britain.² This is also the decade in which the Charismatic movement started to impact the United Kingdom.³ Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead (2005) argue for a “subjective turn” away from ‘religion’ to ‘spirituality’ in the latter part of the twentieth century and identify (some of) The Charismatic Movement as part of this. Hence this history of religious and cultural change forms the context for the rise of The Charismatic Movement and for the ecclesial developments still emerging from its aftermath.

In this chapter I intend to trace briefly the general history of The Charismatic Movement and the subsequent emergence of house-churches in the United Kingdom, mapping their story in the Scottish context in particular.

²Brown (2001: 181) mounts a powerful case against the popular secularisation theory that this process began with the “age of Enlightenment ‘rationality’ ” in the nineteenth century and with the slow decline of Christianity. He argues that the secularisation we know in the twenty first century and is eroding the Christianity so dominant in the previous two centuries was rather the result of a “discourse change” in the 1960s – especially the late 1960s.

³ The ‘Fountain Trust’, an organisation set up to promote Charismatic ‘Renewal’ was inaugurated in 1964, and was influential in both Anglican and Roman Catholic churches (Walker, 1988: 49, 50).

Neo-Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement

The major phenomenon which forms the background to this study is the global rise of what has been termed Neo-Pentecostalism or more commonly, The Charismatic Movement.⁴ Broadly speaking this movement claims for its members the exuberant gifts of the Spirit (*charismata*) originally manifested on the first day of Pentecost as narrated in Acts 2. In popular imagination this movement is associated with ‘speaking in tongues’ (*glossolalia*), exuberant worship, use of bodily movements such as the ‘raising of hands’, and claims of physical healings. David Martin (2008:3) claims that “Pentecostalism is *the* contemporary religio-cultural phenomenon ...and represents a global indigenization of the original Methodist ‘enthusiasm’ that mobilized migrants in the Industrial Revolution” (Italics original).

As noted earlier, Hollenweger was one of the first scholars to give serious attention to this phenomenon. In *The Pentecostals* (1972) he gives a comprehensive overview of the movement from a history of its inception in classical Pentecostalism in 1906, in the racially mixed mission in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, to a discussion of some of its major tenets both in classical Pentecostalism and as they became modified and adapted to the contemporary world-wide movement. In *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (1997) he develops his theme to include the larger Charismatic Movement of the mid twentieth century and notes the unprecedented growth of a Christian movement he names “Pentecostalism/Charismatic/Independentism”, from small and insignificant beginnings to “almost 500 million in less than a century; a growth which is unique in church history not excluding the early centuries of the church” (Hollenweger, 1997: 1). In this review of the movement, Hollenweger (1997: 5) suggests that Pentecostalism has broken out of the narrow confines of its early years into a much broader sphere of theological debate, of critical appraisal of its past, and with a global appeal which is the “Charismatic Renewal Movement”.

In *Tongues of Fire* David Martin, who studies focus largely on the Latin American experience, gives a different and insightful perspective on the beginnings and growth of the movement. He suggests that its present impact owes its origins and growth to “one central element in the Protestant pattern of social change that is Methodism as it is worked out in Anglo-Saxon cultures” (Martin, 1990: 27). He argues that there have been three waves of Anglo-Saxon Protestant religiosity which mirror and follow each other, the third being global Pentecostalism (Martin, 1990: 27). He argues for parallels between England in the eighteenth century, when Methodism “widened the rent in the ‘sacred canopy’ which the Anglican Church tried to maintain over English Society”, and contemporary Pentecostalism

⁴ W.J.Hollenweger (1997) calls it ‘Pentecostalism’. Harvey Cox (1995) terms the movement ‘Pentecostal Spirituality’. Simon Coleman (2000) who writes mainly about the modern movement calls it ‘Charismatic Christianity’.

which “now performs similar roles with respect to Catholicism in Latin America” (Martin, 1990: 27). In *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*, Martin (2002) reworks the links with Methodism. He writes, “because Methodism had escaped the social and ecclesiastical hierarchies linked to territory, to automatic belonging, and to state power, it was a cultural revolution rather than a political one” (Martin, 2002:27). In a backward reflection on the *cultural* revolution that was fostered by Methodism, he makes further links between the modern spread of Pentecostalism and the “new phase of global capitalism in which culture is increasingly recognised as a key variable, including such attributes as responsibility, discipline and trust” (Martin, 2002: 71).

From Pentecostalism to The Charismatic Movement

Although, following Hollenweger (1972, 1997) and Cox (1995), the roots of early classical Pentecostalism can be traced to the first decade of the twentieth century in Azusa Street, Los Angeles⁵ and to South Africa⁶, its modern expansion to The Charismatic Movement can be charted only from the early 1960s within the Episcopal and Roman Catholic Churches in the United States and in main stream Protestantism in Latin America.⁷ In April 1960, Dennis Bennett surprised his Episcopalian congregation in California by telling them that his spiritual odyssey had led him to “speaking in tongues”.⁸ The origins of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal can be traced to 1967, which unlike its Protestant counterparts, “began in a manner that attracted immediate public attention” (Hoken, 1994: 36). Hoken (1994) suggests that the distinctiveness of this movement in the Catholic Church rises from its university campus origins, the commitment of its pioneers to their Church, and a context which lay within the parameters of the general renewal brought about by the Second Vatican Council. In particular he notes that the universities of Notre Dame, Duquesne, and Michigan State (Hoken, 1994: 37) were instrumental in this regard before the movement migrated to the Catholic Church in England and the United Kingdom.⁹

The Charismatic Movement in England

In the United Kingdom and in England in particular, The Charismatic Movement began

⁵ See Cox (1995:48-65) for an account of the ‘Azusa Street Revival’ in 1906 and the years following.

⁶ See Hollenweger (1997: 42 -53) in which he identifies South African integrated churches as originators of classical Pentecostalism.

⁷ Although Latin America had classical Pentecostal denominations as elsewhere in the world, the modern explosion dates from the early sixties and is linked to ‘Evangelical Protestantism’ as we have noted from Martin (1990: 71, 72). See also Hollenweger(1997: 117 -131) for further insight into the links between Wesleyanism and Pentecostalism in Latin America.

⁸ See Fr. Peter Hoken(1994: 17). See also Karla Poewe (ed.)(1994: 3) who attributes the ‘real beginning’ of the ‘Charismatic Renewal’ as such to the Episcopal Dennis Bennett in 1960.

⁹ Hollenweger makes similar observations regarding the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. He claims that some contacts were made in 1962 between Catholics and Pentecostals in Holland but that the “real breakthrough” came in 1966/67 at the “faculty of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh” (Hollenweger, 1997: 153,154).

through external influences on the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. This indicates the surprising way in which such a movement is reshaping global Christianity in the reverse direction from the European missionary movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. David Martin (2008) commenting in the Times Literary Supplement on this ‘reverse flow’ of Christianity from Africa to Europe and North America writes, “Those who gathered at the great missionary conference in Edinburgh in 1910 could never have imagined the relevance of events in Azusa St. four years earlier for their enterprise”.

In the 1960s and 1970s Neo-Pentecostal experience spread through several of the national churches in England, especially in the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches (Walker, 1988: 49). In 1964, Michael Harper, an Anglican priest, became the founding leader of The Fountain Trust, an organisation that promoted Charismatic Renewal in the United Kingdom; particularly amongst main line denominations (see Walker, 1988: 49, 50, 61). In 1980 the Fountain Trust folded when Michael Harper decided that it had served its purpose (Walker, 1988: 62).

The House Churches

Although The Charismatic Movement found its early home in the main line denominations, Andrew Walker (Walker, 1988: 50) suggests that “other Pentecostals were beginning to have their doubts” about the ability of the “old wineskins” to contain the “new wine of the Spirit”. They began to gather in the “front room” of people’s homes, in community halls and youth centres, and sometimes in the lounges of hotels in order to “experience freely” their newly discovered Charismatic expressions of worship (Walker, 1988:52-55).¹⁰

In *Restoring the Kingdom: the Radical Christianity of the House Church Movement* Andrew Walker (1988) outlines a short history of the house-church movement from its beginnings in the late 1950s to its flourishing in the 1980s. Between 1958 and 1975 differences in ecclesial vision and leadership style led to various factions being formed within the emerging house-churches. Two main factions of this movement are labelled R1 (Restoration 1) and R2 (Restoration 2) in Walker’s analysis (Walker, 1988: 30, 31). In its infancy, as the movement emerged in the utopian fervour of the 1960s, the vision to ‘restore the church’ to its ‘original’ and intended purity was common to all streams. However, as Walker notes, the leaders and structures of R1 were more prescriptive and formalised in intention than those of the less authoritarian and undemanding R2. Nevertheless all factions of the movement saw themselves as the natural successors to early radical reformers such as the Anabaptists ¹¹(in the ‘recovery’ of believers’

¹⁰See also Roger Forster (1986): one of the earliest pioneers in this new movement, he gives insight into how ‘house-churches’ came into being.

¹¹ See also Roger Foster (2000:55) in *Coming Home: Stories of Anabaptists in Britain and Ireland*. Foster, an influential pioneer of the house-church movement writes: “Twenty Years ago, I could sit in a room full of clergy and as they went round describing who they were and their backgrounds, I described my theology as Anabaptist

baptism), and to the later outbreak of Puritanism (Walker, 1988: 139).¹² However Walker suggests that these “new dissenters were from Brethren, classical Pentecostal, Evangelical Free Baptists, Salvation Army, and various non-aligned churches” (Walker, 1988: 51). Some of the early leaders of the house-churches in R1 and R2 were Arthur Wallis (Open Brethren) John Noble (Salvation Army) Gerald Coates (Brethren) (Walker, 1988: 44,51,52) and later on, Bryn Jones (from 1968 onwards), who came from a classical Pentecostal background (Walker, 1988: 65). Many of the founding churches of the nascent house-church movement were situated in the affluent South and South East of England (Walker, 1988: 63) although in 1969 Bryn Jones moved the headquarters of the R1 Churches north to Bradford (Walker, 1988: 65, 66).

Walker’s claims regarding the early origins of house-church movement and its historical ancestry contradict a widely held view that these congregations were made up mainly of disaffected Anglicans or Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholics were generally faithful to their denomination and perceived The Charismatic Movement, as we have noted from Hoken, as remaining within the scope and context of the Second Vatican Council. No doubt some disaffected Anglicans joined the ranks of the house-churches; however the evidence of its leadership (and Walker’s research) suggests that this movement was made up generally of classical Evangelicals and Pentecostals who had discovered or rediscovered what they called a “baptism in the Spirit”, which meant they no longer fitted into or were welcome within their own denominations.¹³

I suggest then that although the overall Charismatic phenomenon can be compared to the Methodist “enthusiasm” of the nineteenth century (Martin 2002, 2008), the House-Church movement as such is not to be seen as a re-emergence of Methodism – a protest against the “sacred canopy of the Anglican church” (Martin, 1990) – but as a movement in its own right with concerns to ‘restore’ New Testament ecclesiology. Only as a secondary issue did this movement conceive of its actions as

and I was mocked. It wouldn’t happen today. But then many clergy were ignorant of the Anabaptist story. I believe it is important for “new churches” and “new” historic churches to understand the authenticity, historicity and respectability of the theology and practice they inherit. Any form of recovery or restorationism (in which even many territorial churches also now believe) has got a historical model in Anabaptism which other churches can draw from and be blessed by. Anabaptism is for today”.

¹² See Alan P.F. Sell in Vischner L. (ed) 2003 *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches Past and Present* where he notes that in the mid sixteenth century a stream of more radical Puritans became known as Separatists (84) whom he claims were the Charismatics of their day (89) in their emphasis “on extempore prayer” and their “predilection for prophesying during worship” (89). I suggest that their insistence on nonconformity also makes them early harbingers of the house-church movement.

¹³ Classical Evangelical Churches were generally uncomfortable with both the theology and the expression of The Charismatic Movement. Cox (1995: 15) highlights the differences between these two groups by invoking an opposition between textual and tactile orientations to faith. Hollenweger (1997:191) puts the difference pithily, “Fundamentalists mount arguments. Pentecostals give testimony”. Coleman (2000: 25) explains the ‘unease’ that ‘Fundamentalists’ felt with Charismatics as a difference in ‘historical factors’ which formed them - the former coming from Calvinistic ones and the latter from the Arminianism of Wesleyian and Holiness groups. Martin (1990: 42) notes that the newer generation of Latin American Evangelicals have more readily accepted the Charismatic Movement – a factor which underscores his argument that in Latin America the movement is having the same significance as Methodism did in 18th Century England.

having an anti-establishment stance: although one could argue that its stated goals of ‘restoration’ to ‘New Testament Christianity’ incorporated a *de facto* non-aligned stance of protest. Therefore, although this new movement regarded the Evangelical ‘enthusiasm’ of Methodism as spiritual ancestry (Walker, 1988: 139), I concur with Walker that the immediate forebears of these latest non-aligned congregations are to be seen more in later movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth century: the Irvingites (after Edward Irving 1792- 1834), the Plymouth Brethren, classical Pentecostalism, all of whom who shared ‘restorationist’ ecclesiological thinking¹⁴.

Ichthus

Another stream of the house-church movement lay outside of the R1 and R2 churches: the Ichthus movement. During his research for his book, Andrew Walker began a lasting friendship with the leader of this movement, Roger Foster. Walker states (1988:37)

Headed by Roger Forster (one of the finest minds in the Evangelical constituency that I have ever encountered), this organisation with its headquarters in Forest Hill is essentially a mission group.... Whilst remaining a committed Evangelical, Forster is open to Catholic and Orthodox insights. His work is welcome in Restoration Two and admired in Restoration One”.

As both congregations in this study have been strongly influenced by the *Ichthus* movement, it is worth noting an extract from their ‘Vision & Values’ statement (Sidebar 1).

Sidebar 1: Ichthus Vision and Values

1. Trinitarian – a belief in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2. Evangelical & Evangelistic– with roots in the Bible and the early church they strive to be ‘radical’. Evangelism is through words, works and ‘miracles of grace and healing’.

3. Meeting Structures: *Celebration, Congregation and Cell*. A ‘Celebration’ is when ‘congregations’ come together and can be up to 500 people or more. A ‘Congregation’ is a local body of believers of up to 150 people. The ‘congregation’ then is divided into Cells for closer bonding and prayer of up to 12 people.

4. Philosophy: *Race, Age, Gender*. All people are of equal worth regardless of race, age, or gender. Several London congregations are led by women and/or those of Afro-Caribbean origin.

Extract from *ICHTHUS* (2011) Statement of Vision and Values. Available at:
www.ichthus.org.uk/aboutus (Accessed September and November 2011)

¹⁴See Walker, 1988: 43, 226-246, 247- 265

Edward Irving, Revival Movements, the Charismatic Phenomenon, and the House-Churches in Scotland

The Scottish church has a history in Pentecostalism which predates the events at Azusa Street by nearly one hundred years. In the *Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving*, Gordon Strachan (1973: 13) notes that on the 28th March 1830, Miss Mary Campbell “spoke in tongues and some days later was miraculously healed of consumption at her home at Fernicarry on the Gareloch in the Parish of Roseneath, Dunbartonshire”. Across the Clyde in Port Glasgow, James MacDonald and his brother George, friends of Mary Campbell, also reported miraculous healings and the gift of ‘speaking in tongues’ (Dorries 2002: 41). When this news from his homeland of the outbreak of ‘spiritual gifts’ reached Edward Irving in London, he was most anxious to discover whether this was linked to his theological understanding of the humanity of Christ, a conclusion Mary Campbell was already making in her letters to Irving (Dorries 2002:45; Strachan 1973:15,16). Inevitably the homes of Mary Campbell and the Macdonald family became the source of pilgrimage for the convinced and the curious (Dorries 2002: 41) and delegations were sent from prominent church men to investigate.¹⁵

By the autumn of 1830 attention was turning to Edward Irving’s *National Scotch Church*, Regent Sq. London. In October 1831 “outbursts of tongues and prophesy interrupted the worship services” at the Regent Sq. Church (Strachan 1978:13). Irving exercised a considerable ministry at the Scotch Church, preaching to thousands at his regular services, and allowed *charismata* to be exercised. In time however Irving himself came to grief because of his doctrine of the peccability of Christ, a theology for which he was condemned as a heretic and deposed from the Church of Scotland in May 1832 (Dorries: 2002: 50). His congregation moved to premises in Newman Street in October 1832 and began the formation of a new ecclesiastical body, the Catholic Apostolic Church. Having suffered from ill health for much of his life, Irving died of consumption (tuberculosis) in 1843 on a preaching trip to Scotland. He was forty-two (see Strachan 1978: 14; Dorries 2002: 58, 59).

Despite being condemned as a heretic and his early death, Irving’s acceptance and practice of *charismata* in his congregation is considered by some scholars to be an early portent of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements of the 20th Century¹⁶, and by Walker to be a genuine antecedent for the later House-Church Movement, in particular in his endorsement (and that of the Catholic Apostolic Church) of the fivefold ministries of Ephesians Chapter 4¹⁷. He was to have further influence on the beginnings of the Charismatic Movement of the mid-20th Century in Scotland

¹⁵ Thomas Chalmers sent a delegation to investigate and the noted lay minister Thomas Erskine spent several weeks at the Macdonald home observing proceedings on a daily basis (Dorries 2002: 41,42)

¹⁶ See Strachan 1978: 19 where he states “The beliefs of the various branches of the contemporary Pentecostal Churches are so similar to those of Irving and his followers that one might suspect that they have been handed down by word of mouth or rediscovered like some Deuteronomy of the Spirit”.

¹⁷ See Strachan 1978:19 and Walker 1988: 234-239. The so called fivefold ministries of Ephesians 4 are those of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher.

through the work of the Scottish Presbyterian, Gordon Strachan (quoted above), in the publication of his PhD thesis in 1973, *The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving* (See Black 2013:3).

In a pre-published paper, the Rev. Dr Alasdair Black (2013), the Senior Pastor of Stirling Baptist Church, argues that the leaders of the mid-20th Century Charismatic Movement in Scotland were strongly influenced by the earlier Revival Movements in Wales (1904 -1905) and in the Isle of Lewis (1949 - 1952). Black contends that both of these movements must be distinguished from the later Pentecostal Movements in that they were part of a Holiness Movement which did not fully encourage the use *charismata*, but did emphasise the need for a ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit’ as a necessary experience for holiness, evangelism and Christian ministry (Black 2013:10). As a direct result of visits to the Welsh Revival movement, Charlotte Chapel “experienced something of Revival” (1905/06) as did Stirling Baptist and Bristo Baptist in Edinburgh (Black 2013:15).

Black (2013:19) argues that the ‘Lewis Revival’ (1949) “represents a highly significant moment for the birth of the Scottish Charismatic movement. Although the Scottish charismatic movement was clearly born out of transatlantic antecedents in the nineteen sixties, Lewis exposed Scottish evangelicals to a largely forgotten post-millennial mind set.” (Black 2013: 19) In 1951, Arthur Wallis, a principle mover in the Charismatic Movement of the mid-20th Century and a leader in the emergent house-church movement, visited the Isle of Lewis. As result he wrote and published his seminal work *In the Day of Thy Power* published in 1976 (Black 2013:22, 23). Black (2013: 23) argues that this was not just a history of the events in Lewis, but became a “blue-print for the subsequent rise of the Charismatic and Restorationist movements in the UK and New Zealand”. Wallis was to have an influence on the Charismatic Movement in Scotland as well as in England through his visits to meetings organised by the Scottish Bible teacher Campbell McAlpine, who also was to become a “highly influential figure in the early days of Charismatic movement on both sides of the Atlantic” (Black 2013: 24).

Black maintains that the early leaders of the mid-20th Century nevertheless drew a distinction between the ‘revival movements’ in Wales and Lewis, and the Charismatic Movement of the 1960s. Whereas the revival movements were essentially borne out of ‘pre-millennialism’ (including the theology of Edward Irving), he argues, the Charismatic Movement was deeply influenced by the ‘post-millennialism’ of such writers as Wallis, and this view held the hope that the whole of society could be profoundly affected the power of the Holy Spirit (Black 2013:25). This vision of a transformed society strongly influenced Scottish church leaders, and in 1965 some of these came together to eagerly seek the “experience of the Spirit” and “the gift of tongues” and to participate in the movement which was by now affecting the rest of the U.K., in particular the English churches. These Scottish leaders included the Rev. David Black (father of the Rev Alasdair Black quoted above)

whose story unfolds fully later in this chapter and also in Chapter Four, the Rev. Douglas McBain (Wishaw Baptist) and the Rev. Tom Smail (Motherwell, Church of Scotland) (Black 2013: 1).

The growing interest in the Charismatic phenomenon by Scottish church leaders¹⁸ led to conferences being held in Glasgow, to which Arthur Wallis was invited to speak, and in Motherwell, to which Dennis Bennett, the American Episcopalian, was invited (Black 2013:25).

The promotion of the Charismatic Movement by Scottish church leaders also led to an increased link to the Fountain Trust (the English movement noted above) and in 1974 the Rev. David Black was appointed to lead the Scottish expression of the movement *Scottish Churches Renewal*.

In *The Triune God and the Charismatic Movement: A Critical Appraisal of Trinitarian Theology and Charismatic Experience from a Scottish Perspective* James Purves (2004) gives an account of the impact of The Charismatic Movement and the subsequent emergence of house-churches in Scotland. As happened in the U.S.A. and in England, Purves writes that the Charismatic Movement began in the *historic* Scottish churches (Purves, 2004: 9):

The first development of a peculiarly Scottish dimension to the Charismatic Renewal came in 1971, with a meeting held in the Renfrew Church Centre. This was organised by David Black who in 1974 became the first director Scottish Churches Renewal. Black's appointment reflected the hope that there might occur within the Scottish context what had been accomplished by the Fountain Trust through its successful promotion of spiritual renewal in England.

At that time, claims Purves, expectations were high within the Charismatic communities in the historic churches that these churches "could be renewed" (Purves, 2004:10)¹⁹. In keeping with these expectations David Black also facilitated and participated in symbolic and hopeful ecumenical Charismatic gatherings with the emerging Scottish Catholic Charismatic communities²⁰, a connection for which he was criticised by fellow Baptists (Black 2013: 33).

Scottish Catholic Charismatic Renewal

The advent of Charismatic Renewal within Catholic circles in Scotland followed similar patterns and time frames to those in Protestant denominations. As noted above, Catholic Charismatics tended to maintain links with their own churches although they also formed prayer meetings and committed faith communities of their own. The following information comes from an interview in March 2013

¹⁸ Alasdair Black's (2013) paper is dependent on the diaries of his father David Black in which he notes that he was also joined in the Charismatic quest in 1965 by Gordon Strachan (CofS), Brian Casebow (CofS), Ken McDougall (Methodist), and Douglas Ross (Baptist) (Black 2013:26).

¹⁹ Purves (2004: 10) writes that in 1974 David Black, in an editorial in *Renewal* 54, noted that "the SCR is affiliated to the Mission, Development and Unity committee of the Scottish Council of Churches which now recognises that the Charismatic Movement has a vital role to play in the ecumenical movement".

²⁰ In 1977 David Black organised joint Charismatic meetings to which Cardinal Suenens, the prominent Catholic Charismatic was invited to address, having visited the Cardinal in his Palace in Mialines near Brussels in 1976 (Black 2013:33).

with an aging David McGill whose activities in the Scottish Catholic Charismatic Renewal were contemporaneous with those of the Rev. David Black, with whom he formed a close relationship.

David McGill recalls how he was invited to a “renewal meeting” in October 1975²¹. His immediate response was “renewal meetings are for Protestants” and he was “a good Catholic”. Nevertheless he was persuaded to go. This was a very painful time in the lives of the McGill family, as it followed the tragic death of two of their children in the near past. Sometime later he was invited again, and his response was “this is for good people”. However he picked up a book his wife had given him, and said to her that if the first thing he read persuaded him to attend, he would do so. The first sentence he read was “the Devil will try to tell you that you are not good enough!” (McGill exclaims and give a wry chuckle). That night he went again to the ‘renewal meeting’ and “spent the whole night (prostrate) on the floor, praising God and speaking in tongues”. A few weeks later he was “putting out the chairs for the next meeting” and beginning to organise ‘renewal’ prayer meetings in Glasgow. Days of ‘renewal’ followed, and this was followed by weekend ‘renewal’ retreats. In November 1977 they had their first national conference attended by 400 people. The Right Rev. Charles Renfrew, the Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Glasgow was appointed by the Church to liaise between the church and the growing Renewal Movement. In 1978 another conference was held in Bearsden to which Ralph Martin, the well-known American Catholic Charismatic was invited to speak. From 1980 to 1981 David McGill and his son-in-law were convicted of the need to form a faith community whose prime focus was the “call to evangelise”. This was accompanied by visits to *Christ the King*, Ann Arbor, the burgeoning Catholic Charismatic community in Michigan, U.S.A. In January 1981 David and John founded the *Community of the Risen Christ* based in Glasgow.

Along with his involvement and growth in Catholic Charismatic activity, McGill recalls that he formed a personal and “spiritual” friendship with the Rev. David Black of Scottish Churches Renewal, and that they were nick-named “the two Davids” by those in both Charismatic communities. *The Community of the Risen Christ* continues today to further its “call to evangelism” with particular emphasis placed on the spiritual “formation of young people”.

The Rise and Formation of House-Churches in Scotland

Other factors were also beginning to shape the Charismatic Movement in Scotland. Within the organisation now calling itself ‘Scottish Churches Renewal’ (SCR), led by the Rev. David Black, there came an awareness that on the one hand there was a rejection of ‘spiritual renewal’ by many within the historic Protestant churches, and on the other of “further developments in the USA and England which married the Charismatic Movement to newly-evolving church structures” (Purves, 2004: 10). As was the case in England, growing dissatisfaction with the lack of pace within the historic Protestant churches led to the emergence of groups of Charismatic Christians meeting in their

²¹All quotations from David McGill come from an interview on the 19th March 2013.

homes, and in association with their English counterparts, forming independent ‘Fellowships’ (Purves, 2004: 10-12). As also was the case with their English counterparts, the early leaders of house-churches in Scotland were not from the historic churches of Presbyterian or Roman Catholic persuasion (Purves, 2004: 10-12). Scottish Churches Renewal disbanded in 1984 (Purves, 2004: 11), and the Rev. David Black left the Baptist Union of Scotland to continue in the founding of a congregation in Bishopbriggs. This is one of the congregations which, in its present life and ethos, forms part of the focus of my fieldwork. Black’s story and that of the Bishopbriggs congregation (whose name was changed several times) is told more fully in Chapter Four.

For the purpose of arguing that in Scotland, as in England, the nascent house-church movement was also a realignment of existing ‘free church’ Evangelicals, it is helpful to identify three other Scottish house-church leaders who were contemporaries of the Rev. David Black. Hugh Clarke was brought up in the Salvation Army and entered the Elim Pentecostal ministry. In 1981 Clarke founded a new independent Charismatic church in Coatbridge, which was to become “one of the largest new churches” (Purves, 2004: 12). Brian Hayes was a Pastor in the Elim Pentecostal denomination and founding leader of the Edinburgh City Fellowship with headquarters in South Clerk St. (Purves, 2004: 24): this congregation continues today as the Community Church, Edinburgh and is a member of the network of churches to which the two house-church congregations in this study belong. Stewart Brunton was another early leader of the house-church movement in Scotland. His background was the YMCA in Dumbarton. He founded the Gate Fellowship in Dundee, and developed links with the ‘Pioneer’ house-church movement in England, which was led by Gerald Coates, who founded yet another grouping of house-churches in the London area (Purves, 2004: 12). These three men exercised considerable influence in the formation of independent Charismatic churches in Scotland which continues today through the churches they founded.

House-Churches: Past Roots and Present Culture

I now draw together some of the threads of the evidence presented so far, explore some fresh perspectives, and argue that the emergence of independent Charismatic churches in the United Kingdom has both historical precedent and present day cultural roots.

Classic Pentecostalism (Elim and Assemblies of God) dates to the beginning of the twentieth century when, according to Martin (2002) and Brown (2001) the Evangelical discourse still had powerful, culturally felt themes in the United States and Britain, a continuation of the late 1790s and 1800s. In the United Kingdom, Evangelicalism reached its peak in the 1950s, when in 1954 1.9 million people attended the Billy Graham crusades in London – and of particular interest to this study – 1.2 million attended the Scottish ones (Brown, 2001: 173). Thereafter there came a sharp decline in the Evangelical discourse, when, as Callum Brown (2001) argues, secular narratives became more

persuasive and attractive to the popular psyche. Brown (2001: 176) argues that in the United Kingdom, the 1960s was a key decade in “ending the ‘Enlightenment project’”, and the disappearance of an “agreed reality”. A decade of experimentation and experience seeking accompanied this decline. Brown (2001:176) suggests that the immediate victim of this was organised Christianity, yet in an ironic turn of events, it also gave opportunity to an experience-centred Christianity named The Charismatic Movement. Writing later in a volume which reflected on the sociological impact of The Charismatic Movement, Walker (1997:30) identifies the movement with the ‘spirit of the age’ in that “in the churches it reflected the idealism, the heightened experience, and the hedonism of the counter-culture even though ideologically they were opposed to each other”. From a wholly different and more critical perspective, Steve Bruce (1998: 224) in *The Charismatic Movement and the Secularisation Thesis* contends that The Charismatic Movement has done little to stem the “broad paradigm” that is “secularization”. Nevertheless, he argues, Charismatic Christianity, with its emphasis on the “experimental” is likely to be exactly the kind of religion that would emerge in a secular society.

House-Churches and Historic Roots

The Charismatic Movement proper was birthed in the United Kingdom from external influences in the Anglican and Roman Catholic Church. Nevertheless as Walker (1988:50) points out, the Protestant house-church movement had its *doctrinal* roots in the Evangelical discourse of the earlier part of the twentieth century, and its *ecclesiological* roots in those Evangelical churches which were of a ‘separatist’, ‘restorationist’ and ‘fundamentalist’ inclination such as the Christian Brethren.²² Walker, who was contemporaneous with the events he was describing, and had held discussions and interviews with many of the house-church leaders he was writing about, notes that many of them felt alienated by the mainstream Charismatics (Anglican and Catholic) as they “felt rooted in the Reformation” (Walker, 1988: 50). Walker (1988: 52) writes that only in the 1970s did the Charismatic Movement begin to accelerate and with it came a parallel acceleration in the birth of house-churches. Thus, for example, John Noble (a founding figure in R2) started a house-church in his living room at Ilford (London) at the beginning of the 1970s (Walker 1988: 52). Walker (1988: 52) notes that John Noble was from a Salvation Army background, and that although he knew Michael Harper when he was a curate at All Souls Langham Place in London, he had little in common with established Christianity.

²² Walker (1988) argues that many of the early leaders of the house-churches in the U.K. had deep roots in the ‘Christian Brethren’ or the ‘Plymouth Brethren’ movement which began in 1831 to 1834 under the influence of Henry Drummond and John Nelson Darby and was prominent in Evangelicalism at the beginning of the 20th Century (Walker, 1988: 228,229).

House-Churches and Contemporary Culture

In *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*, Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead (2005:2) argue that The Charismatic Movement is in keeping with a “major cultural shift” which amounts to the “massive *subjective* turn of modern culture” (Italics mine).

Heelas and Woodhead (2005), in agreement with Bruce (1998), arrive at the same conclusion although arguing from different perspectives that the emergence “subjective-life spirituality” is to be expected in the current cultural climate and in particular as a result of the decline of the discourse of “life-as-religion”. With the emergence in some quarters of “subjective-life spirituality”, they argue forcefully for the inevitable “co-existence of secularization and sacralisation in the contemporary landscape” (Heelas/Woodhead, 2005:77). Heelas and Woodhead (2005:3) propose a typology which distinguishes between “life in the congregational domain” and “life in the holistic milieu”. Linked to this move *away* from organised and controlling religion, is the move to the “subjective-life”, to autonomy and independence. In this scenario it is envisaged then whatever collective activities are carried out are voluntary rather than prescribed, and become a sharing of the “subjective-life”. I argue that the house-church *raison d’être* bears a strong resemblance to this phenomenon which Heelas and Woodhead (2005) claim pervades our contemporary cultural landscape. The aim of living life in “deep connection with the experiences of self-in-relation” is the aim of “life in the holistic milieu” (Heelas/Woodhead, 2005:3) and readily fits the characterization of the house-church *habitus*. As such I suggest that the house-church movement not only has strong ecclesiological links to the past and can claim historical precedent for its separatist ethos, but that it is also a child of its own cultural age in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Concluding Remarks: Alliances and Realignment

Despite the historical and cultural differences which have forged the identities of the different emphases and streams of the Charismatic movement in the latter part of the twentieth century, new alliances and realignments between the historic and the ‘New Churches’ (or house-churches) are being formed in this early part of the twenty-first century; this is exemplified in the expansion of the *Alpha Course*. The original impetus for this course can be traced to the growth in America of the ‘new-church’ or ‘independent Charismatic church’ movement, in particular that of *The Vineyard*²³ stream. In the spirit of cross-pollinating influences experienced within the Charismatic Movement in the last decade of the twentieth century John Wimber, the late leader of American based Vineyard Ministries, forged a close alliance with Holy Trinity Brompton, London, an Anglican Church responsible for the founding and promotion of *Alpha*. This course has exercised national and global

²³ For references to the Vineyard Ministries see Martin (2002:41), and not too complementarily – Hollenweger,(1997:232).

influence, in particular on Charismatics; and in all denominations from Roman Catholic groups to Church of Scotland parish churches to Baptist congregations, and notably, in the Scottish house-church congregations which are the subject of my fieldwork.²⁴

In Scotland the separatist movements of the 19th Century did not have the same impact as they did in England. As a result the Scottish house-churches did not experience the same growth as their English counterparts in the 1970s or 1980s. The Protestant and Catholic churches continue to have influence in the popular culture, particularly in the West of Scotland where it continues to be fuelled by sectarian allegiance.

However this overall picture is changing rapidly, and is becoming fluid and pluralistic as the influence of secularism is increasing on the national culture. Both the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church continue to experience steep and rapid losses of membership;²⁵ the growth of other religions, in particular Islam, keeps pace with the natural and immigrant growth of ethnic groupings, and various forms of ‘folk religion’ play their part in the popular psyche – that is the growth of ‘spirituality’ as claimed by Heelas/Woodhead (2005).²⁶ New forms of Christian expression continue to emerge both inside and outside the historic churches. These include a renewed interest in Celtic spirituality; a ‘new monasticism’, and other forms of relational living linking worship to social action, such as is found in the Iona communities. Recent aspects of emerging expressions are documented by Doug Gay (2011) in *Remixing the Church: towards and Emerging Ecclesiology* in which he explores current movements in ecclesiology that signal a remixing of patterns of worship and living from different traditions.

In *Church on the Move: New Church, New Generation, New Scotland*, Peter Neilson (2005), author of the 2001 Church of Scotland report *Church without Walls*, offers what he considers to be a “photomosaic” of the emerging church: an observation that “around the country many new patterns of church are emerging” (Neilson, 2005: 24). Amongst this “photomosaic” of Christian expression is a growing number of independent congregations which have formed out of the wider Charismatic Movement, two of which are the subject of this study, and whose stories are explored in Chapters Three and Four.

²⁴ For a survey of the impact of the Alpha Course in the U.K. and Scotland in particular, see Brierley (2003: 109-119).

²⁵ From 1994 – 2002 The Church of Scotland lost 40% of its membership. The Roman Catholic Church lost 30% in the same period (Brierley, 2003: 16).

²⁶ This would include a growing interest in various forms of Paganism, sometimes linked to renewed interest in all things Celtic - as in the recently formed Pagan Federation (Scotland) (see Kath Gourlay in the Scotsman newspaper, May 25, 2006).

PART ONE: *Charismatic Renewal, Congregational Studies & Two Churches*

CHAPTER TWO Narrative & Ritual: *An Axis for Interpretation*

Although *ethnography* is the general approach favoured by all the researchers in congregational studies, we may usefully divide the literature on the subject into two categories: namely *narrative* and *ritual*. In this short chapter I propose to introduce and review this literature, and in so doing I explore these twin tools of ethnographic methodology with a view to grounding my own research and analysis in an axis of interpretation which takes a synthesis of both approaches into account. Indeed, as will be apparent, this synthesis already exists in the general field of congregational studies as well as in the more particular studies of Charismatic congregations.

Narrative

For the pioneer of congregational studies, James F. Hopewell (1988), the discovery of narrative as an investigative tool was a revelation. Hopewell (1988: 41) recounts the incident of a failed course in the analysis of a congregation using “veteran psychological explanations”, during which he and his fellow researchers realised that the reason for the demise of their course was their failure to take into account the “hidden codes of worth and meaning” which underlay the corporate life of this particular congregation. They had failed to grasp the fact that the essential and most treasured ethos of this particular congregation lay in their *story*. This failure gave rise to his interest in *narrative*, and to his major work, published posthumously, *Congregation: Stories & Structures* (Hopewell, 1988). Hopewell’s discovery led him to an understanding that the identity of a Christian congregation is shaped by the narrative of lives as they interact, and which following Geertz, weave a “web of significance” (Hopewell, 1988: 5):

Each (congregation) is a negotiation of metaphors, a field of tales and histories and meanings that identify its life, its world and God. Word, gesture, and artefact form a local language – a system of construable signs that Clifford Geertz calls a “web of significance” – that distinguishes a congregation from others around it or like it. (Brackets mine)

It follows then that the work of the ethnographer is to discover tales, histories and stories that have formed the life of a congregation. The narrative which forms a congregation’s identity is built largely by spoken words and idiomatic phrases, but also consists of a complex language of speech-acts which brings artefacts and ritualistic behaviour into play (Hopewell 1988: 7):

including matters as tangible as doughnuts and mute as handshakes and pouts. Together the signals make up the idiomatic code by which a congregation communicates itself, enabling it to identify and integrate itself, to express its faith and love, to govern and sometimes to change its corporate behaviour.

The language a congregation uses consists of idioms, signs and symbols which give them identity and hence security. Hopewell illustrates this point by telling the story of a newly appointed Pastor,

who on arriving at the church suggested moving the pulpit for sensible and practical reasons. Although he had preached ‘unorthodox’, even ‘heretical’ sermons, nothing caused as much consternation as the motion to move the pulpit (Hopewell 1988: 7). Hopewell’s point is that religious language may be universal, and within a denomination there will be many similarities between congregations, but idioms, signs and symbols form a *local language* which in turn forms a local symbolic culture. Programmes may change, but “symbolic culture” does not, at least not too easily (Hopewell, 1988:7).

Furthermore, Hopewell (1988: 46) suggests that as a congregation’s *self-perception* is narrative-formed, the congregation by their very humanity also participate “in the narrative structures of the world”. The corollary to this, he argues, is that “stories and their mythic structures are the primary means employed in a symbolic approach to understanding the congregation” (Hopewell, 1988: 50). In the first instance Hopewell (1988: 44-46) introduces his use of ‘mythos’ as an interpretative tool by examining the development of the urban Episcopalian church (where his first attempt at congregational study had ‘failed’) in terms of “the journey of hero”. The cyclical “mythos” of “adventure”, he argues, captures the narrative quality of this church’s identity and can therefore not only become a means of catching “sight of its corporate self” but can also be useful to enable it to “see the way ahead” (Hopewell 1988:119). He amplifies his understanding and use of “a good myth” (Hopewell 1988: 119) by applying this to three more congregations – two Methodist and one Baptist (Hopewell, 1988: 119 – 138).

However much Hopewell’s extension of his narrative theory into *mythos* stretches our credulity at this point, he nevertheless manages to point to the way in which “myth helps express and explore the genius that characterizes a congregation” (Hopewell, 1988: 119). My reservation however with a complete endorsement of the use of *mythos* is the danger, as I see it, of ‘reading too much’ into the characterisation of a congregation from pagan sources completely alien to the stories of Christian congregations. Nevertheless, Hopewell points the way to the essential *narrative* ethos of congregations, and the possible use of ‘external’ narratives to interpret their stories.

Nancy Ammerman (1998) in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* provides a helpful ‘how to do it’ volume in congregational studies to enable religious leaders to (re)discover an “accurate description of the way things are” (Ammerman, 1998: 16). This volume may be an example of the extrinsic studies which Guest and his fellow editors consider to be more typical of an American approach, with concern about social cohesion, and congregational growth. It should however, not be dismissed. Ammerman’s volume goes beyond Hopewell’s purely narrative appeal to develop useful insight into the practical practice of congregational study. These include helpful chapters on participant observation; “guided (yet open) interviews”; how to use and reflect on notes in ethnographic research; and the part that cultural context plays in the research of congregations. It is

foundational and very rich, and was particularly helpful in my own approach to and use of value-added sidebars and appendices within the ethnographic framework, as seen in Chapters Three and Four.

Several in-depth studies of U.K. congregational life have appeared in the useful volume edited by Matthew Guest, Karin Lusting, and Linda Woodhead (2004) entitled *Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a Post-Christian Context*. A number of these follow a predominantly narrative model. For example Matthew Guest (2004: 76-83) addresses the role of the public discourse of an Anglican Charismatic congregation as both a mirror of congregational identity and as a tool used in the minimalization of public conflict. In the same volume Peter Collins (2004: 99-112) interprets the identity of a Quaker meeting in the north of England employing various categories of narrative which he recognises as braided within the rituals of the Quaker gathering: namely, “prototypical” (or individual), “vernacular” (or local) and “canonic” (within the Quaker tradition). Timothy Jenkins (2004: 113-123) argues for the narrative shaped quality of “congregational cultures” and “boundaries of identity”. Jenkins (1999) relies on the ethnographic study he made of churches in the area of Kingswood in Bristol, the central narrative of which was the ‘Kingswood Whit Walk’. This gave him an opportunity to examine the character of individual congregations as they came together for this annual ecumenical walk, as well as their collective identity within the Kingswood district.

Finally, Al Dowie’s (2002) ethnographical account of “Riverstane Church” in *Interpreting Culture in a Scottish Congregation* gives insight into a congregational study in a Scottish context. Dowie widens his narrative approach, in comparison to say Collins or Jenkins, to include ‘word and movement’ within the church and church services, various artefacts within the architecture of the building, “micro-politics” and “status economics” which, he argues, act as “symbolic boundaries” of identity and function. In his final two chapters, Dowie provides us with an abstraction from his earlier ethnographic descriptions. Here he explores themes of “differentiality”, “deference” and “dissonance” which have been engraved into the Riverstane psyche through the aforementioned symbolic artefacts, symbolic acts, and unspoken cultural norms, and appear to exert a negative influence on the congregation’s ability to break “down walls of separation” (Dowie, 2002: 189). It is Dowie’s sharp analysis of congregational culture which is most useful here. In particular it is his identification of boundaries which label some worshippers at Riverstane as “insiders” and others (in particular strangers or visitors) as “outsiders”, which gives insight into his contention that “the (negative) situation with regard to mission can be seen as the reflex of congregational culture” (Dowie, 2000: 195. Brackets mine). This is a principle worth underlining, as in Chapters Ten and Eleven I argue that - in contrast to the negative impact of Riverstane’s culture on their ability to be missional – the *habitus* of the house-churches, shaped as it is through ritualised narrative, results in a distinctly positive missional outcome.

Ritual

Ritual behaviour has long been a focus of pilgrimage studies as analysed in the late 1960s and 1970s by Victor Turner.²⁷ More recently such studies have become a useful tool in the analysis of Charismatic phenomena and Charismatic congregations. Daniel Albrecht (1999:21) for example argues that “ritual functions as a vital component of Pentecostal spirituality” and that “Ritual works for Pentecostals. They depend on it: in fact authentic rituals vitalize Pentecostal spirituality” (Albrecht, 1999: 196). This may seem surprising since in popular and common usage the term ‘ritual’ typifies practices, often religious, which have become formalised and meaningless through repetition. In their own thinking Charismatics believe that they have broken free from ritual to pursue spontaneous forms of worship and flexible structures. The worshippers in the congregations of my field research were surprised and slightly shocked to believe that I considered their activities as rituals.²⁸

Their incredulity comes from an inaccurate understanding of *ritual*. In the first place, following Douglas (1970) and Bell (1992) as explained below, ritual is less to be thought of as ceremony and more as a healthy and normal part of everyday life. Secondly, once *rituals* are understood as human behavioural structures in which all participate, following Thomas Csordas (1997, 2001) and Daniel Albrecht (1999) it is evident that Charismatics actually worship within highly ritualised formulas of their own making.

Mary Douglas (1970) in *Natural Symbols; Explorations in Cosmology* argues that ritual is part of everyday life and is maintained by the ‘natural symbolism’ of the body. In a later edition of her work, she claims that western culture, which at the end of the twentieth century is devoid of “common symbols” (Douglas, 1996:1) is a *secular* inheritor of the Protestant stance of anti-ritualism and anti-body of earlier centuries (Douglas, 1996:1, 21). As a result she argues, sociologists have relegated an understanding of ritual to religious activity (Douglas, 1996:2). Her mission is to reinstate the notion of ritual as a way of life sustained by “natural symbols” centred on the “two bodies” – both physical and social (Douglas, 1996: 72-91).

Catherine Bell (1992: 88) in *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* also wishes to “extend the notion of ritual beyond the narrow and somewhat traditional connection with religious institutions and formal worship”. “Indeed”, she says, “in most studies that use the term, ritualization is seen to involve the

²⁷ See Victor Turner 1969. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* New York: Aldine De Gruyter. Also see Victor & Edith Turner 1978. *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* New York: Columbia University Press

²⁸ See also Albrecht, 1999:21 whose “Pentecostals object and reject the term ‘ritual’ as representing “something ‘dead’, meaningless or even ‘unscriptural’, ‘unspiritual’, and mechanical”.

formal ‘modelling’ of valued relationships so as to promote legitimation and internalization of those relationships and their values” (Bell, 1992: 89). This definition will prove useful since, as I argue in Chapter Seven following Csordas and Albrecht, that the formation of meaningful relationships is the intended goal of the Charismatic ritualistic behaviour in the two congregations of my field work. It is Bell’s insistence on the nature of ritual that is most useful here. Ritual does not consist, she suggests, in the repetition of certain acts, but rather that “acting ritually is first and foremost a matter of nuanced contrasts and the evocation of strategic, value-laden distinctions” (Bell, 1992: 90). Genuine ritual does not lie in how much such acts are repeated, but in the meaning that participants give to its performance. This is true of weddings, which may only happen once in a life time, or special meals which may only happen from time to time. Ritual then is an engagement in meaning-making acts which may be performed over and over again, or only from time to time.

In a phenomenological exploration of Charismatic ritual, Thomas Csordas investigates the movement exclusively within the (American) Roman Catholic Church (Csordas 1997, 2001). In the *Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing* (1997) he gives an extensive account of the psychological and spiritual Charismatic phenomenon of ‘healing’ and its therapeutic process. In *Language, Charisma & Creativity: Ritual Life In The Catholic Charismatic Renewal* (2001) he explores the ritual life of Catholic Charismatics in their use of space, time, and imagery in the exercise of their *charismata* of ‘tongues’, ‘prayer’, ‘prophecy’ and ‘ritual healing’. The notion of *habitus* as a “system of perduring dispositions” (Csordas, 1997:9) is particularly significant for Csordas, and is used extensively as a phenomenological framework in which he wishes to examine the formation of the Charismatic self. As outlined in the Introduction, Csordas has borrowed the notion from Bourdieu (1977), and it is a useful overall concept as it synthesises behaviour and general cultural environment in a single term. In contrast to Hopewell’s (1988) understanding of *narrative*, in which the story and the drama of congregational life always remains ‘out there’, for Csordas the Charismatic domains of expression and imagery (prayer, prophecy, healing and ‘tongues’) become ritualistically ‘embodied’ in what becomes the ‘sacred self’. In *Embodiment and Experience*, Csordas (1994) uses his editorial article to argue for the central theme of all his work, that of “embodiment” as the “existential ground of culture and self” (1994: 6).²⁹ Drawing from a broad anthropological base, he considers that most if not all Charismatic ritual expressions - i.e. ‘raising of hands’, ‘laying on of hands’, ‘speaking in tongues’, ‘dancing in the Spirit’, ‘singing in the Spirit’ - are centred on *the body*. Csordas argues that Charismatics develop a thoroughly ‘incarnated’ notion of “sacred self”, in which “embodied imagery” becomes a vehicle for Divine revelation (Csordas, 1997: 74-108). Should this form of embodiment also mark the ritual field of the Scottish congregations, it would herald a radical departure from the

²⁹ Cf. with Douglas (1970, 1996) above on the ‘symbolism of the body’, a reference which Csordas (1994: 5) makes himself. However for Csordas, the ‘body’ is more than *symbolic* as a reference – it is the “existential ground of self” (1994: 6). I explore this theme in Part Two, Chapter Seven.

“anti-body” (Douglas, 1996:21) stance of their Protestant/Evangelical heritage. I explore this theme in Chapter Seven and also in Part Three.

Csordas suggests that it a highly developed adoption of the imagination builds the Charismatic *habitus* which in turn enables their “reflexive capacity to transform one’s orientation in the world” (Csordas, 1997: 74). This operates in two senses. Firstly there is an *individual habitus* and ‘modes of orientation’ (Charismatic practices) in prayer, prophecy etc. which develop the imagination. Secondly, these practices combine in corporate activities which are crucial to the integration of their life together. This second aspect says Csordas (1997:74) is more complex in the sense “that ritual healing imagery assumes a specific efficacy in transforming *other* orientations” (Italics mine). This echoes what we have already noted from Bell (1992: 89), that “ritualization” leads us “to involve the formal ‘modelling’ of valued relationships”. Csordas (2001) takes this further however in the introduction of an embodied *habitus*. He argues that when such practices are ritualised in the embodied collective domain of the Charismatic matrix, valued relationships are strengthened and others are created (Csordas, 2001: 108-109, 114).

The title of Daniel Albrecht’s (1999) study of three Charismatic churches on the Californian coast, *Rites in the Spirit, A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/ Charismatic Spirituality* makes his intentions abundantly clear. This volume lacks some of the philosophical depth of the Csordas approach, yet it is a thorough study into the meaning of ritual and its use in American non-aligned Charismatic congregations. Albrecht’s congregations are situated on the coast of Northern California in Sea City, an area just south of San Francisco. They all have a Pentecostal/Charismatic focus. Two of them are of the house-church or ‘new church’ genre, having been founded in the modern era of the Charismatic Movement “and reflect much of the contemporary styles Pent/Char worship” (Albrecht, 1999: 73). The third is of classic Pentecostal origins (Assemblies of God) with a seventy five year history, and acts in his study as a useful contrast and foil for the two.

Albrecht’s study is focused on the central services of the three churches, which take place on a Sunday morning, and which are the “focus of all Pentecostal/Charismatic spirituality” (Albrecht, 1999:22). As with Csordas, Albrecht takes a phenomenological approach to these gatherings, describing what happens, and then analysing the text in terms of *rites* and *mode*. In this case he says, *rites* are what Charismatics actually do within their overall ritual practices; namely “gathering and greeting”, “worship and praise”, “transitional rites”, “the Pastoral message and other speech-acts” and the “rite of alter/response”. Other speech-acts form ‘micro-rites’ which Albrecht classifies as subdivisions. These include all the peculiarly Charismatic rites (also to be found in Csordas’ Catholic congregations) and by which the different congregations legitimise by their practice: ‘speaking in tongues’ (*glossolalia*), ‘laying on of hands’, and behaviours such as ‘swaying’, ‘dancing’, ‘raising of hands’ and ‘falling in the Spirit’ (Albrecht 1999: 712,713).

On the one hand, in Albrecht the categorization of ‘rites’ corresponds to the Csordas categorization of ‘domains’ (Csordas, 1997:74). On the other hand, Albrecht’s concept of “modes of Pentecostal ritual sensibility” is a broader category by which he means an ‘embodied attitude’ (Albrecht, 1999: 177).³⁰ Following Land (1993) he classifies different modes of Charismatic ritual as ‘celebration’, ‘contemplation’, ‘transcendental efficacy’, ‘penitent/purgation’, ‘ecstatic improvisation’, and ‘ceremony’ (Albrecht, 1996: 179). The Charismatic service may not include all of these modes and rites of the ritual field, but will always include some of them, he argues. As will be outlined in Part Two, some of these modes of Charismatic ‘ritual sensibility’ are to be seen in the ritual matrix of the Scottish congregations in this study.

Narrative and Ritual

In *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals* Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley (1998: 37) argue that whilst *narrative* and *ritual* remain as powerful interpretative tools in themselves, “the conjunction of both narrative and ritual, however, is exceptionally powerful”. Furthermore, they suggest, that “if this is true at a human level, how much more so when the divine and human narratives meet in the stories we tell and the rituals we enact” (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 37). Thus, whilst the “primary concern of pastoral care is to assist people in weaving the story of their lives with God’s stories...into a transformative narrative” they insist that “story telling without further ritualization is incomplete” (Anderson/Foley, 1998:48).

There are two reasons for this, and both entail the complex human interactions between past memories necessary for narrative and the present meaning-making activities which have been described above as ritual. In the first instance, ritual enables the individual to *enter* his or her narrative by dramatic symbolic enactment which renders the process transformative. Appropriate ritual enables the story-teller to embody a narrative which would otherwise remain incomplete. Secondly, the significant role of ritual’s relationship to story is its ability to “confirm sense of belonging” (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 27). In this sense, apart from the therapeutic value of common story-ritualization, it binds the story-teller(s) to a wider community of story-ritualizers whether they are familial, societal or cultural (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 35). Within faith communities in particular, the ritualization of narrative actively engages the individual in a common drama and connects “an individual’s story to the story of the larger faith community through a shared ritual vernacular” (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 49).

³⁰ cf. Csordas “Modalities of Revelation” (1997: 87-108). For Csordas these involve an ‘embodied imagery’. Albrecht’s classification is slightly broader in that his “modes of sensibility” (1999:179) describe an overall embodied *attitude* of the worshiper, and ‘*imagery*’ will always play a part in these ‘modes’.

Following John McDargh (1993), Anderson/Foley suggest that our stories of relationship to God reflect at a very profound level our “experiences of being met or overlooked, of being taken up and decoded or left unread” (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 41)³¹. As one of the dominant forces which drives human beings is the need to be recognised and affirmed, Anderson/Foley (1998: 41) suggest further that there is an urgency within faith communities to “acknowledge human stories in the divine narrative, the divine narrative in human stories”. Drawing upon ethnographic observation, I explore and situate this argument in the real life and behaviour of the two house-church congregations in Chapter Nine.

Narrative & Ritual in Congregation Studies

It is not surprising, given the epistemological and hermeneutical approach common to both, that a number of self-contained studies of congregational life have appeared recently which appeal to both the ritual and the narrative approaches. For example, in *On the Perception of Worship* Martin Stringer (1999) pays particular attention to ritual and performance in the worship of four Manchester congregations. Ostensibly this is a study which leans towards the phenomenological approach of ritual. He argues that from an anthropological perspective, observation and discussion needs to take place on “what people are *doing*” (italics mine) or “say they are doing” (Stringer, 1999: 51), before we ask “people to describe the ‘meaning’ of that a particular performance has for them” (Stringer 1999: 51).

A further study which merges the horizons of narrative and ritual is that of Simon Coleman (2000) in *The Globalization of Charismatic Christianity*. The study focuses on the Charismatic *Word of Life* congregation in Uppsala, Sweden - a ‘new church’ of the ‘Faith Movement’ genre.³² His concern is to characterize the *habitus* or ‘embodied disposition’ of this large and successful Charismatic congregation. In so doing he considers not only the narratives and beliefs of the community but also their ritual practices which lead to a materialization of the Word in self and the environment. Coleman’s concern is to demonstrate the globalizing context of this congregation in shaping their Charismatic identity: embodied practices and dispositions which have local manifestations can be transported to the global stage (Coleman, 2000: 62-71; 117-119).

³¹ Contra Freud, McDargh (1993:237) suggests “The Key motivating force in human living...is the inherent need for *recognition* – the experience of mutuality and relatedness whereby interacting human beings co-create both selves and worlds” (italics original).

³² This describes a particular “wing of the global (neo-Pentecostal) charismatic revival, known variously as the Faith, Faith Formula, Prosperity, Health and Wealth.” (Coleman, 2000: 27)

Conclusion: Narrative, Ritual and Text

As noted above, Hopewell is indebted to the anthropologist Clifford Geertz for his narrative approach to congregational study. Not surprisingly Geertz also stands behind much of the phenomenological ritual approach of Csordas, in particular to reinforce his insightful analysis of Charismatic imagery (Csordas 1997: 74). It is the further step which Csordas takes in claiming an “embodied imagery” within Charismatic ritual which gives significance to ritual as “embodied practice” in the narrative formation of Charismatic congregations (Csordas, 1997: 74-108). Albrecht’s phenomenological approach also supports the readability of embodiment within Charismatic worship. Furthermore, as both Coleman (2000) and Stringer (1999) in different circumstances characterize the behaviour of their Charismatic congregations as being peculiarly embodied, the cumulative effect of these arguments supports the argument that the *narrative* of Charismatic congregations is read in the enactment of their rituals.

The philosophical reorientation that Geertz introduces however does not stand alone. Behind Geertz and other ethnographic researchers lies the phenomenological reorientation in hermeneutics of the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur and others who have shaped the ontological outlook of post-modernity. Geertz acknowledges as much himself (Geertz, 1993: 4).

Firstly, Ricoeur (1969) is foremost in placing phenomenology at the front in his epistemological quest in an attempt to gain a satisfactory hermeneutic of being which is not purely reduced to linguistics (as in Wittgenstein) or does not begin with an enquiry about ‘being’ (as in Heidegger or Kant).³³ Ricoeur would prefer to begin by describing the ways in which phenomena *appear*. Albrecht (1999), Csordas (1997 & 2001), Cartledge (2003), Coleman (2000), Stringer (1999), and Jenkins (1999) all follow this line of enquiry. The observation of phenomenon is the groundwork of all ethnography.

Secondly, to circumvent the potential solipsism in this conception of self, Ricoeur (1991) moves from speech/text to action/text in which for Ricoeur *action* becomes a part of the *discourse* in which human beings take part.³⁴ It is then a short step from the concept of discourse (*discours*) to that of *speech-acts* in which *meaningful actions* (Ricoeur, 1991: 150) are conceived as part of the objectified lived-in world and can be classified as ‘texts’ (Ricoeur, 1991: 152). Csordas sees the pitfalls of potential solipsism, and reverts to Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* as noted above. This may not be very

³³ Paul Ricoeur, 1969: 10-15 contrasts his approach to that of Heidegger who begins his investigation into ontology with a premise about ‘being’. Ricoeur’s approach begins with phenomenon and ends with the ontological question. Wittgenstein remains, he claims with a purely ‘linguistic’ approach and Kant remains with an ‘internal’ (*réflexive*) one.

³⁴ Ricoeur introduces the idea of ‘discourse’ (*discours*) which includes spoken as well as written language and refers to the objective and the existential ‘lived in’ world (1991 : 145ff).

different to Ricoeur's configuration of speech-acts, which remain existential whilst holding the possibility of objectification as text. The move to an understanding of observed acts as text does not just lie behind the overtly phenomenological approach of Csordas, Albrecht, and Stringer: as noted above, following Geertz, it also lies behind the narrative perspectives of Hopewell, Ammerman, Guest, and Dowie.

The perspective in which both ritual and narrative form part of a 'readable' *habitus* allows me the methodology by which I can observe, note and interpret the behaviour of the two house-churches which make up my field of research. Were ritual to stand alone in a phenomenological field of analysis, it would remain impersonal and inaccessible and may collapse into solipsism. However when interpreted *as* narrative and *by* narrative it begins to make comprehensive sense. Narrative brings a sense of meaningfulness to ritual. This will free this study from the initial temptation to judge the ritual matrix and behaviour of members of Charismatic house-churches as 'odd', 'bizarre' or 'aberrant'.

Similarly, narrative alone would not make sense within a Charismatic congregation without taking into account peculiarly Charismatic ritualistic behaviour. In the same way that ritual is interpreted *by* narrative, so the stories of congregational and individual lives are reinforced by being enacted in ritual. The continuum of ritual to the everyday lives of Charismatic Christians is observed and interpreted in the studies of Csordas (1997, 2001: American Catholic), Albrecht (1999: American Protestant), Coleman (2000: Swedish Protestant) and by Guest (2004) and Stringer (1999) in England. I will argue that the same continuum holds true for the Scottish house-church Charismatics.

PART ONE: *Charismatic Renewal, Congregational Studies & Two Churches*

CHAPTER THREE Ethnography and Ecclesiology: *Observations and Conversations*

In Chapter Two I gave an overview of the scholarly literature in congregation studies, with particular attention given to the two most frequently applied genres of ethnographic interpretation: namely, *ritual* and *narrative*. This chapter now focuses more closely on the practice of ethnography as it pertains to my study of the two house-church congregations and its appropriateness for interpreting their *habitus* and the theology/ecclesiology to which this gives rise. In *Interpreting Culture in a Scottish Congregation*, Al Dowie (2002: 38) points out the double meaning of the term ‘ethnography’: it refers both to the process of research (the fieldwork), and the product of that research (the documented account). This chapter is concerned primarily with the process and methods of ethnography and their relationship to theological interpretation. In the rest of the thesis, the term ‘ethnography’ refers to the documented account emerging from the fieldwork.

Introduction

A common agreement amongst scholars is that the practice of ethnography is a genre of qualitative research which has departed from reductionist or quantitative methods of classification. As noted in Chapter Two, this epistemic shift was triggered by a reorientation from Geertz in the concept of social culture from fixed objectified categories to that of social life as a fluid and interactive entity, or a “web of significance” in which the researcher is a necessary part of the *total gestalt* of “social life as organised in terms of symbols ... whose meaning (signs, representations, significant) we must grasp if we are to understand that organization and formulate its principles” (Geertz, 1993: 21).

This has been followed by scholars in the field of congregational studies. In *Congregational Studies in the UK*, Peter Collins (2004:99) gives a useful definition in the introduction to his case study of a Quaker congregation in Northern England:

Ethnography – a set of methods typical of tightly focused or ‘intrinsic’ congregational studies – is not a matter of compiling statistics, testing hypotheses, or establishing laws. Rather, ethnography is a facilitation of a more or less believable account of local or contextualised meanings.

In *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, Pete Ward (2012: 6, 7) sets out seven core ethnographic values for the practice of ethnography in the congregational setting: participation; immersion; thick description; an active participative ethics; empowerment; and understanding. Seen in this way, ethnography is a cluster of *values* which “shape how research is conducted rather than a specific, closely defined methodology” (Ward 2012: 8). Nevertheless Ward (2012:8) admits that this cluster involves certain clearly defined *methods* of inquiry which he defines as observation, the analysis of texts and documents (e.g. church magazines, notices, minutes of meetings etc.), the use of interviews, and the use of recordings or transcripts. I suggest however that these can be condensed

further into two principal methods: *observation* (making of notes and/or recordings) and the use of *interviews* (digital recordings and/or transcribed notes). Information gained through analysis of relevant and contemporary church magazines, weekly church bulletins, statements of intent, church documents and writings can also be used to add further colour and dimension to the picture of a congregation's *habitus* already painted through observation and interview.

Observation

For John Swinton (2012: 75) in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, "Observation is central to the ethnographic enterprise". Observation takes on two aspects: the first takes in the social, geographical and human situatedness of the fieldwork; the second involves participation in the fieldwork activities - in my case in the central worship events of the two congregations - as *participant-observer*. Both aspects of the observational process leads, by the process of note-taking, recordings, and additional information gained from congregational bulletins and pamphlets, to "thick description" which Geertz (1993: 20) considers to be a means of "rescuing the 'said' of such discourse from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms". In other words "thick description" is in essence a snap-shot of human situations and discourse which inevitably change or disappear in time.

I attended the BCC congregation's central worship event in their own purpose-built building on a Sunday morning on eight occasions between April 2009 and March 2013. Their Sunday morning worship gathering lasts over 2hours from 10.30am. I normally arrived before each event to observe and note the arrival of the congregation and left about 30minutes after the last song had been sung in order to record the aftermath of the morning events: the 'response' rituals followed by 'dispersing' rituals of the congregation. On each of these occasions I took note of the relevant notices being displayed, and kept the information bulletins which they issue every Sunday to the congregation.

I also attended and observed the BCC's Youth Café in February 2010 and then again in March 2013, once I had obtained the relevant Disclosure Scotland permission which allowed me to talk to the young people if I felt it necessary. In September 2010 I recorded my walk around the central shopping precinct in Bishopbriggs, and then visited the local Library which gave an interesting and statistical account of the history of the district, and its present social/housing make-up. In March 2013, I recorded a morning visit to the Fellowship's Centre, walking around the neighbouring streets, and speaking to the various voluntary staff who run the office and the 'Rainbow Tots' nursery. I then followed this by having morning coffee and an informative conversation with one of the longest serving members of the Fellowship who lived close by their Centre.

Visits to the BCF congregation began in May 2010. As shall be noted in the next chapter, the inner-city gathering in Bridgeton is much smaller, and inevitably their social/cultural milieu stands in strong

contrast to that of Bishopbriggs. The socio-cultural difference of BCF to BCC makes for an interesting comparison when exploring rites and rituals which seem similar but which inevitably tell different stories.

I visited the BCF Sunday event on seven occasions from May 2010 to May 2013 in the recently built Bridgeton Learning Centre. The main gathering for the Bridgeton congregation on a Sunday morning lasted from 11.00am to about 12.30pm. In similar fashion to my fieldwork in Bishopbriggs, I arrived before the morning event to take note of the manner in which the members arrived and waited until the last person was going out the door of the Centre. Because BCF do not own their own building, their time is limited; hence their dispersing rituals take up less time than they do at BCC.

I visited the BCF drop-in shop the 'Open Door' in Bridgeton Cross on four occasions on a weekday. The first time was to interview the leader and founder of BCF, BQ; the second occasion was a brief visit during my walk around Bridgeton Cross and a visit to the Library; the third time was to interview the leading group of BCF and the fourth was to attend their women's outreach gathering on a Tuesday evening which is recorded in Chapter Ten

The objective of *participant-observation* is to be able to observe 'from the inside'; to be "able to build a picture from the lived experience of a church community" (Ward 2012:8). However as a Pastor to a similar congregation as the ones in my fieldwork, I was all too aware of the "lived experience" of such a church community. For me the concern was not unawareness of "lived experience" within such a Charismatic faith community, but rather the danger was of being *too involved* and 'not seeing the wood for the trees'. From 2005 to 2007 I had carried out a pilot research project in my own congregation in which objectivity had been an issue, and a challenge to overcome. Having written out several "thick descriptions" of my congregation's ritual behaviour and asked other members of the congregation to do the same, by the time I attended the Bishopbriggs congregation I had become used to objective note-taking on the behavioural aspects of a Charismatic house-church congregation.

The fieldwork notes taken at the main worship gatherings of the BCC and BCF congregations described the layout of the place(s) of meeting, the programmatic sequence of the event, the songs that were sung and the order in which they sung, the somatic actions of the congregants, the interpersonal behaviour of adults, young people and children, the gist of sermons and the person giving them, and those aspects of doxology peculiar to Charismatic settings. On each occasion I would ask myself the question "what is going on here?"

Interviews and the Place of the Researcher

Some scholars who write on the subject of ecclesial ethnography stress the importance of the interview to gain a deeper insight into the life of a congregation.³⁵ My own primary concern was to understand the narrative underlying the congregation's story both collectively and individually. The process and recording of interviews gave rise to the essential *narrative* element of the axis of interpretation in which story gives explanation (at least to some extent) to observed rituals.

To understand the congregations' stories I interviewed the leaders, and those who had been members of the congregations the longest. At BCC I interviewed KS who was their Pastor at the time, and GC who was their young associate Pastor and was to take over from KS during the time of my fieldwork. (For all profiles of anonymised participants at BCC see APPENDIX 3: pg. 199). I also interviewed IB who is an Elder at BCC and has been with the congregation since its founding by the Rev. David Black. I had a protracted telephone conversation with DF who was the architect for the Bishopbriggs Centre and one of its earliest Elders. I also interviewed Mrs Jean Black, David Black's widow, in her home in Stirling and was able to borrow a box-full of archive material on the life of her husband and the founding of the Bishopbriggs congregation.

As mentioned above, at Bridgeton (BCF), I interviewed their founding leader BQ, followed by another relaxed conversational interview with the other leaders together at their drop-in shop, the Open Door. (For all profiles of anonymised participants at BCF see APPENDIX 4: pg. 200). I also interviewed one of their leaders CA who was employed as an 'outreach' worker amongst other women and in the school with 'difficult' pupils.

Interviewing the Congregation

A number of scholars who write on interviewing practice in congregational study stress the need for interviews to be 'open-ended'³⁶: that is conversations with interviewees should not result in answers which have been predetermined by 'closed questions' from the interviewer. Nevertheless Hopewell and Dowie suggest the need for questions designed to provoke "pertinent answers" (Hopewell 1988:90) and "open-ended questions which allow the "informants to select the topics to be discussed" (Dowie 2002: 104).

As Frances Ward (Guest 2004: 125) suggests, the process of ethnography is a messy business which beginning from "day one, and evolves continually as the reflective process deepens and extends". As my primary concern in all my interviews was to encapsulate authentic narrative, I assured my

³⁵ See Ammerman 1998:80& Thumma in Ammerman 1998:203-208; Dowie 2002:100-108; Ward 2012: 8 who states that the interviews are an attempt at discovering "an authentic voice rather than a representative or reliable example".

³⁶ See Hopewell 1988: 90-91 who uses the term "guided interviews" which result in "open-ended conversations with members of a congregation"; Dowie 2002:104 who calls for a "non-directive approach to the interviews" with "open-ended questions"; Ward 2012:5 calls them "semi structured interviews".

interviewees that our conversation would essentially be about *their story*, especially when they balked at the idea of being interviewed because they could “not answer questions about theology”. My questioning invariably then began by asking them to tell their story. As example here is a brief excerpt from the beginning of a recorded interview with CA³⁷ from BCF.

Me: Tell me a bit about yourself

CA: What do you want to know (nervous laughter)

Me: Have you got a story to tell? I’m sure you have

CA: (Hee...hee nervous laughter) wee story... How I got to here?

Me: Yes

CA: Well God has pursued me all my life.

Me: Where were you brought up?

CA: Oh! In Busby...that’s where we lived. It wasn’t a Christian household but a really good family

Me: encouraging noises – yes

Both congregations had been forewarned that I would be carrying out fieldwork research amongst them, which would entail me participating in their meetings and interviewing some of them either as individuals or as groups who worked together. Initially I asked the Pastors to approach members of different ages and sexes to ask if I might interview them. After my second or third visit of participant-observation, several individuals, couples and groups of members accepted the invitation to be interviewed. Interviews of congregation members (as opposed to leaders) began at BCC in January 2010 and at BCF during June 2010. Dowie (2002: 104) suggests that informants should be allowed to “select the topics to be discussed”. Allowing the interviewees to tell their stories usually led other topics to emerge quite naturally: their family backgrounds, their present family situations, their own faith journey, how and why they attended this particular congregation, and so on.

As participant-observation progressed and the reflective process unfolded in both congregations, a growing concern of mine was to understand the connection of *ritual* to *story*. Scott L. Thumma (Ammerman 1998:203) states in his study on ‘Methods for Congregational Study’ that “one of the best ways to correct the inadequacies of observation is to talk to those whom you have been watching”. Thus for example I wondered, early in the observational process, if the somatic expressions of these Charismatic worshippers were a dramatized way of telling personal stories. I observed also that some of the worshippers at BCF spent a great deal of time with arms outstretched and on their knees, and speculated that they may be acting out the drama of their lives. I noticed two families of African descent at BCC, and asked myself if they felt they could express themselves freely

³⁷ For profiles of anonymised participants at BCF, see Appendix 4: pg200

in this very white Scottish congregation? I therefore asked to speak to some of these individuals whom I been watching; to understand their stories and how they related these to their worship practice. Later in the reflective process, I wanted to gain more accurate information on how the worshippers regarded their peculiarly Charismatic expression and understanding of revelation, and how this related to their Protestant heritage of a written hermeneutic. In this later stage, questions for my interviewees became more defined in an effort to elicit some clearer answers to this issue (see Appendix 1: pg.197).

I stressed to my respondents that they should choose wherever they felt most comfortable to sit and have a conversation. As a result interviews took place in coffee-shops, in the BCC building, at the BCF drop-in centre, and often in people's homes. I interviewed people on their own, in couples, and on more than one occasion a whole family joined the conversation as the interview went on.

Interviews took longer than I had initially anticipated: taking into consideration the time for 'small talk' and hospitality, interviews could last anything between two to three hours, especially if the interview included more than one person. I interviewed people during the day, at lunch-times, and in the evenings. Except for one very self-conscious woman (VM)³⁸, respondents were happy to be digitally recorded, as well as for me to take brief notes. In her case I simply took as many notes as I could once I was certain that she was relaxed about the interview process.

At Bishopbriggs (BCC) I had conversations and interviews with leaders, couples, single individuals and small groups. Question and answer conversations included informal discussion with the some leaders of the Youth Café in the office at BCC one Friday morning whilst they were setting up for a later youth event in the evening, and the answers given to a questionnaire I circulated amongst a similar group of Youth Café leaders (without their main leader LH) on a Friday evening (see Appendix 2 pg. 198). About sixteen people, couples and/or individuals agreed to be more formally interviewed, although as noted above, sometimes partners and/or children also joined in the conversation by the end of the interview process. The overall number of people at BCC I engaged in inquiring dialogue and/or more formal interview amounted to around thirty five: that is 20% of the total congregation of 175 members and adherents.

At Bridgeton (BCF) I had appointed interviews with eight of their number and informal conversations (more appropriate in many cases than appointed interviews) of around fifteen others. This latter number includes the conversation with the women's group at the Open Door and snatches of questions posed and answered in the informal setting of their Sunday breakfasts. This number – at the considerably smaller BCF - amounted to 50% of those who gather for their Sunday meetings and their weekday events.

³⁸ For profiles of anonymised participants at BCC, see Appendix 3: pg199

Situating the Researcher

The task of constructing meaning from engagement with a body of people in observation and conversation places the researcher's own horizon of understanding squarely into the interpretative genre of research that is ethnography. Several scholars comment that this situation is not only inevitable but desirable, given the inter-subjective phenomenological nature of this form of research.

As explained in the Chapter Two, the observation of phenomenon is the groundwork of studies by Albrecht (1999), Csordas (1997 & 2001), Cartledge (2003), Coleman (2000), Stringer (1999), and Jenkins (1999), and lies behind the narrative perspectives in Hopewell (1988), Ammerman (1998), Guest (2004), and Dowie (2002). As also discussed at the close of Chapter Two, these scholars take their cue from the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1991: 150,151), who amongst others, argues that human action(s) can be treated as text. However the task of reading human behaviour as text requires human interaction which brings inevitably into play the participant observer's own horizon in the hermeneutical conversation. Following the hermeneutical arguments of Ricoeur and Dilthey, Al Dowie (2002: 18, 39) argues that "ethnography as a form of description cannot claim to be thoroughly objective. All description is interpretation because, filtered through human consciousness and language, there is no such thing as neutral or value-free description". Following Gadamer, Dowie (2002: 39) argues that the ethnographic method is a "fusion of horizons" in a "hermeneutical dialogue" in the "construction of meaning".

In *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, John Swinton (2012) argues that the "ethnographic look is deeply value laden" (76) and that in ethnography "the act of interpretation is necessarily value-laden" (81). Swinton (2012:82, 83), also following the hermeneutical theories of Hans-Georg Gadamer, argues that "human beings are fundamentally interpretative creatures" and that this "way of being in the world" is the basic human act. Value-laden interpretation therefore not only cannot be avoided, but without it, interpretation itself is meaningless. To avoid the potential for imposing alien bias on the field of research, Swinton (2012:81) suggests that the researcher needs to recognise that the act of observation and interpretation *is* value-laden by definition and to work within it, not pretending that it does not exist and so ignore hidden biases to skew his/her work. From this perspective then, the task of the researcher is to fuse his/her horizon with that of the research participants "in a way that will deepen and clarify the meaning of the experience being explored" (Swinton 2012:83). For Swinton (2012:83) the exercise of the researcher is to enter into a constructive dialogue with the human text (behaviour and words). That being so, the ethnographic account will be "seen to be a co-construction" (Swinton 2012:83); a mutually constructed interpretation which emerges from the dialogue of the researcher with the human field of research.

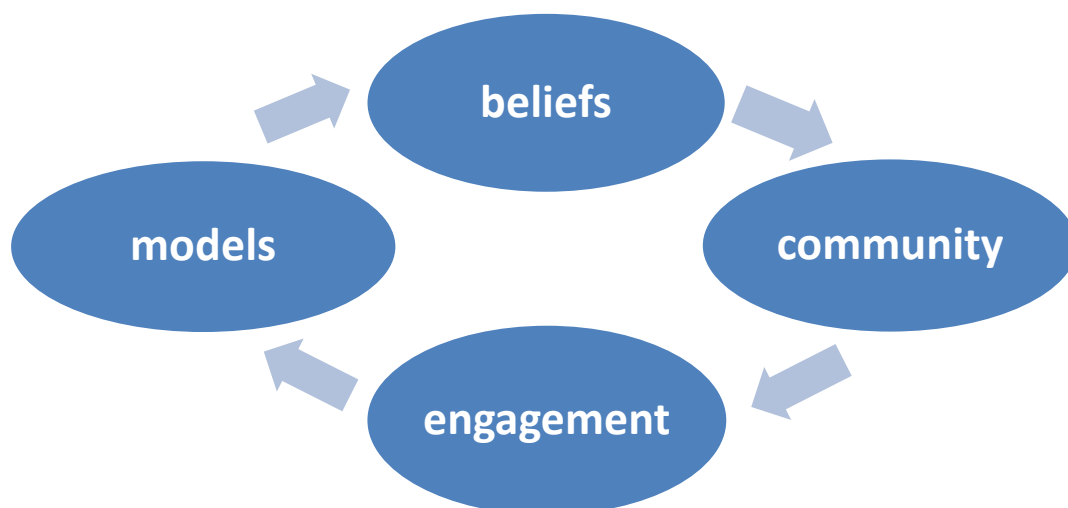
Swinton (2012:83) suggests that the task of investigating meanings from religious communities is made possible by this 'co-constructive' approach to ethnography, as it allows the researcher to bring

theological understanding as a “vital observational and analytical tool that has a voice throughout the whole of the research process”. In other words, a researcher such as me cannot and does not carry out ethnography in a neutral fashion (if that were possible). Swinton (2012:83) argues that if the Christian researcher brings a theological horizon into conversation with the ethnographic methods an “honest and faithful interpretation emerges”. He maintains that this hermeneutical perspective allows Christians a mode of reflexivity which accepts the reality that it is impossible for the researcher to stand outside the research field, but rather seeks to “incorporate that knowledge creatively and effectively within the practice of interpretation” (Swinton, 2012:84). He argues that this may be “an honest methodological position from which Christians should begin” and allows for a theological lens to be part of the interpretative process throughout (Swinton 2012:84).

Ethnography and Theology

From the perspectives of Dowie (2002) and Swinton (2012) the Christian researcher in congregational life is situated in an ambivalent position between objectivity and subjective reflexivity: a dialectic which nevertheless needs to be maintained and pursued for meaningful dialogue to emerge from the ethnographic and reflective process. Paul S. Fiddes (2012:24, 25) offers a useful flow-chart for the theologian/ethnographer in which he/she can chart a justifiable path from observational research to theological discovery. I have adapted and simplified his flow chart (Fig. 1) for my own purposes: mapping a way for the horizon of the researcher to fuse or interplay with those of the field of research in the hermeneutical dialogue:

Fig.1



Beliefs Fiddes (2012:24) argues that we cannot objectively ‘observe’ God, but can only *participate* in the life of the Trinity. Thus the simple category of ‘beliefs’ in this flowchart is misleading and incomplete: the Christian does not simply bring ‘beliefs’ to the community of faith, but a life *engaged* by Christian devotional and doxological practice in the life of the Triune God.

Community In the same way that the Christian shares in the life of the Trinity, he/she also shares in the life of others: the shared life of the faith community reflects the life shared in and by the Trinity. Faith expressed in behaviour, ritual, and mutual engagement in relationship forms the cultural, theological and ecclesial horizons of the community.

Engagement The characteristic nature of the Christian God in relational Trinity then, reflected in the life of the faith community, demands that the researcher in the field of Christian congregations also engages and participates relationally with the congregation (Fiddes 2012:24, 25). The researcher must listen to “stories people tell in the *here and now* about themselves” (Fiddes 2012: 26) (italics original). Events of the past (stories) will interplay with the narrative of current “acts of God” (Fiddes 2012:25, 28). The engagement of the researcher with the faith community will form a creative fusion or interplay of horizons in the hermeneutical dialogue (Fiddes 2012:28).

Model The outcome of ecclesial research is a discovery of new or freshly reconfigured theories or ‘models’, in much the same way as scientific investigation does (Fiddes, 2012:30). Practical theology, Fiddes argues, uses ecclesial models as a helpful tool to pastor and to shape the church in life and mission: thus ethnographic research should add to this understanding. In the light of this, I suggest, the ecclesial ethnographic account (the hermeneutical dialogue) should point to fresh ways in which space and relationships are shaped by humans in their personal and corporate engagement with God and with one another. In my adaptation of the Fiddes flowchart (Fig.1), engagement with the congregations in my field of research gave rise to socio-cultural consideration, philosophical reflection and theological conversation on the peculiar nature of the Charismatic *habitus* as displayed by the house-churches. For Fiddes (2012) the ethnographic process should produce extrinsic and helpful models for application in Pastoral Care and/or Mission. In my analysis of the *habitus* in the two congregations, I allow intrinsic interpretation to shape (extrinsically) reflection on the missional impact of both congregations in Chapter Ten, and to bring this interpretation into conversation with relevant scholars in the field of missiology in Chapter Eleven. For Fiddes (2012: 33, 34), theology should arise from the ethnographic process as this becomes open to the “unexpected”, in discerning “where God is at work”. In Chapter Twelve I bring a wide philosophical spectrum of scholarship to bear on the ethnography to discern an “unexpected” interpretation of the Charismatic house-church *habitus*.

Beliefs As a virtuous circle, this process should in turn inform further *beliefs and behaviour*: in the first instance in theology (how God acts in the world); and shape ecclesiology (how the Christian faith community is formed and is enabled to behave).

John Swinton (2012: 85-91) argues cogently that seen from the above perspective, there is no reason why the theologian-ethnographer should not maintain a theological reflectivity throughout the ethnographic process. He contends that the temptation is to “collapse theology into ethnography” in the name of social science and is a false understanding of “relevance” (Swinton 2012: 88, 86). However given that the ethnography methodology has an inbuilt *de facto* bias, it is incumbent on the Christian ethnographer to critically allow his/her theological horizon to be fully incorporated in the hermeneutical conversation with that of the researched.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the ethnographic process which I follow and which produces the ethnographic account that is to come. I have outlined the two principle tools used in this methodology; namely observation and conversation. In the act of observation attention is given to two areas of interest, where people *live* and what people *do*. The place where people live includes the geography and situatedness of their *habitus*. What people do (in Christian congregations) is principally reflected not only in how they choose to conduct their doxological rituals, but also in other activities they consider reflects and is integrated to their congregational ethos.

The concern of “engagement” (Fig.1) is principally to find out what people *say* about themselves, their stories, and how this relates to what they *do*. In the two congregations I was in conversation with, my principle aim was to elicit personal stories of life and faith, as well as the overarching congregational narrative which bound the members to one another. A strong secondary motive was to relate *story* to *ritual* in such a way as to further explore the meaning making nature of the doxological rituals.

The phenomenological nature of the ethnographic method necessarily situates the researcher as *participant* as well as *observer* in the field of research. The danger in such a hermeneutical genre is to run the risk of heavy bias in favour of the researcher’s values. Fiddes (2012) and Swinton (2012), who have a particular concern for the place of the researcher in Christian congregational study, explain that this can be overcome by the researcher being aware of this possibility and viewing the ethnographic process as a hermeneutical dialogue between the horizon of the researcher and that of the field of research. Seen from this perspective, the hermeneutical dialogue has the possibility of yielding helpful and positive insight in the field of theological and ecclesiological thought. The next chapter marks the beginning of the ethnographic account by giving a full picture of the two faith communities, their socio-historical and geographical situatedness and the narrative of their emergence as congregations.

PART ONE: *Congregational Studies, Charismatic Renewal & Two Churches*

CHAPTER FOUR Two Churches: *Stories worth Telling*

Introduction

Unlike the congregations researched by James Hopewell (1988) in *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, members of the two congregations I interviewed love to tell the story of their church.³⁹ Theirs are recent stories of adventure and discovery that live vividly in the fabric of their life together; their personal stories and their faith journeys being more often than not linked symbiotically to that of the congregations they have decided to be part of. I discovered that their personal and corporate Christian ethos and experience is narrative formed; that the progenitor of a network of house-churches in Scotland is in an initial co-operation between these two congregations that is recounted in the telling of their histories.

Ammerman's (1998) compendium *Studying Congregations*, gives helpful instruction for documenting congregational study. Her first task in understanding the culture of a congregation is to take inventory of the "outside culture" in which its members share (Ammerman 1998: 80). I take notice of Ammerman's instructions and begin with the historical and cultural setting of each congregation before proceeding with their stories. Following Ammerman's (1998) example, and that of her fellow compendium contributors, I add to the description of these settings with 'Sidebars': standalone documents that provide relevant supplementary information.

Bishopbriggs Charismatic Congregation (BCC)

BCC is the older of the two congregations. The founder, Rev. David Black, was instrumental in the emergence of the general Charismatic Movement as it appeared in Scotland in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as chronicled in Chapter One. I begin by recounting the historical, geographical and socio-cultural context to the BCC story.

Bishopbriggs: A prospering suburb for aspiring people

Bishopbriggs lies in the north-east of Glasgow. In the *Gazetteer of Scotland* published in 1882 it is referred to as a "village in the Cadder parish, Lanarkshire." Then in a short disparaging report on the 'village' the *Gazetteer* continues:

³⁹Hopewell (1988:140) complains that "many churches fail to tell their story. They are paralysed in prosaic self-description that follows depressingly predictable lines. They evaluate themselves by counting money, membership and programs. They tabulate the age, sex, race and social class of their members. And they even equate themselves with the property they occupy". He had suggested earlier that an understanding of the narrative formation of their congregation would enable members to see "beyond the embarrassment" and should "increase the facility with which the gospel is proclaimed and heard in its midst" (Hopewell, 1988:9).

It was originally called Bishop Riggs, and took that name from lands around it belonging to the Bishops of Glasgow; it presents a somewhat unprepossessing appearance, and it is inhabited chiefly by poor Irish families; and it has a station on the railway, a post office with telegraph department under Glasgow; a Church of Scotland mission station, a Free Church, and a public school with accommodation for 74 children. Pop. (1871) 782

Today it is very different. Due to its proximity to Glasgow, Bishopbriggs is a sizeable burgh of middle-class affluence (population 23,500) in the district of East Dunbartonshire. One inhabitant commented to me “it is the place people aspire to live in if they cannot afford to live in Bearsden or Milngavie”. The Burgh is bounded in the south by the City of Glasgow, north-east by the towns of Lenzie and Kirkintilloch, north-west by a stretch of the recently renewed Forth & Clyde Canal, which follows the meandering tidal River Carron, and in the west by the prosperous suburbs of Bearsden and Milngavie. Further north are the towns of Milton of Campsie and Lennoxton (associated with the once mighty Thanedom of the Earls of Lennox), and yet further north, the scene is framed by the green rolling contours of the Campsie Fells.

In its town-centre Bishopbriggs has all the appearance of thorough contentment with itself. Unlike the post-industrial centre of Bridgeton and other small central-belt Scottish towns, with their boarded-up shops, Bishopbriggs seems to have managed to integrate its large shopping supermarket in the Triangle Shopping Centre with the smaller thriving newsagents, travel agents, bakers’ shops and restaurants. These range from a Chinese Buffet to pizza parlours, a bank or two, and the ubiquitous charity shops. The Roman Catholic Church of St. Matthew, festooned during my fieldwork with a large banner proclaiming ‘Welcome to Glasgow Pope Benedict XVI in September 2010’, and a large well-maintained local Library have also managed to incorporate themselves just off the Centre but still amidst the bustle of pedestrians and traffic.

The BCC Centre, Bishopbriggs

My research into the story of the Bishopbriggs congregation was greatly helped by an interview with Mrs Jean Black, widow of the late Rev. David Black in March 2010, and a box-full of archive material retrieved from her attic. Other stories surrounding the beginnings of this congregation came from individuals who formed Black’s team of supporters. These included DF, the architect responsible for the design of the BCC Centre, and IB,⁴⁰ one of the founding members of the congregation and an Elder in its current formation. The congregation began life as a small gathering of Charismatic Christians affiliated to the Baptist Union of Scotland and led by Rev. David Black, a Baptist minister recently returned from South Korea where he had administered an orphanage under the auspices of the Christian Children’s Foundation. As narrated in Chapter One, David Black had been influenced by the emergence of the Charismatic Movement as it spread into other parts of the

⁴⁰ For profiles of anonymised participants at BCC, see Appendix 3: pg199

U.K. and in 1965, along with other Christian Pastors of different denominations, had sought for the ‘baptism in the Spirit’.

He returned to Scotland and was inducted in 1971 to the Pastorate at Dennistoun Baptist Church in East End of Glasgow. The Charismatic Movement in South Korea had greatly impacted his ministry and he arrived back in Scotland as the same Movement, now making an impact in mainstream churches in the rest of the U.K., was beginning to bear influence in Scotland. In 1975/76 a group of Charismatics began to meet in Burnside Villa, Bishopbriggs where they “enjoyed a new found liberty in the Spirit in their expression of worship”.⁴¹ This old house, the former home of the Bishop, who gave his name to the town, “served as a meeting place for the rapidly growing group of mainly young Christians, who firstly met under the leadership of Raymond Wylie, then under the pastoral care of David Black”.⁴² In 1975 the Baptist Union of Scotland recognised the congregation, and they moved into Kenmure Church Hall in Bishopbriggs. The Villa had now become too small and too derelict for their purposes. In 1977, the search began for a place to meet, to buy a building or a site on which to build. Black, an intrepid entrepreneur by nature, came across a derelict three acre brick works site not far from the centre of Bishopbriggs and negotiated its purchase. Planning permission was required for 27 housing units, sheltered housing for the elderly or handicapped (term then in use) and a Christian Centre, to consist of a café, a bookshop, offices and accommodation for worship services.⁴³ By January 1979 the purchase of the land was finalised, and by September of the same year, the first houses were occupied.

The Centre, Bishopbriggs.

The notion of community living, undoubtedly fuelled by the general utopian fervour of the 1960s, gained strong currency in Western societies from the late 1960s on into the early 1980s. This notion also gained prominence in Charismatic circles, supported by a belief that the earliest lifestyle paradigm for Christian believers was one in which they ‘held all things in common’.⁴⁴ Many experiments in community living took place in the U.K as well as the U.S.A. Michael Harper, an Anglican priest and founder of *Fountain Trust* in England wrote his most influential book *A New Way of Living* (1973) about an experiment in community living in an Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas, USA. Such influences also came to bear on the young and eager group of Charismatic Christians now meeting in the Kenmure Church Hall, as they planned for their ‘community within a community’ in Bishopbriggs.⁴⁵

⁴¹ From *In Praise of His Name*; small pamphlet published by BCC, May 1981 for Centre building opening.

⁴² From *In Praise of His Name*; small pamphlet published by BCC, May 1981 for Centre building opening.

⁴³ Scottish Baptist Magazine October 1978

⁴⁴ Acts Ch4:32-35

⁴⁵ The impact of such influences was borne out in conversation with DF, project chief architect, in July 2011.

By May 1981 many of the houses had been built and their offices and temporary place of worship was opened in the newly named Park Avenue, or *The Avenue* as it was referred to by the interviewees during my fieldwork. By now the congregation had moved from Kenmure Church Hall, and were meeting in a school hall in Bishopbriggs. They continued to do so until the Park Avenue venue was ready for them to meet in. Discouraged by the slowness of pace in ‘renewal’ amongst Baptists, David Black and his Bishopbriggs congregation seceded from the Baptist Union of Scotland in 1985.⁴⁶ By this time the congregation had grown to about seventy strong. I now pass over a number of years to 1988 when Black left the oversight of the congregation in Bishopbriggs to pioneer other congregations in Scotland. A few years followed in which the remaining Elders held the congregation together as best they could. In 1992 KS, who was linked to the *Ichthus* congregations in England⁴⁷, was appointed as their Pastor. KS opened new dimensions of Christian identity and witness for this young congregation. The ‘sanctuary’ (always part of the original plans) was finally built and completed in 2005 with a view to its being used by the wider Bishopbriggs community as well as the church. KS also began to gather leaders of similar house-church congregations into an informal network of churches. The earliest of these was BQ whose story of the Bridgeton Charismatic Fellowship (BCF) is to follow.

Fostered by KS, the Bishopbriggs congregation took on a deliberate missional attitude. To oversee this, an umbrella organisation called ‘The Well at Bishopbriggs’ was formed. The activities of The Well included a Mothers & Toddlers group, an Alpha Course in Red Towers (a notorious housing estate south of Bishopbriggs), other Alpha Courses in the Centre itself, regular involvement with the Glasgow City Mission by committed teams from the church, a Drop-In in the new premises and a Friday night Youth Café. This latter missional enterprise will become the subject of further exploration in Chapter Ten. A Community Pastor (GC) was also appointed to liaise with and support the wider Bishopbriggs community, and later a Youth Pastor (JD) was also appointed. By now the congregation had grown to around 140. Notably, a number of the original inhabitants of The Avenue had moved away or deceased and non-members of BCC had purchased some of the houses. In March 2009, KS left the oversight of BCC for a pastorate in Edinburgh. He was succeeded in 2010 by GC, the young man who had been the Community Pastor during the KS tenure. My fieldwork at BCC covers the end of the period when KS was senior Pastor, the first two years of the pastorate of GC and a few months in early 2013 when the pastorate at BCC was vacant.

⁴⁶ DF, the chief architect for the project and an elder in the Bishopbriggs congregation in its earliest years, informed me that all decisions were taken after “much prayer and consideration” for what they believed “the Lord was saying”. The decision to leave the Baptist Union was taken to the whole congregation for their approval. Relationships with the Baptist Union, says DF, “remained cordial” (DF interview July 2011).

⁴⁷ See Ch.1 (Sidebar 1, pg.17) for an explanation of the *Ichthus* house-church movement and its values.

SIDEBAR 2

NOTES OF A WEDNESDAY MORNING WALK IN THE BCC NEIGHBOURHOOD

The BCC Centre is situated at the northern end of Bishopbriggs, just off the main A803 leading to Lenzie and Kirkintilloch. I walk up from the main road. All around me are privately owned white and/or cream coloured bungalows and semi-detached houses. A few yards from the main road, I turn left into Park Avenue. 9.30am and the road is quiet. On my left a small block of three story red-brick flats. I walk further. On my right two-storied detached houses with parking spaces in front of them where a few cars are parked. Some houses have garages; I surmise that the parking spaces are for those houses that have opted not to have garages. One of the residents is walking across to the parking space. I wave to him. He invites me in for a coffee. I say I will come by later. I make my way up the avenue. Houses now are less spacious and expensive looking, pebble-dashed and grey, typical of the west of Scotland. A notice reads 'Private Parking for Residents Only'. In the distance the sound of a wailing siren: Police or Ambulance? Two women come from the pathway between the houses, chatting to one another. One of them pushing a pram the other carrying filled plastic shopping bags. They make their way past the Centre into the housing complex beyond. On my left is a little avenue with bungalows and semi-detached houses. I make my way to the Centre building, a three-storey building faced with grey pebble-dash. On its sidewall is a notice board that gives the times of events in the centre: Sunday family worship, youth groups, pre-fives, playgroups, and Rainbow Tots. A line proclaims, "Jesus is not just for emergencies". I walk round to the front to a car park in which there are three cars. I go into the building, into a small entrance and climb the stairs: carpeted with brown worn carpeting. To my left are some rooms. Some more stairs lead to room with administrative volunteers. I say hello to three young people in another room. They are planning a 'youth event' on 'spirituality'. The walls are covered in colourful posters and they are erecting what looks like a tent, made of muslin. An administrative volunteer offers to introduce me to the 'Rainbow Tots' staff. We go down the stairs again and then across the main auditorium, decorated for Easter with coloured paper chains. I pick up a leaflet which gives notice of the Lent Services for Bishopbriggs Churches Together. I go down more carpeted stairs to a brightly coloured room in which there are large plastic climbing frames, various toys on the floor, and a kitchen at the far end. I am introduced to one of the volunteer staff who chats a little about the Rainbow Tots, the pre-fives group. She says that it is as much about giving space for adults to talk and interact as for children to be cared for. Mothers and grandmothers arrive with their children. I leave by the back door and climb the walk-way at the rear. I decide to take up an invitation for coffee I had received earlier.

When I began fieldwork at BCC in 2007 the congregation gathered for their main meetings in the newly constructed sanctuary which holds about 200 seats on a Sunday morning. The term ‘sanctuary’ however is misleading. Apart from the triptych on the front wall above a small raised platform there are no religious symbols in the hall. The triptych itself is enigmatic in that its symbolism is not overtly or traditionally religious: a design incorporating holes (‘wells’ I was told) and linear and cross-like marks could easily be interpreted as a piece of New Age symbolism, or simply as a work of contemporary conceptual art. Natural light fills the place from large windows at the side and on the roof.

Outside the building is not recognisable as a church. It blends with the rather plain brick and concrete buildings that surround it. This is deliberate. Eschewing traditional ‘sacred’ architecture, the congregation in Bishopbriggs were concerned to make the place ‘comfortable to use’ by secular community groups, a vision which has now been realised. This aspect of the congregational meeting place as it relates to their *habitus* is explored and interpreted further in the study, in particular in Chapters Six, Seven and Ten.

In keeping with the values of the *Ichthus*⁴⁸ congregations, BCC has a mixed-gender leadership team in which both women and men have positions of leadership and influence in the congregation. The leadership during my fieldwork consisted of three men, including their Pastor GC and three women, including IB, mentioned above. Apart from the six senior leaders there is a wider leadership team, who meet regularly to “help see the vision of the church become a reality”⁴⁹ and to oversee the various activities of the church including the children’s work and the operation of The Well.

⁴⁸See Chapter One (Sidebar 1, pg.17) for explanation of *Ichthus* values.

⁴⁹Excerpt from an interview with GC, April 2010.

SIDEBAR 3

BCC CORE VALUES

We affirm the following core values, as a “statement of practice”, believing that what we do says more about us than what we say.

God

We seek to worship the Triune God, honouring God the Father and identifying with the life of Christ through intimacy with the Holy Spirit, involvement with the world, welcoming the stranger, identifying with the outcast and loving our enemies.

Bible

We believe the Bible is inspired by God. As the true story of God’s involvement with the world, and his purposes for humankind, we seek to engage with it deeply and to have our lives shaped by that engagement.

World

We seek to be shaped by God’s mission in the world, being active in seeing the dreams of God come true in our lives, our community and our world. We seek to partner with people wherever we see God at work, whether in the wider church family, or elsewhere. We seek to transform the ‘secular’ realm – seeing all of life as holy.

Roots

We affirm historical Christianity as expressed in the Nicene and Apostles’ creeds, which define our theological ‘centre of gravity’. We also affirm and value the church in all its forms, across history and across the world, always seeking to learn from what other Christians have said and done.

Community

We seek to live life in a loving community, in the image of God, being committed to each other, to God and to serving others with love and generosity. We believe you cannot live in the way of Jesus alone. We seek to be welcoming to all people, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, and marital status, cultural, social, ethnic or religious background. We seek to model leadership as a community. We value participation, encouraging all members to be active participants in the life and ministry of the church.

Journey

We seek to be walking in the way of Jesus Christ, always asking questions, thinking creatively, learning from history and from others, and valuing journey over dogmatism.

Bridgeton Charismatic Fellowship (BCF)

The congregation of BCF meet in the recently built Bridgeton Learning Centre. The stories of this gathering of Christian believers and that of the new community Centre in the small inner-city enclave are so closely intertwined and revealing that it is worth telling in some detail.

Bridgeton & Dalmarnock: Inner-city places of poverty and mortality

Glasgow has a long history as the commercial and industrial heart of Scotland. The 18th century saw the rise of wealthy merchant traders, in particular, the Tobacco Lords (also known as the Virginia Dons), whose trade with the new world produced some of the first millionaires in Scotland and

subsequent disparity between rich and poor. In the 19th century, as the Industrial Revolution gained pace, Glasgow produced textiles, chemicals, and engineered goods that were exported from busy ports on the River Clyde. Migration from an agricultural, rural population to city dwelling accelerated. Bridgeton, with adjacent Dalmarnock, is situated immediately to the East of what is now known as ‘the Merchant City’, built in Victorian splendour and from whence wealthy merchants plied their trade. Bridgeton and Dalmarnock became synonymous with the weaving industry; especially the production of ‘Turkey Red’ (in this it shares an industrial history with other parts of the lower Clyde). In a short historical narrative of the area, local historian Gordon Adams records that “within a few decades Bridgeton was practically submerged beneath the building of new industry and the housing for the workforce” (Adams, 1979). At the beginning of the 20th century and even as late as the 1970s, Bridgeton and Dalmarnock shared the fate of other inner city areas with the decline of traditional industries and the poverty, disease and poor health that ensued. In August 2008 the *Scottish Daily Record* reported that “men in Glasgow’s east end” have life expectancy of 54 “in comparison to the life expectancy of men in the more prosperous district of Lenzie to the north of the city, which is an average of 82”.⁵⁰ In 2011, George Galloway is reported as saying that "The life expectancy of people in parts of this city is 10 years worse than in Kabul".⁵¹ These headlines continue to be a matter of debate, but by all accounts life expectancy in the east end of Glasgow remained much lower than the rest of the city.⁵² More precisely, the small district known as Bridgeton (or Brig’ton as locals prefer to say) lies just off the (old) London Road (A74) before it exits the city and makes its way south to Carlisle. At that point the River Clyde, having begun as a wide and navigable river into the heart of the city, now begins to meander past Glasgow Green, skirts to the south of Bridgeton and then passes through the post-industrial areas of Dalmarnock and Cambuslang. On my frequent visits to Bridgeton I invariably approached Bridgeton from Glasgow Green, crossed one of the many smaller bridges spanning the Clyde, and immediately found myself in Bridgeton. The contrast between Glasgow Green and Bridgeton could not be greater. Dog owners walk their dogs and joggers run around ‘The Green’ in all weathers. In the summer of 2010 and the spring of 2011 I noted families having picnics on the grass and lovers enjoying the sunshine and each other. On crossing the bridge there is an abrupt change. The modern buildings are monotone. Some are boarded up. Large sandstone buildings lie derelict.

⁵⁰ For a demographic comparison of Bridgeton to Bishopbriggs see Appendix 5: pg.201

⁵¹ The Guardian 22nd April 2011

⁵² The Guardian reported in 2006 that life expectancy for men in the Carlton Ward – which includes Bridgeton - was 53.9. In 2011 the Guardian Fact File column reported: “The Scottish Public Health Observatory does publish data on life expectancy on the larger administrative area level of Carlton, Gallowgate and Bridgeton. They put the most recent life expectancy figure this area at 64.5 for men and 79.5 for women – but no direct comparison can be made with the earlier figure. The Scottish national average from 2007 to 2009 for men was 75.4 years and for women was 80.1 years.” Figures published by Money Advice Service Scotland in June 2013 for the Calton Area continues to state average male life expectancy as 53.9. (See Appendix 5)

SIDEBAR 4

NOTES FROM A WALK AROUND BRIDGETON, JUNE 2010

Bridgeton Cross is a place under repair: bounded on one side by London Road and the other by Dalmarnock Rd. On the side of an old building across London Rd. is a large sign, 'CLYDE GATEWAY'. The building was probably once a cinema, and then became a furniture store. Now it is dilapidated and sorry-looking, with greenery growing on its turrets. There is a lot going on around me. The bandstand (sometimes called the 'Bridgeton Umbrella') sits proudly in the middle of the Cross, wrapped in polythene, having been newly painted. Is Bridgeton Underground Station being...or, has it been totally rebuilt? It looks like it. Lloyds Pharmacy, a Curry House, a Registry Office, a shop selling phones, a shop offering 'Independent Financial Advice' are to one side of me. On the other a Credit Union, a Lady's Hairdresser, a Shoe Repair shop. I walk a little further down Dalmarnock Rd. and see many boarded up shops, names of their former life still displayed: an old 'Fancy Goods' shop, a Video Rental place, tenement buildings in disrepair. Old men stand around the square puffing cigarettes. Huge warehouses stand silent, a large shop premises, glorious in its day and housing the 'Virgin Express' Newsagent reeks of decay. Sandstone buildings are drenched in years of pigeon droppings, grass and small trees grow from a Victorian turret: once magnificent buildings now aproned with crumbling shop fronts. Yet in the decay, there is much renewal, rebuilding or struggling to be rebuilt: pubs, Indian restaurants, and lively declarations - 'Karaoke with Linda every Saturday; a Monday Club with Camay every Monday'. Younger men stand against the wall of the pub smoking. I move further around the square and I see BCF's 'drop in' shop, 'OPEN DOOR A Place to be Yourself' on a sign across the front. I step inside. Three women are standing by the small kitchen talking and drinking tea. I recognise one of them and explain my walk to her, then exit quickly. A notice on the outside advertises the church meeting on a Sunday at the Bridgeton Learning Campus. There are new shops on the square - an Optometrist, a Citizen's Advice bureau, a 'Quality Butcher', a brand new Pharmacy and a coffee shop. Another shop displays 'Spray tans available'. What word would I use to describe Bridgeton? It would be struggle. Many agencies have put effort into this place, struggling to bring hope. The hope is in the new urban entrepreneurs, new newsagents, new grocers, and so on: that is where hope lies. I walk a bit further to the Library and see beer cans scattered on the street, a chip shop, and a solicitors. New and old together: the new struggling to renew the old, the stubborn refusal of the old to go away.

I walk down Dalmarnock Rd. and turn left into residential Bridgeton. There appears to be a lot of new social housing. In contrast to the old 'grey slab' social housing the new housing seems more thoughtfully designed: brown and yellow brick, smaller windows, built at a lesser height. Tenements are on my left. I turn right past the Catholic Church: tall, made of sandstone with crosses on top; beside it a Catholic school and a playing field. A big green WELCOME sign beckons me in to the new community centre where I am due to meet CA.

Bridgeton Charismatic Fellowship (BCF)

I am grateful to BQ⁵³, the leader of this congregation, and to other church members for – on several occasions and over the period of a year - telling me their story with enthusiasm and obvious commitment to community-orientated church witness. The story begins in 1993 when a group of young Charismatic Christians began to meet in the home of one of the families who lived in Dalmarnock. The core families in this group had recently broken away from the small Pentecostal Church in Bridgeton because they considered it too restrictive and legalistic for the vision growing amongst them, of serving the people of Bridgeton. They were soon joined by others including JMCK whose story I recount in Chapter Eight. Practical outreach continued and increased. I now quote BQ verbatim and trust I do justice to his pronounced Glasgow accent. My additions are in brackets. Interview April 2011:

(We had) a heart for the poor...the marginalised...because a lot 'y us had experience of being in they places...and although it's not always healthy, you feel kinda drawn back to they places...that's kinda who we were. We also did outreach work...prison work and soup runs. We visited Cornton Vale women's prison... (involved with) YWAM who had a rehab at the time...working in the streets or rehab we would try to put them up. Leslie (his wife) and I ended up having a house-full of waifs & strays...exciting days, but wearing.

BQ is an engineer toolmaker who works in his father's business in nearby Rutherglen. He left school during the "reign of Mrs Thatcher" when "jobs were scarce" (his words) and he naturally went into his father's trade. He found himself the reluctant leader of this small group of socially-minded enthusiasts. They

continued to meet in the home of one of their member families until this became too small for their purposes, when they moved into various rented halls in the area. After a few years they felt they should move into the community hall in Bridgeton, because they "believed God wanted them there".

⁵⁴At first the keepers of the hall refused their application. After several attempts, they finally were granted the use of the smaller of the two halls within the old Community Halls complex in Bridgeton

⁵³ For profiles of anonymised participants at BCF, see Appendix 4: pg.200

⁵⁴ Interview with BQ April 2011

SIDEBAR 5

Values of BCF by BQ

Our church is first and foremost about Jesus and the people he has called to follow him; each of those people being special and each of them has a calling from God that is unique. So instead of having a mission statement that would in all likelihood come from the top and work down we decided that Gods calling to us as a team was to enable all of Gods people to fulfil their God given dreams and visions .We as leaders are called to serve and it is this call that compels us to seek to bless others as they go on their journey of discovery. Someone smarter than me described this as umbrella. We provide a place of shelter for others to discover their path. Even this process of describing our heart with words falls short and could even sound like a mission statement .I suppose the other reason for avoiding a mission statement is that it would make us sound like a business and that is something we all feel uncomfortable with.

for their Sunday worship. Two amusing anecdotes reveal the spirit and ethos of this group at that time, and are worth recounting. These stories are from the recorded interview with BQ in April 2011.

The first came about because the old Community Halls were “dirty and smelly”, and the group’s initial joy and enthusiasm at being allowed into the halls soon dissipated as a result. Much to BQ’s dislike, they decided that instead of their usual format of Bible study and worship, they would bring sweeping brushes and cleaning materials ‘to church’ one Sunday. They “donned Marigolds (a brand of plastic glove) and swept and cleaned the halls inside and out”. Although they did not trumpet their endeavours, BQ and other interviewees recall that this act did not go unnoticed in the community. Thereafter he says “people’s attitudes changed towards us” and he added that although he did not approach the task with much joy, “there was also a mind-shift in me... understandin’ about service to the community”.

The second amusing incident comes from the fact that the Orange Order used the larger of the halls for band practice on occasions when their marching season was about to start. I learned subsequently that the Orange Order in Scotland consider Bridgeton to be one of the centre of their activities. On one Sunday, as the Orange Order band was playing “No Surrender!” in the larger hall next to them, the small BCC congregation were “giving it laldy” (Scots: singing with gusto) in the next hall with “I surrender all - to Jesus I surrender!” BQ and others recount this incident with a certain degree of mirth and defiance.

BQ recalls being asked to join a newly formed committee to campaign for a new Community Centre. The old halls were little-used and local people thought a new hall complex would be more appealing to the community. The pressure group was given the name FAB (For All Bridgeton). They began planning and campaigning with great enthusiasm and vision. BQ was surprised to hear the group using quasi-biblical/spiritual language – ‘new-life, ‘new birth’, ‘transformation’ and such. They were on a steep learning curve. BQ: April 2011:

They were’ne long in lear’nin and finding their voice...that process involved consultation...looking for funders...getting political backing...MSP & Councillors...took about 2 years...started the building...architects...I became the chairman of the group...group were strong because they were local people, and more meetings...lots and lots of meetings!

Meanwhile the newly formed BCF also went through some changes. BQ linked up with KS at BCC in Bishopbriggs for support, and realised that he was not equal to the task of leadership on his own. Four other leaders were appointed, three of them female. Whilst the new centre was being built they continued in their service to the community. One of their women leaders became fully employed by the church to liaise with and support community activities, “which she did very successfully” (B Q: April 2011). The new Bridgeton community halls (now called Bridgeton Learning Centre) were completed in 2007, and the congregation began to use it on a Sunday for their main gatherings for

worship. In a further conversation to my initial interviews with BQ, he indicated that they avoided having a 'mission statement'. I asked him to write down the reasons for this, as this would say as much about them as would a formal mission statement (See Sidebar 5).

What of FAB, now that they have achieved their objective? They still continue to meet, said BQ, although he considers that their 'fire has gone out' and needs to be reignited. What is his hope for this group? Interview April 2011

To push for change...real change that needs to happen...maist inner-city communities...do not need to be ignored...big issues...quality of education...quality of housing...how to support lives wrecked with drugs and alcohol. What would I like to see? A re-engagement in the process for change...fresh blood needed...those there get tired & become part of the establishment

What is his vision for the BCF?

To work in the community...the work that CA does here. Through 'Open Doors' CA works in the local school and is paid by the church to work once a week...as she had been working with Renfrewshire councilbit of funding from the seed fund to get it started...not just in school but also in 'Open Doors'. She works with the 'worst behaved' most difficult educational needs...supports them in learning. Core values are still the same...seeing the Kingdom o' God making a real difference to the community here as well as our own lives...

SIDEBAR 6

'Creating New Space' by BQ

I wish to explore ways in which the church can create new ways for the voice of the ordinary everyday person in church to be heard. It is my belief that these voices are important and can make a very positive contribution to the practical and theological future of the church. I want to approach this from a positive place and attempt to find new and creative solutions that will create a new space. First, I will try to outline some of the difficulties and barriers we might face.

My own experience and that of those around me has been one in which a lack of confidence stops people from speaking out and sharing their thoughts and ideas. I overcame this with what I would call a bold and brash approach, a willingness to speak out in settings that were not comfortable or even natural. This was partly my own lack of confidence and the strange setting, alongside the fact that I did not speak the religious language. Those around me and others have shared that they have felt the same way and it holds them back to the point that they step back from sharing anything at all.

So the first barrier I see is the one of lack of confidence. Jesus gave people the space and confidence to speak to him and to share their thoughts with him. He wanted to know who Peter thought he was, and gave him the space and confidence to share his thoughts. This shaped Peter's understanding and theology for the rest of his life.

I touched earlier upon one of the other barriers I see, the barrier of language. On more than a few occasions language has been a barrier to me being able to fully take part. When we don't understand what is being said it creates a barrier to being able to play a full part in the conversation. This is not a plea for dumbing down of leadership but a plea for a new space where the language of leadership and theology is able to communicate with the everyday language of ordinary people.

The last barrier I mention is that of culture. Much of the culture of our church leadership is of white, middle class, educated males. We all feel most at ease in our own culture. This allows us to relax and have a bit more confidence to speak out knowing that the examples and stories we use will be familiar and understood. Jesus was brilliant at this, constantly using the culture of the people he was sharing with - stories of sheep and the sowing of seed. This is, I believe, Jesus using culture to relate the kingdom of God.

Conclusion

Fieldwork represents two congregations in different geographical, historical and socio-economic situations; although as I have noted, these Glasgow communities have more economic and human history in common than the casual observer might first appreciate. Nevertheless, they portray two distinct aspects of life in contemporary Glasgow: an aspiring and thriving suburbia, and a stubborn residue of post-industrial wasteland.

In this chapter, I also give the histories of the two faith communities as they have emerged within their geographical and socio-historical setting, in the wake of the Charismatic Movement as it appeared in Scotland. A fuller account of their lives together, their ritual behaviours, stories of individual congregants and the reciprocity between congregation and community will be given and interpreted in the chapters following. The object of such interpretation will not be a socio-political commentary, or an “attempt to seem relevant” (Swinton 2013: 83), but is an attempt to bring observation and analysis to newly emerging communities of Christian faith which allows for a mutually constructed interpretation between the field of research and myself as researcher.

For Paul S. Fiddes (2012) ethnographic exploration of such congregations allows for new theological and ecclesiological convictions to emerge in a circular flow: beginning with engagement, producing fresh models of ecclesiological vision, and ending (or continuing again) in fresh aspects of beliefs and behaviours which can be learned and incorporated into the life of the church. For Pete Ward (2012:3) fresh ethnographic accounts have the “potential to make a significant and urgently needed contribution contemporary discussion of the church”.

Chapter Five is an initial interpretation, using the parabolic genre in the teaching of Jesus, to bring some initial insight into the ethos of the two congregations in this study.

PART ONE: *Congregational Studies, Charismatic Renewal & Two Churches*

CHAPTER FIVE Two Congregations: *Narrative and Parabolic Interpretations*

Introduction

In *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, James Hopewell (1988) argues convincingly that the shift to ‘thick descriptive’ narrative is altogether more useful and accurate in understanding Christian congregations than “mechanistic approaches” (Hopewell 1998: 24). He contends that as congregations are essentially formed by narrative, their “self-perception is primarily narrative in form” (Hopewell 1998: 46, 48). Characteristics of a congregation are then best understood from “congregational idioms” (Hopewell 1998: 12) and symbols in words, artefacts, and behaviour such as “doughnuts, handshakes and pouts” (Hopewell 1988:7). Congregations, argues Hopewell, can only be properly understood inductively as a reader would apprehend a story, or sense a poem. Furthermore, he contends that the *narrative* genre can be usefully extended to include the use of ancient myths to reflect congregational character (Hopewell, 1998:42, 111-117, 120-139).

In an endorsement of Hopewell’s pioneering work, the theme of poetic apprehension as a hermeneutical tool has been contended for more recently by Heather Walton (2012) in her essay entitled ‘Poetics’ in the *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*. She argues, following Terry Veling and Daniel Louw that practical theology requires *poetics* (poetic reflection as hermeneutic) in order to “extend its prophetic vision” and appropriate pastoral care, the scope of which cannot be contained within objectified rational analysis (Walton 2012:174). Walton (2012: 176) praises Hopewell for daring to see “beyond the structural and organic analysis of congregational life” to glimpse the glory (even of a plain church) of the “deep current of narrative ...by which people give sense and order of their lives”.

In this chapter, I explore the hermeneutical relationship of story to congregational character. In particular I analyse the way in which this is a helpful means whereby the essential ethos or “corporate self” (Hopewell 1988: 119) of the two congregations can be uncovered, and may also allow for Walton’s (2012:174) concern for “prophetic vision” to be disclosed.

Story and Congregations

For Stanley Hauerwas in *A Community of Character* (1981:9) the “Gospel requires the recognition of the narrative structure of Christian convictions for the life of the church”. He introduces several aspects of the link between church character and external story. He argues that “The church’s first task is to help us gain a critical perspective on those narratives which have captivated our vision and lives” (Hauerwas 1981:12). To facilitate his interpretation of the narrative-shaped context of the church, Hauerwas (1981:12-35) turns to Richard Adams’ *Watership Down*, the extended and

complex narrative of a group of rabbits who exodus from a well-established warren in which they were in mortal danger, survive many battles and finally arrive to the safety of Watership Down.

For James Hopewell (1988:104) “story expresses a narrative coherence among the disparate states and events that constitute the identity of the community”, so claiming that in this way, story recounts, informs and accounts for the character of the group (Hopewell, 1988:104). In the case of the two congregations in this study, as evident in the previous chapter, story continues to sustain and augment community character in such a way that other stories form and are told in light of the community’s overarching narrative. Narrative in its telling enhances group identity, interprets its life, modifies self-understanding, and motivates individual and group behaviour, an amalgam of the lives and behaviours of its individual members.

In *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, Hopewell (1988) turns to Greek myths to interpret the congregations he is investigating. Hopewell’s contention (1988:109) is that “myth itself is a product of the struggle of a community for the particularity of its character”. As an outcome of congruent social situations, myth can bring “interpretative power” to congregational study (Hopewell, 1988: 110). To illuminate the character of each church in his study, Hopewell uses the myths of Oedipus and Orpheus and the fairytale of Briar Rose. Allied to his use of myths as interpretative tools, Hopewell embraces Northrop Frye’s fourfold typology for categorising narrative forms: Comic, Romantic, Tragic, and Ironic. Hopewell (1988: 69) was to interpret and adapt this typology in congregational study: the Tragic genre becomes the Canonic; the Comic becomes Gnostic; the Romantic becomes Charismatic and the Ironic is interpreted as the Empiric. The church member with Canonic tendency relies on authoritative (written) interpretation of God’s will. The member with Gnostic tendencies exercises an intuited understanding of the world. For the Charismatic believer, stories are suffused with tales of supernatural powers and a transcendent spirit personally encountered. The Empiric church member rejects the supernatural in favour of a Christian story that prizes “data objectively verifiable” (1988: 69).

In Chapter Two I voice reservations about the use of *mythos* to interpret church life. My hesitation lies in the danger of ‘reading too much into’, or ‘reading the wrong things’ regarding the characterisation of a congregation which is avowedly Christian. Hopewell (1988:111) admits himself that there are problems with this approach. Furthermore, as Walton (2012: 176) notes, Northrop Frye’s categorisation was already coming to be seen “as overly deterministic”; and for my purposes, Hopewell’s adaptation and use of Frye’s system is overly prescriptive. The churches in Hopewell’s studies were of mixed world-views, so his four-fold narrative typology was usefully appropriate; mine however are overwhelmingly ‘Charismatic’ (Hopewell’s categorisation). Therefore, to follow Hopewell’s typology in an interpretation of my congregations would result in a fruitless cul-de-sac.

In this chapter I follow Hopewell and Hauerwas in using external narratives for interpretative purposes, but instead of myths or stories about rabbits, I use two Parables from the Synoptic Gospels. Several reasons for this will be given later. Having discounted Hopewell's fourfold typology for my purposes, I nevertheless find that Hopewell (1988: 114) uses four other more general and useful elements in narrative construction which he claims, following Richard Bondie, facilitate the correspondence between (world) story and congregation. These are:

1. *Crisis and Integration*: In a loss or disintegration, what is the characteristic response and reintegration that is sought?
2. *Proficiency*: What is the characteristic skill, the chosen manner of doing things, the reliable pattern of behaviour?
3. *Mood*: What is the characteristic temperament, the emotional atmosphere?
4. *Hope*: What end is characteristically expected and sought?

For Hopewell (1988:114) these characteristic elements of narrative each reveal moments or quality of character which enable "tale and character to illuminate each other". Rather than being prescriptive and closed in their typology, they pose open-ended questions; helpful tools of disclosure when story can correlate with congregational narrative and bring about an interpretative dynamic, as I argue and demonstrate in this chapter.

Parables as Interpretative Narrative

There are several reasons for choosing the Parables as interpretative narratives. Firstly, we can circumvent the danger of 'reading into' or 'reading the wrong lessons' in a congregation's story which is undoubtedly Christian, by employing stories which come from their own traditions and have shaped their lives. As Hauerwas points out in *A Community of Character* (1981:10), Christian communities are formed by a "truthful narrative", in particular by the story of Jesus and his kingdom (Hauerwas 1981:36ff).

The second reason follows closely on the first. The respondents I interviewed from the two congregations commonly adopted stories from the Bible as their own, and routinely compared the components of their own stories to those of the people of God, either in the Old or the New Testament. Biblical narrative(s) already shape and drive the ethos of the two congregations and this will emerge in the accounts that follow.

The third reason encompasses the first two and comes from the nature of the parabolic genre as portrayed in the Gospels: I present this in two parts.

Firstly, in his ground-breaking work *The Parables of the Kingdom* (1935), C.H. Dodd expanded the work of Adolf Jülicher in discrediting the use of the Parables of Jesus as allegories. Joachim Jeremias

(1963) in *The Parables of Jesus* follows Dodd in placing the Parables in an eschatological context: their context is the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God and in particular the advent of its realization in his life and ministry (Dodd, 1935: 33, 34ff; Jeremias 1963: 10). So for the first part, I use Parables because they are in substance Parables of the Kingdom which, to follow the reason given above, is a key reference notion for the two congregations.

Prior to the second part, Hopewell's (1988) dismissal of Biblical stories to illustrate church character requires brief examination. He asserts that "biblical narrative is different from other mythic stories" (Hopewell, 1988: 113). Following Northrop Frye, he contends that the Bible is concerned to address Christians in Western Culture, who find themselves "to be the object, not the topic" (Hopewell, 1988: 113). His choice of Greek mythology lies in his understanding that they come from the wider library of human experience, and are more objective to the cause of interpretation of human behaviour. However, as Dodd (1935), Jeremias (1963), followed by Kenneth Bailey (1976) in *Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke* argue, the Parables of Jesus situate their *Sitz im Leben* outside of the Christian cultural sphere, and reflect a way of life common to first century Palestine (Dodd, 1935:21, Jeremias, 1963:12 ; Bailey, 1976: 142). Stripped of their accretions either in the early church⁵⁵ or by centuries of allegorization, they are simple stories which stand in an ancient tradition of story-telling and come from an ancient "world-treasury" of stories and tales (see Jeremias 1963: 12) , and offer ample external evidence of human behaviour. I suggest this gives scope to "help a congregation affirm its juncture with the human race" (Hopewell, 1988: 112). As second part of the third reason, I suggest that the genre of Gospel Parable equates well to Hopewell's criterion for *mythic* consonance whilst also allowing scope for insight into a Christian congregation's character.

I follow Dodd (1935) in his understanding of the Parables of Jesus. They are stories from life in first century Palestine with a *single idea* in mind (Dodd, 1935: 18f). For Jeremias (1963: 19), following Dodd, the single idea must be "of the widest possible generality: the broadest application will prove to be the true one". Dodd (1963: 18) indicates that although other ideas are present in the Parables, "details have been designed to set the situation or series of events in the clearest possible light, so as to catch the imagination". In other words, parabolic details have *not* been added in order that they may be interpreted allegorically. Furthermore, other details or ideas which emerge in the Parables are "not intended to have independent significance", as they would in *allegory* in which "each detail is a separate metaphor" (Dodd, 1963: 19). In interpreting the two congregations, I intend to avoid the use of allegory and to focus on those details which present "a single point of comparison" (Dodd, 1935),

⁵⁵ Dodd (1935) and Jeremias (1963) argue that the Parables have two *Sitz im Leben*. The first one is the life of Jesus in first century Palestine and the second in the life of the primitive church as they interpreted the Parables for their own use (Dodd: 111, Jeremias 23ff). Nevertheless they both concede that the historical setting of the Parables and their original format is easily discernible, and in some cases – as in Luke's setting for the Lost Sheep - is historically accurate.

but with “the broadest application” (Jeremias, 1963). This will offer a fresh approach to the use of the Parables as well as allowing the storied characteristics of the two congregations to emerge.

The final reason for the use of Biblical narratives, and the Gospel Parables in particular, is predicated on the role of narrative in forming Christian identity and theology. In *System, Story, Performance: A proposal about the Role of Narrative in Christian Systematic Theology*, David F. Ford (1997:191) proposes a strong link between Christian communal identity that is narrative formed, and Christian systematic theology. He argues that there are three basic categories which need to be taken into account when human/Christian congregational identities are to be conceived: namely system, story and performance. He argues that in Christian theology (system) and in the formation of Christian identity (performance/behaviour) “story has a key role, inseparable from the form and content of the Christian stories, especially the Gospels” (Ford, 1997: 191). Theologians have variously approached their task either from the perspective of “system” (systematic theology) or of “performance” (doxological ritual and ecclesial behaviour). Ford (1997: 191) suggests however that “*story*” might have a “certain primacy” if applied with “middle-distance realism” and have the capacity to synthesise all three approaches. He contends that both “system” and “performance” must be in “continual and critical interaction with ‘story’ if it is to maintain its rational, moral and spiritual integrity” (Ford, 1997:191). To retain the integrity of congregational narrative, their story must remain inseparable from the content and form of Christian stories, especially the Gospels (Ford, 1997:191). What follows permits the narrative form and agenda a “certain primacy” whilst pointing to and interpreting the “performance” of the congregations. These storied interpretations also foreground the greater attention given to “performance” that will come in Part Two.

Ford’s (1997) account of “middle distance perspective” follows the work of J. P. Stern (1973), in which interpretation “pivots” from the realistic world of social interaction to the Biblical narrative; in which the “realistic narrative” forms of the Gospels are “inseparable from their meaning” (Ford, 1997:194). This claims Ford (1997:194), is “an inextricable combination of form and content”. The “middle distance perspective” pivots between life and literature “in a way that translates one mode of experience into another” (Ford, 1997: 198). This perspective of story also enables the church member to maintain integrity between life and performance in “worship, community, prophecy and mission” (Ford, 1997: 199). It enables the Christian to live between the “Then and There” of the Biblical story, and the “Here and Now” of daily experience (Ford, 1997: 199).

All of this moves us beyond Hopewell’s use of *myth* as a way of discerning the character of a congregation, and allows the use of Biblical narrative to illustrate a congregation’s Christian *raison d’être*, as well as an interpretation of its character. I suggest that the character of Christian communities should not be divorced from their stated values. Indeed, as Hopewell (1988) points out,

congregational character is often shaped by its struggle to fulfil aspirational values.⁵⁶ I now consider the two congregations in the light of two Parables of Jesus.

The Wise and Foolish Builders: Bishopbriggs Charismatic Congregation

Matthew 7:24-27 (NIV)

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

The theme of *building* is writ large in the history and continuing psyche of BCC and is a significant concept in capturing the essence of their collective ethos. The housing complex, the offices, hall and sanctuary were all built on the site of an old and derelict brick works. This fact alone conjures up graphic images of promise and purpose in the minds of the members. In February 2010, I interviewed a couple, FC/HC (see Appendix 3 pg.199), who have been part of this congregation initially as young singles, then as a married couple, and now as a family with three children. At one time, both lived with their parents in ‘The Avenue’, but now live in another part of Bishopbriggs. I asked them for their memories of the beginnings of the faith community, later asking them what stories they thought of when considering the ethos of their church. In keeping with their Charismatic notion of revelation (which I consider in Chapter Eight) they both remembered a “word that was given” regarding the purpose and promise of their venture. I asked them about the site for the building of their premises:

Me: Was that an old quarry? (Referring to site of their premises)

FC: It was actually an old brick works. It was just derelict land. I think a word was given in the early days about it being a “well-watered garden” and something about “rebuilding the ancient ruins”.

HC: (jumps in) Yes that’s right it’s Isaiah 58, 11 & 12 (She quickly looks up the passage and reads) “You will be a well-watered garden, your people will rebuild the ancient ruins...you will be called the Repairer of Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings”.

Me: Was this word given at the beginning?

HC: That’s right, I think it was given through various people...but it’s only been remembered recently when the large meeting hall was being built. Again I felt that this was a word for us. (HC then asks if she can read out the verses which precede Isaiah 58:11, 12 as if to indicate what was now being impressed upon the Bishopbriggs community. She then reads out vs.7ff):

“if you share your food with the hungry ...and provide the poor wanderer with shelter then your light

⁵⁶As indicated earlier, Hopewell’s initial attempts at congregational interpretation were a failure because he did not take into account what “Trinity had laboured through great peril to deliver” (Hopewell, 1988:104). The subsequent use of an external story to interpret Trinity’s heroic journey through trials and struggles to achieve its aspirational goals became a more accurate interpretation of the congregation’s character (Hopewell, 1988: 42ff, 104).

will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear...then you will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail”.

That’s just what I think of when thinking about my church (She laughs nervously)

In the above interview the single key idea of *building* comes immediately to the fore for this couple, and it is linked automatically with a Biblical narrative which had shaped their initial formation. In interviews with the associate Pastor GC in 2010 and 2011 he told me that further building was envisaged which would house a general café and better accommodation for the Mothers & Toddlers group.

Hopewell’s (1988:114) first two questions in his four elements of story are useful now.

In *Crisis and Integration*, he asks what loss or disintegration characterises the story and what is the characteristic response and reintegration that is sought? For the men in the Parable, it might be imagined as a crisis that comes from a lack of accommodation, or a need for better accommodation. Are they newly married? Are their families growing? The characteristic response of the wise builder is to construct a dwelling on the sure foundation of rock.

For BCC, crisis occurred in 1977 and again in 2005, with the lack of suitable accommodation to meet the needs and aspirations of a growing congregation. In the first instance the response to this crisis was to look for some land on which to build. By 1979, the purchase of land was finalised and the process began, not just to build a place of worship but also to create a community living and worshipping in close proximity. Then in the years preceding 2005, the leaders of BCC, inspired by KS realised that the sanctuary for worship, as had been originally envisioned, had not been built. Instead of a sanctuary there remained a large gaping pit in the centre of the community. The finances were realised and by 2005, a modern, multi-purpose hall built.

In *Proficiency*, Hopewell enquires as to the characteristic skill, the chosen manner of doing things, the reliable pattern of behaviour. For the men in the Parable, the obvious skills required were those of an experienced and astute construction worker. The Rev. David Black had in his circle several people who were accountants, planning experts, and DF, an architect by profession. With DF and his team by his side, Black purchased the land and drew up plans for houses, which included sheltered housing, and a centre with offices and several meeting rooms. By the end of 1979, the first newly built houses were occupied.

I have demonstrated that the *single idea* of building is a significant concept for the origins and developing life of BCC, with the Parable of the Wise Man acting as intermediary narrative in an illustrative and yet accurate interpretation of the congregation. It is also a means to “extend the prophetic vision” (Walton 2012:174) of the congregation, as becomes apparent in the further

interpretation of the Parable, since for BCC the concept of building has deeper and more prophetic implications, which the symbolism of ‘bricks and mortar’ signifies.

David Ford’s (1999: 199) commentary on the way in which a story acts as correlating narrative, pivoting the reader or listener between “realistic narrative” and “performance” is also a useful perception in understanding the way in which Parable (“Then and There”) can illustrate the “Here and Now”. This process continues as I explore the Parable of The Wise Man in more detail.

Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

A man faces a crisis or dislocation (Hopewell 1998: 114). He needs suitable accommodation. He needs to think carefully about where and how to build. Hopewell’s (1988:114) third question, in his four elements of story, is helpful here. His third element is *Mood*: what is the characteristic temperament, the emotional atmosphere?

What kind of man is the first man in the Parable? He is a wise man. He is a skilled builder. He is proficient in what he does. He knows that building on the sure foundation of rock will ensure the stability and safety of his house when the inevitable storms come. However, ‘wisdom’ does not just lie in building skills: the idea of ‘the wise man’ also makes reference an understanding of *wisdom* which was a common theme amongst the contemporaries of Jesus.

As Joachim Jeremias (1963:153) observed, *wisdom* was a prevalent motif of rabbinic teaching which said that a man who hears and obeys the Torah is wise and cannot be moved. Now Jesus calls for a departure: obedience to *his* words. His words are recorded in the preceding two chapters of Matthew’s Gospel, in what is the commonly termed the Sermon on the Mount. Thus wisdom also refers to performance in the “Here and Now” (Ford, 1997: 199); to how the faith community behaves in obedience to their calling in Christ.

DF, mentioned earlier, became part of the David Black’s coterie of friends and advisors in the late 1970s and early 1980s. DF was given the task of drawing up plans for building the BCC centre and submitting these for approval to the local authority. Practical skill was present amongst the founders of the church: a certain and necessary kind of *wisdom*, inferred by the Parable. However another kind of wisdom was also present. The Parable pivots from the skilled wisdom of the builder, to wisdom as obedience to the words of Jesus.⁵⁷ This obedience rested upon calling to live out the gospel in shared communality and in particular to “rebuild the broken walls”, as recalled by FC&HC in the interview above. The symbolic force of *building* permeates the narrative of the congregation both in past promise and in present reality.

⁵⁷Tom Wright in *Matthew for Everyone* (2002: 78-81) argues that Matthew sees Jesus “like Moses, only more so” and that for Matthew *obedience* to the teaching of Jesus claims precedence over that of the Torah.

I return to the interview with FC/HC, February 2010. Immediately after pointing out to me the promises given by the ‘word’ to BCC, they continued with the *building* theme and its meaning in terms of present performance:

FC: Yea...it works on several levels...we built on land which was literally derelict...I mean it was completely derelict...but it could mean the building up of peoples’ lives.

HC: (jumps in) Yea that’s right ...just thinking about the Mothers & Toddlers group and how peoples’ lives have been affected...thinking about those coming along...not necessarily becoming Christians...but their lives being supported in one way or another...I see that very much as rebuilding the walls

Me: Let’s continue with the line of thinking - so you run the Mothers’ & Toddlers group?

HC: Yes that’s right. There’s a group of us from the church...two mornings a week.

Me: Could you say more about ‘building up lives’? Any examples? No names of course!

HC: Yes we have the practice of cooking meals for mums who have just given birth.

Me: Is that for all mums? Not just ones that belong to the church?

HC: Yes, all who come to the Mothers & Toddlers...many are not part of the church. One wee story is of a mum who recently gave birth, but was diagnosed with cancer. She has two other children, one of whom also comes to the group. We cooked for her when she gave birth. We asked to pray for her when she was diagnosed and she was happy for that. I think she values the quality of support and friendship she gets from the group. This is building up lives as I see it...giving someone a quality of life she may not have otherwise.

Thus the notion of *building* takes on a “middle distance perspective” in Bishopbriggs, much as it does in the Parable. It allows the members of the congregation to pivot, as Ford observes, “between life and performance”, that is life as the “realistic narrative” (Ford, 1997:196ff) of building (and all that goes with this: finance, planning, bricks etc.) and performance as “worship, community, prophecy and mission” (Ford, 1997: 199). For these two longstanding members of the Bishopbriggs congregation, the idea has become foundational to the ethos of the faith community, driving its mission to the neighbourhood. In recent times, as building work to complete the main complex of the premises took place, the community was reminded of their calling. Therefore, the idea of *building* in its dual sense persists during the transitional phases of the life of this congregation.

The next section of the Parable is now considered:

The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

Hopewell’s (1988: 114) fourth story element concerns *Hope*: what end is characteristically expected and sought? In the Parable, the wise man’s hope and expectancy is that the house will withstand rain

and flood. ‘Rain’ and ‘storm floods’ came to the young congregation by way of planning obstacles, construction problems, local opposition, and public ridicule. A major obstacle was getting planning permission for a complex of buildings that included a church as well as housing. However, as DF remembers, they became the beneficiaries of “special consideration” as the local authority was anxious to transform the status of that particular area of Bishopbriggs from “industrial” to “residential”.⁵⁸ That the site had been an old brick works also gave problems. Large stone kilns had to be demolished, and floods literally and frequently happened as disused pits filled with rain water. Opposition came from local people who envisaged that a closed sect or a hippie commune was setting up on their doorstep. To overcome the objections “we bent over backwards to build good relationships with the community” said DF. He recalls that the first Mothers and Toddlers venture was a big success with the neighbourhood, as was the Elderly Day-Care facility that started in the newly built Centre in 1981.⁵⁹ Possibly hardest to bear was the ridicule that came from other churches, and some Christian leaders. But, we “spent a long time focusing on unity and building good relationships with all the churches in the area. We had good relationships with the Catholics, even when other Evangelicals were not speaking to us”.⁶⁰

“Yet it did not fall”⁶¹: the building work continued as did the “performance” of the congregation in “worship, community-building, prophecy and mission”(Ford, 1997: 199). The congregation’s hope and vision to build a Christian community was being realised. They had become ‘wise builders’ in the dual sense of the “middle-distance” perspective afforded by the Parable. Continuing in the Parable:

But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

The ‘foolish builder’ stands in contrast to the ‘wise builder’. In terms of realistic narrative, this man is a rogue builder. He cuts corners. He is lazy and not willing for the hard toil of digging down to find rock. He builds on whatever he finds easiest and quickest, in the false belief that it will last.

The “middle distance” perspective of the parable would serve as a caution to the BCC. DF held that during the early days of the congregation there were those who wanted to take easier routes; he said that “some wanted to ‘cut corners’ and were willing to compromise their values”.⁶² There were also

⁵⁸Interview with DF July 2011.

⁵⁹ This is also reflected in several articles that appeared in local newspapers at the time. For example, the Bishopbriggs Herald of January 1982 and December 1983 carried favourable photos and reports of “a new Day Care Centre for the disabled at Christian Centre, Bishopbriggs”. The same paper on April 20th 1983 at the opening of the Mother and Toddler group reported that “it was obvious from the mum’s smiles that this one venture is a success already”.

⁶⁰Interview with DF July 2011

⁶¹ Matthew Ch7:25 NIV

⁶² Interview with DF July 2011

those who had “lost their edge”, had “become comfortable”⁶³. Clearly, the project in Bishopbriggs would have failed dismally if such people had had their way, and the subsequent demise of the project would have constituted a “crash” which would have reverberated around the wider Christian world. Thus, the “middle-distance” and poetic correlation of the Parable to the congregation enables an extension of “prophetic vision” (Walton 2012:174). It affords appropriate pastoral care in a way that Greek myths or stories of rabbits cannot do with integrity or authority.

I continue with an interpretation of the BCF congregation using the Parable of the Lost Sheep from Luke’s Gospel.

The Shepherd and the Lost Sheep: Bridgeton Charismatic Fellowship

Luke 15:1-7 (NIV)

Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” Then Jesus told them this parable: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’

For Jeremias (1963) and Bailey (1976) the *Sitz im Leben* of the Luke 15 Parables (The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, The Prodigal Son) is not only of significance for Luke’s theological purposes, but is historically authentic (Jeremias, 1963:124; Bailey 1976:142). Luke 15:1-3 is part of the Evangelist’s source and not the product of his redactional efforts (Jeremias, 1963: 100).

In considering the life of BCF, I argue that distinct from that of Matthew, Luke’s *Sitz im Leben* is also significant for our interpretative purposes. In Luke, Jesus directs all three parables against his critics in defence of his association with ‘sinners’ (Jeremias, 1963:124; Bailey, 1976:142,143). In Matthew Jesus directs the Lost Sheep Parable to his disciples. My intention here is to follow Luke.

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

There has been much debate as to the identity of the *ἀμαρτωλοὶ* with whom Jesus associated. Jeremias (1963:132) holds that the term ‘sinners’ means those “who led an immoral life (e.g. adulterers, swindlers)” and that those following a dishonourable occupation, (e.g., custom officers, tax collectors, shepherds, donkey-drivers, pedlars and tanners), are ritually unclean. Following Jeremias, Bailey (1976:147) also observes that within first century Judaism certain proscribed trades were considered *am ha’arets*, that is, ‘unclean’. E.P. Sanders (1983) in *Jesus and the Sinners* disagrees with Jeremias’ equating of the *ἀμαρτωλοὶ* with the poor (Jeremias, 1963:124), contending that ancient Judaism gave

⁶³ Interview with DF July 2011

place to the poor and that restoration for transgressors of Judaic Law was always available (Sanders, 1983: 18-19).

The key issues in interpreting The Lost Sheep Parable in the context of its *Sitz im Leben* are not negated by this debate. Sanders (1983:5), agrees with Jeremias in that “the one distinctive note which we may be certain marked Jesus’ teaching about the Kingdom is that it would include ‘sinners’”. For Sanders (1983) the ‘sinners’ were those who regularly flouted Judaic Law. Notwithstanding the different interpretations of ‘sinner’, there is agreement that certain groups of Jews within first century Judaism were religiously and socially alienated, be they rich tax collectors or poor shepherds. According to Kenneth Bailey, a further matter irked the Pharisees. Jesus had *table-fellowship* with the *ἀμαρτωλοὶ*. In *Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes*, Bailey (1976:143) comments on eastern hospitality practices:

In the East today, as in the past, a nobleman may feed any number of lesser needy people as a sign of his generosity, but he does *not* eat with them. The meal is a special sign of acceptance.

Bailey (1976:143) comments further that, “in addition to ‘eating with sinners’, there is the possibility that Jesus was himself hosting sinners”. He argues that the accusation here closely parallels Mark 2:15 where Jesus is clearly the host for the meal (Bailey, 1976:143). The accusatory turn of phrase, “this man receives sinners and eats with them” uses *δέχομαι*, which often implies *hospitality* (Bailey, 1976:143). He comments that “*to host sinners would most likely be the greater offence*” (Bailey, 1976: 143. Italics mine).

In *The World of Jesus* John Riches (1990) points out that, although Judaism offered salvation to the *repentant*, by having table-fellowship with known ‘sinners’ Jesus seemed to indicate that repentance came as a consequence of being accepted by God, not its precondition (Riches, 1990: 120,121). For Riches (1990:121), this was a radical message for Jewish society, creating much friction with the religious authorities. In Luke, the Parable of The Lost Sheep is an invective against the prejudices of the Pharisees and a narrative of Jesus’ hospitality to the despised, with which he was having table-fellowship. For Jesus, table-fellowship with ‘sinners’ was an enactment of the Messianic banquet, proclaiming that the “Kingdom of God has come” (Riches, 1999:119 also Dodd, 1935:49ff).

BCF and Eating with the Poor

Eating with the alienated poor has been a hallmark of this small Christian community since its beginnings. This upholds its vision and mission as recorded in the interview with BQ in Chapter Four:

(We had) a heart for the poor ...the marginalised ...because a lot ‘y us had experience of being in they places... (BQ April 2011)

Once a month, and more often when logistics allow, BCF prepare and serve a breakfast to their congregation on a Sunday morning. On my visits to them on these particular Sundays, hot bacon and

sliced-sausage rolls and steaming cups of tea/coffee were served to those who gathered in the café area from 10.30am onwards. Having breakfast with this group was different from what I had experienced in affluent Bearsden or even Bishopbriggs, where eating together served an important yet purely social function. In Bridgeton, eating together is an important social function with a different significance. In Bishopbriggs, the eating together serves to foster social cohesion and community spirit: in Bridgeton the grouping dynamic reveals a greater need for mutual acceptance and affirmation, met by the willingness of all in the congregation to demonstrate the solidarity of table fellowship. Poverty was visible as hungry men, women, and children enjoyed their meal together. At BCF, eating together meets both physical and socio-psychological needs, and is a precondition (as I argue in Chapter Seven) to the human-Divine encounter to come. Continuing with the Parable:

Then Jesus told them this parable: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them.”

Here I ask Hopewell’s first question in his four basic aspects of narrative:

Crisis and Integration: in a loss or disintegration, what is the characteristic response and reintegration that is sought?

The loss/disintegration is one sheep from the sheepfold. Why is this situation an issue when another ninety-nine remain? Bailey (1976: 148) makes the point that someone wealthy, not necessarily the shepherd, would own one hundred sheep, although he may be a member of the family owning the sheep. However, as sheep were the only source of wealth for Bedouin clans, the loss of a single sheep would mean a loss of income. Furthermore, the shepherd would feel responsible to the clan for such loss, and he would be anxious to make sure the sheep was found (Bailey 1976: 149). In the Parabolic story, the scene is set: the lost sheep, the anxious shepherd, the struggle to come to terms with the loss. What to do next?

Kenneth Bailey (1976:147) observes that there is an amusing irony in making a shepherd the hero of the story. Moses was accepted as a shepherd. King David had been a shepherd. God himself was thought of as a shepherd (Psalm23). The figure of the shepherd was a noble symbol, yet, by contrast, first century AD “flesh-and-blood shepherds who wandered around looking after sheep were clearly ‘*am ha’ares* and unclean” (Bailey, 1976: 147). Bailey (1976:147) comments that it is difficult to know how rabbis revered the shepherds of the Old Testament but despised the shepherds of their time. With a shepherd as hero, Bailey suggests the parable begins with a shock to the Pharisees’ sensitivities and is “an indirect yet very powerful attack on the Pharisaic attitudes towards the proscribed professions” (Bailey, 1976: 147).

Pivoting in middle-distance perspective from the parable to BCF, it is fitting that the hero of the story should have a dual image in the mind of the hearers, revered symbolically and yet despised culturally. Historically church leaders and pastors (shepherds) have been highly respected and the leaders of

BCF, who have pioneered a church amongst the poor, are highly respected by other leaders in house-church congregations in Scotland. They also command respect in academic or training institutions that send students to them for placement.⁶⁴ However, the pastors of BCF do not regard themselves highly. They rather count themselves amongst ‘the despised’, coming from inner-city parts of Glasgow. To quote BQ(April 2011) again in reference to their mission to the poor, “a lot ‘y us had experience of being in they places”.

“Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?”

Notably, Jeremias (1963: 133) and Bailey (1976: 149) doubt that an eastern shepherd would leave ninety-nine sheep alone on the hillside and go looking for a single sheep. However, surprising and unlikely details are essential elements for the impact of the *parabolic genre*. The ninety-nine left in open country give stark relief to the actions of an anxious shepherd who cares for one sheep and goes after it. As in other Luke 15 Parables, the crisis of ‘lost-ness’ is underlined by the narrative.

At this point Hopewell’s (1988: 114) second question in his elements of story is helpful:

Proficiency: what is the characteristic skill, the chosen manner of doing things, the reliable pattern of behaviour?

Again, the answer to the question would appear obvious. The characteristic skill portrayed is that of the experience and proficiency. The learned competence of the shepherd has bred in him a reliable pattern of behaviour.

Hopewell’s third question in his quartet of narrative elements adds to the picture of the competent shepherd:

Mood: what is the characteristic temperament, the emotional atmosphere?

At this point in the story, the emotional atmosphere may be one of fear, anxiety and struggle. I venture to suggest that those listening to Jesus did not visualise a happy, carefree shepherd, dressed in clean robes setting off on an adventure, as many Sunday school illustrations might lead us to believe. They would have been more likely to envisage an anxious, bedraggled looking man, compelled to make a journey that will save his honour and his livelihood.

Convinced that conventional church generally operates on a ‘come-to-us’ basis, the small house-church that formed the nascent congregation began with a concern for ‘lost-ness’ and a ‘go out’ or ‘go after’ and is still central to their ethos. So motivated, the group continued to visit Caunton Vale women’s prison, and BQ and his wife gave hospitality to “waifs and strays” to the point of exhaustion. The same motivation also drove them to apply for use of the old Community Centre, the “dirty and smelly place” (BQ April 2011. See Chapter Four). It fuelled their participation in the

⁶⁴ On visits to BCF I met students from International Christian College, Glasgow, and ‘INVEST’ (a Church of Scotland training course), placed there as part of their course.

planning and fund-raising efforts for Bridgeton's *new* community centre. It inspires their continued meeting in the heart of the district and the work of 'Open Doors', the main square shop premises; I detail some of this work in Chapter Ten.

The first two questions posed by Hopewell's elements of story, which I have argued suggest fresh interpretative nuances to the Parable, are helpful at this point. The Parable of the Lost Sheep is, in its first part, a story of crisis, loss, anxiety, distress, and struggle, effectively characterising the community of Bridgeton and those who wander into the path of BCF. Loss and anxiety mark the shepherd; distress and struggle mark the sheep. The BCF community are both shepherd and sheep; a sense of alienation and struggle is all too evident in the wider Bridgeton community.

BCF's initial identification with their wider community occurred when they sought permission to use the old community hall for church meetings because, as BQ says, "God wanted them there" (interview April 2011). Furthermore, BCF congregation demonstrated solidarity with the struggle of the neighbourhood through their cleaning-out and cleaning-up efforts at the centre, and in their supportive fund-raising for the building of a new community premises.

And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home.

Hopewell's (1988: 114) fourth element of his quartet of storytelling is:

Hope: what end is characteristically expected and sought?

The Parable of the Lost Sheep is also the story of redemption, care and joy. On finding the lost sheep, the shepherd puts it on his shoulders, and joyfully carries it home. Two striking motifs are discerned in this brief sentence of the Lucan narrative. In the first instance, in the simple act of placing the sheep across his shoulders, the shepherd demonstrates professional skill and care (Jeremias, 1963: 134; Bailey, 1976: 152). Secondly, Luke records that he acts joyfully: the theme of joy is initiated here and is repeated at the end of each of the Luke 15 Parables. Kenneth Bailey (1976:153) notes that the shepherd does not return the sheep to the sheepfold, but carries it to his home community to receive care. When observing and interviewing the leaders and members of BCF, I noted the way they practiced 'good news to the poor' in giving considerable attention to the vulnerable. I was greatly impressed by the genuine and ungrudging care given to individuals. An instance of this is recorded in Chapter Ten.

Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'

Sheep played an important role in the economy of first century Palestine and their well-being was a *community* matter (Bailey 1976: 150). A lost sheep was a collective concern: its loss affected everyone. Likewise, its recovery and restoration would be a matter for community celebration. The

shepherd brings the sheep back to his friends and neighbours, and calls them to celebrate that it is found. The refrain of hope and joy is repeated.

Celebration is also part of BCF. Meals are a time for celebration, and as noted above, they eat together and take food to the hungry whenever possible. This happens on a Sunday morning at the Bridgeton Learning Centre, or during the week at the 'Open Door'. When visiting, I observed that the Sunday morning breakfast became a celebration for occasions such as getting a job, having a birthday and being offered a house by the local authority. The meals I shared with the congregation were times of friendship, story-telling, welcoming strangers, and feeding the hungry. Jesus gave hospitality and ate with the sinners. The meals Jesus gave and/or participated in were a sign that the Kingdom of God had come, and anticipated the eschatological Messianic meal in which 'sinners' would be honoured guests. His actions and his parabolic story of the Lost Sheep belong together. In the same way, the celebratory meals at BCF are enacted parables of the Kingdom's inclusivity, and its welcome to the alienated and poor.

Poetics and Prophetic Vision

Heather Walton (2012) argues that practical theology can gain from the use of *poetics* – that is intuition, imagery, feelings – which allows for and extends a prophetic mode of reflection. This should be particularly true for the formation of ecclesiology in urban ministry where the missional imperative to bring 'good news to the poor' requires a prophetic vision.

Although in reality a first century pastoral scene is unfamiliar to us, Jesus' story of the shepherd and the lost sheep stimulates imaginative and intuitive sensibilities: the anxious shepherd, the distressed sheep, and the joyful celebrations. The mildly ridiculous portrait of a shepherd who leaves his entire flock on the open hillside to search for a single sheep, and the exaggerated celebrations that follow the finding of the sheep, are two aspects of the story that might not have appeared in a simple tale of a lost then found sheep. Nonetheless, they are a deliberate element in the hyperbolic genre of parabolic story. They arrest the hearer with the express purpose of calling attention to Kingdom inclusivity. If we allow the Parable of what the 'anxious shepherd and the lost sheep' to be a correlative narrative for BCF, I suggest it is also prophetic insight into their congregational character. As such, it serves not only the purpose of ethnographic interpretation, but adds prophetic challenge to practical theology in the missional field of urban ministry.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued for the use of Gospel Parables as interpretative narratives for the two congregations in the study, thus avoiding the possibility of 'reading into' the interpretative process using misleading themes such as mythological or contemporary fictional tales. My argument rests on

the focus of an interpretation from stories in the narrative domain that have already given shape to the corporate vision and character of the congregations.

An imaginative discernment of Biblical Parable places the genre in a wider than Christian context, to a first century setting, in both genre and content, and positions it within a larger world treasury of literature. The concept of the *single idea* of the parabolic form allows for a focused interpretation of the congregation in question. For BCC, this emerges as the focused vision and congregational characteristic of ‘building’. For BCF it is the idea of ‘lost-ness’ (social alienation), which elicits the active concern of the shepherd. Nonetheless, as argued in this chapter, Hopewell’s (1988:114) four elements are helpful to the development of the single idea in broadening aspects of congregational ethos.

Heather Walton (2012) and John Swinton (2012) have warned against arid analytical methods in congregational study that lead only to a “very positivistic approach to human actions” (Walton 2012: 174). Following Nancy Bedford, Walton (2012:714) argues that theologies based on practical research are in danger of “losing momentum” and retreating into safer “but less prophetic modes of reflection”. She argues that “poetic modes of reflection” - the creative use of the imagination and a willingness to play with metaphors – are ways of overcoming this (Walton 2012: 174). She praises Hopewell for his narrative approach, claiming they took him beyond the Geertz use of symbolic systems to encapsulate the complex stories of church congregations (Walton 2012:176). She also praises Hopewell’s understanding of Eros as “the personification of cultural creativity” adding that his death prevented him from developing his “radical poetic vision” (Walton 2012:177).

John Swinton (2012: 79) warns against the Christian ethnographer drifting into some form of “methodological Deism”, where “God’s current activities are presumed to be irrelevant to designing and conducting an effective investigation”. He argues that, following Gadamer’s approach to hermeneutics, it is naïve to believe that the researcher can ever be truly detached from the field of interpretation, and that consequently the Christian ethnographer should develop a “mode of reflexivity within which the theological is assumed as normal”. It is possible that Swinton (2012) and Walton (2012) had in mind the earlier ethnographic studies characterised by Matthew Guest, Karin Tusting and Linda Woodhead (2004) et al as ‘intrinsic’ studies, exemplified to a large extent in their volume *Congregational Studies in the UK*.

Following Walton (2012) and Swinton (2012), I propose to adopt a mode of reflexivity in which the theological is a normal and primary dimension of my methodological and epistemological assumptions, as already outlined in Chapter Three. On this premise, I argue that the use of Gospel Parables not only gives the two congregations an integral and truthful interpretation, but also that an imaginative assimilation of the Gospel narratives extends their genuine prophetic focus.

Chapters One to Five gives a preliminary understanding of the two congregations by way of detailed description and narrative interpretation. Part Two comprises Chapter Six to Eleven. In these chapters, I depict and analyse observed ritual, which together with the stories of individual members of the congregations form an interpretive tool for their Charismatic house-church *habitus*.

PART TWO: *Rituals That Live*

Hallelujah! Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints

Psalm 149: 1

Praise him with the tambourine and dancing; praise him with the strings and flute

Psalm 150: 4

PART TWO: *Rituals That Live*

CHAPTER SIX Sacred Space: *Music and Movement*

Introduction

Peter Collins (2004: 99) argues that the ethnographer is tasked with asking themselves, “What does this group do and how do they make sense of what they do? (And here doing includes saying)”. In this and the following four chapters, I thicken the ethnographic process by applying this question, through observation and interview, ritual and story, to the two congregations whose stories were told in Part One. What do these groups do? What significance can be attached to this? How do they make sense of what they do?

In *Selling Worship: How what we sing has changed the church* Pete Ward (2005) traces and explores the rise and influence of music associated with the Charismatic Movement since the 1960s. He argues that “evangelical Christians in Britain” have come to embrace popular music, and that more significantly, this has influenced the “practice and theology of worship” (Ward 2005:3). In this chapter I explore how Charismatic music, largely imported, has influenced Scottish Charismatic congregations; I present an examination of the ritualistic ways in which music and movement combine to catalyse experiences of the Divine-human encounter - the heart of the Charismatic *habitus* – influencing not only the practice, but also the theology of Charismatic Protestant congregations. Here I understand the term ‘movement’ in two ways. Firstly, the rituals *move* the worshippers from ‘secular space’ to ‘sacred space’. In both congregations, it is noticeable that secular space transforms, through ‘ritual time’ - a concept I develop later - into sacred space. Secondly, movement itself is symbiotically related to music within the Charismatic rituals; it catalyses epiphanic experience and becomes part of the transformation of secular to sacred space.

I begin with participant-observation of two Sunday gatherings: Bishopbriggs Charismatic Congregation (BCC) in March 2009 and Bridgeton Charismatic Fellowship (BCF) in May 2010.

Thick Gatherings

Bishopbriggs Charismatic Congregation (BCC)

Unlike BCF, BCC has built its own accommodation over the last thirty years and gathers on a Sunday in a purpose-built auditorium. However, as previously mentioned in the storied context of this congregation, BCC has deliberately secularised its building so that the exterior is indistinguishable from the grey and white rendered houses that surround it or the Wimpey company offices at the entrance to Park Avenue. The buildings are plain, and apart from the fact that the church name appears on a notice board in the foyer, there are no traditional signs or symbols, no cross or pulpit, to indicate to the Mothers & Toddlers group, Pilates fitness class, or the occasional business conference,

that this is also a regular place of worship. As noted in Chapter Four, the dissolving of boundaries between secular and sacred was an architectural policy by the founders of BCC. It is a notion present throughout the analysis of both congregations; partially explored in this chapter, and examined more thoroughly in Chapters Ten, Eleven and Twelve.

BCC: 15th March 2009

9.45am: The modern entrance hall is the full width of the building. It is furnished with easy chairs, coat stands, and a coffee/tea area. There are some large notice boards by the wall to my left on which there are pictures and notices of the events at BCC. People are standing around chatting. Some are drinking coffee/tea. Most appear to be in their 30s or 40s. Young children laugh and play; some are playing with their toys on the tables provided. Several prams arrive, pushed by harassed looking mothers. People hug. The foyer is becoming very full: parents tell children to stop running around, but keep chatting themselves.

10.20am: I enter the main meeting room. It is a large carpeted area, lit by the light now streaming into the room from full length windows on the side and from windows set high above the entrance area. Chairs are set out in a semi-circular fashion facing a platform which rises about a foot from the main auditorium. Earlier one of the men setting out the chairs told me that the hall had a capacity of 200. On the platform four musicians are tuning their instruments, making last minute sound checks, and talking amongst themselves. The platform is littered with microphones on stands and musical instruments – a drum set, a djembe or two, a saxophone, keyboards, and several guitars. The musicians are dressed mainly in blue or dark denim jeans and short-sleeved shirts. To my left on entry is a small raised enclosed area in which a few anxious and serious looking young men peer at video screens, twiddle knobs and make hand gestures to the musicians on stage – occasionally calling out when hand gestures do not seem sufficient.

10.40am: The meeting begins. The hall is about half full. A man who looks to be in his mid-40s and who stands on the floor below the platform is leading the meeting. His voice is carried throughout the hall and into the foyer from a microphone clipped to his shirt. He welcomes everyone and invites the congregation to say the Lord's Prayer together. Everyone stands up. The first song is projected onto two screens in front of the congregation, and they sing with gusto - 'And can it be?' (Charles Wesley hymn lyrics).

10.45am: More people arrive: mothers pushing pushchairs. Over in the left hand corner of the room a woman is unfurling a large flag made of deep pink chiffon. The singing gets louder as more people arrive. In the area at the front of the congregation, where the speaker had been standing, the flag is being waved slowly, in time to the music.

The next song is projected. The lyrics are from Isaiah but the setting and music is entirely contemporary. They read “Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord”. The tempo is now rocking. The drumming seems louder than before.

A family of African origin consisting of a mother, an adult daughter and two younger children come into the hall. Many hands are raised. Some people are swaying gently to the music.

The leader returns to the front. He prays for God’s presence to be felt. Suddenly all is very quiet. Small children still run around at the back of the hall. Quietness continues for half a minute. The worship leader introduces the next song.

10.55am: The next song is projected

This is the air I breathe
This is the air I breathe
Your holy presence living in me.

This is my daily bread
This is my daily bread
Your very word spoken to me.

And I, I'm desperate for you
And I, I'm lost without you.

This is the air I breathe
This is the air I breathe
Your holy presence living in me.

And I, I'm desperate for you
And I, I'm lost without you.

Some small children are waving small flags at the front. The large pink flag is now being waved in a gentle flowing motion over the congregation at the front. Still more people arrive and take their seats. The place is now quite full. Some people are swaying to the music. Lots of hands are raised. Mothers are holding young children at the back whilst singing and swaying.

The worship leader speaks. He says that he believes God has a specific word he wants to bring to everyone in the congregation. He encourages everyone to be listening out for God’s voice. He then takes up the leadership of the same song. The music gets louder and is building to a crescendo. The congregation repeat the refrain to the last song “I’m lost without you”. The leader introduces the next song.

11.10am: The song “Who is there like you?” is now being sung. A young couple in front of me seem lost in the singing and in each other. The congregation sing “lift up holy hands” – most hands are raised. Over on my left a woman in her 50’s is dancing. The black woman in

front of her is dancing vigorously. She picks up one of the flags arrayed at the front and begins to incorporate using it in her movements. The sound rises to a crescendo. The band is getting louder as is the singing. The congregation are singing “your power at work in me is changing me”.

11.35am: The children and youth leave the congregation. Another song is sung: “These are the days of Elijah”. A smaller pink flag is unfurled and is now being waved vigorously. The young man in an electric wheelchair at the front is spinning his wheelchair around in a dance. Now and again he races around the hall whilst singing. A lady at the back is running up and down in flowing dance movements. The music again gets louder as the song progresses.

11.40: The congregants remain standing and become quiet. In the stillness, GC, comes to the front and reads a poem that speaks about ‘blossom and the Holy Spirit’. Another song entitled “Hear the call of the Kingdom” is sung. This song seems to invigorate the congregation, and the singing rises to a crescendo. The congregation then quietens; GC gives thanks to God for ‘his presence’ and for ‘touching our lives’. IB comes forward to preach.

Bridgeton Charismatic Fellowship (BCF)

Bridgeton is in the east-end inner city of Glasgow and BCF meet in the town’s new community hall. The Bridgeton Learning Centre, in whose construction the congregation played a leading role, lies on the Old Dalmarnock Rd. at the heart of Bridgeton, and is flanked on two sides by car parking areas, recently laid turf, and small gardens. The hall of deep orange brick, glass and grey metallic acrylic is accessed through glass doors from the car park into a welcoming foyer. The words *Bridgeton Learning Centre* are neatly emblazoned on the glass doors and ‘WELCOME to Bridgeton Learning Campus’ is written in large green letters on the wall next to the small reception area.

BCF: 30th May 2010

As I had done the previous Sunday, I pass through the entrance foyer and empty desk into the Café area: a modern brightly lit room at one side of the community centre. Again I am greeted warmly and offered a cup of tea and a biscuit. I follow others into a medium sized hall where about 30 chairs are set out in a semi-circle. Facing the circle of chairs is a single lectern and two other chairs. A couple of people strum guitars and a rather dishevelled looking man is playing the djembe. I recognise the djembe player as the Hungarian musician I had met earlier in the week at the Church’s Open Door centre in town. I wave to him in recognition as he continues to rehearse with the other musicians. Over to my left the same tables I had noticed on a previous visit are again laid out with paper and crayons and some children are chattering playfully and enthusiastically ‘colouring in’. I sit at the back row. I notice a man in a wheel-chair to my left on the front row. Next to him is a middle-aged woman whom I take to be his wife or carer or possibly both. He has a blanket over his legs and is smiling broadly. BQ opens the meeting with a “funny story” of an event which

happened to him in the week. The guitarists strum their instruments. The djembe player begins to play and leads into a song:

Draw me close to You
Never let me go
I lay it all down again
To hear You say that I'm Your friend
You are my desire
No one else will do
No one else can take Your place
To feel the warmth of Your embrace
Help me find my way
Bring me back to You

Chorus:

Oh, Oh, Oh
You're all I want, You're all I've ever needed
You're all I want, Help me know You are near

Three of the congregation rise to their feet and raise their hands. Everyone else sits; some remain quiet and contemplative. A few more people join the congregation and sit at the back. It is now about 10.45am and the chairs are mostly all filled. Hardship and struggle is etched in drawn faces and plain apparel. There is a quiet intensity about the congregation.

After the song is repeated a few times there follows an interlude. The musicians continue playing quietly. There is now a quiet humming which breaks into a 'singing in tongues'. This is a beautiful chant-like sound that grows and diminishes. The next song is introduced - "Father God". A few more people stand and hold up their hands, their eyes closed. One of the girls sways gently to the music. Another song is introduced:

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart,
I want to see You,
I want to see You.

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart,
I want to see You,
I want to see You.

To see You high and lifted up
Shining in the light of Your glory,
Pour out Your power and love
As we sing holy, holy, holy.

Most of the congregation are now standing. Many are swaying, raising their hands 'palms up'. The singing gets louder, and one of the women to my right kneels on the hard floor, her hands still raised, her eyes closed. She stops singing, holds out her hands further in what seems to be

imploring prayer, whispering softly and imperceptibly. After a while the singing draws down and BQ moves onto the next part of the service.

Secular Space, Sacred Space and Sacred Time

BCF have chosen to meet in secular spaces where during the week, senior citizens play carpet bowls, people play badminton, the community run playgroups, have parties, and so on. The BCC own purpose-built hall(s), and have deliberately secularized these. Simon Coleman and Peter Collins (2000) make similar observations about two congregations they investigated, one Swedish Charismatics, the other British Quakers. As different these two groups seemed, they displayed a similarity in their desire to dissolve the “distinction between formal ritual action and everyday activity” (Coleman and Collins, 2000:318). Furthermore they both, “at least to some extent present variations on an underlying *habitus* and wider aesthetic system that invokes a non-conformist spirit of both revivalism and protest” (Coleman & Collins, 2000:320). In Part One I followed Andrew Walker (Walker, 1988:139) and David Martin (Martin 2002: 27) in suggesting that The Charismatic Movement as a whole bore resemblance to Puritanism and Methodism, both of which carried strong elements of *protest* within their movements. However, no hint of protest was manifest in the interviews or ritual conversations of the two groups meeting in their secularized spaces. Following Walker’s argument that Puritans and Methodists were the non-conformist forebears of house-churches, I suggest that in similar manner the simplicity of the BCC and BCF buildings has been chosen to reflect an inner spirituality and can be traced to non-conformist ancestry.

However, this is where similarity to the simple austerity of non-conformist predecessors ends, as the lineaments of the house-church ritual field are flamboyant and avowedly semiotic as seen in the documented observations. The ritual matrix of worship at BCC or BCF is articulated through gesture, dance, noise, imagery, poetry, and music of various kinds. In the following chapters, I explore other aspects of the Charismatic *habitus*; for the moment, I confine myself to the element of music, which frames and shapes the central doxological event in which the congregations are engaged. In this ritual event, the congregations move from ‘secular space’ to ‘sacred space’: a space *transformed* for this brief time, by the ritualistic dramas that unfold in it.

Music & Movement

At BCC and BCF, the congregants move from the ‘secular’ outward foyer (BCC) or café area (BCF) to a main meeting hall that becomes ‘sacred space’ during ritual events. The human activity that happens in the place before the main event - drinking coffee, hugging, children playing, laughing, praying in small groups and so on - are a vital part of the matrix of Charismatic rituals. In the ‘secular’ space the worshippers are preparing - spirits reconciled and re-orientated - to engage fully in the intense Divine-human encounter that follows.

Music is critically important in the ritual field of Charismatics and generally needs to be music of a particular type: not classical or jazz, but thoroughly contemporary, leaning towards Folk and Rock genres. It is highly lyrical, regularly comprises of quieter verses interspersed with a chorus that rises to a crescendo, and the entire song is often sung repeatedly. In the early days of The Charismatic Movement, the music took much of its inspiration from classical (black) Pentecostalism, and included Psalms set to contemporary folk music. From the 1960s, though to the 1980s several well-known secular musicians were ‘converted’ and had a profound influence on the Charismatic repertoire.⁶⁵ Other Charismatic songwriters emerged and gained much prominence in the Charismatic field and their songs were recorded and sung in non-Charismatic church settings.⁶⁶ They invariably followed the musical trends of their generation and their musical instruments of choice can be found in any contemporary Folk or Rock sound, keyboards, drums, percussive instruments and guitars. The music used by the two congregations appeared in the main to have been influenced by Graham Kendrick of Ichthus origin, and John Wimber of the Vineyard movement.

At both BCC and BCF, when worshippers enter the main hall of gathering, they meet the sound of musicians tuning instruments, checking sound levels and generally preparing to lead the congregation in worship. At this point in the proceedings the entry from the foyer (BCC) or café (BCF) provides a liminal space from the workaday world to the expected hierophany that is to come.

These congregants are ‘prepared’ by embodied rituals within ‘secular space’ to meet with their God, the ‘secular space’ having been ‘sacralised’ by the early rituals of the Charismatic matrix. In both settings continued chatter and laughter creates an atmosphere of friendship, acceptance, and anticipation for what follows. This atmosphere is enhanced by the continuing sound of musicians preparing both instruments and each other for song and dance. Now and again the musicians rehearse parts of a song. At BCF, the atmosphere is a little more restrained: the cares of life seem to weigh more heavily on the worshippers. However, warm friendship prevails; the worshippers are affirmed and set at ease by the informal atmosphere and the jocular way in which the leader begins the service. I propose that five phases are discerned in the ritual field of the two congregations above, in which music and movement play a part. Each of these phases or elements is distinctly evocative and plays a peculiar part in the overall ritual: each phase arouses the worshippers to a variety of seemingly appropriate movements. Characteristic examples of these phases follow.

⁶⁵ Most famous amongst these were Barry McGuire who was with the *New Christy Minstrels* and sang ‘Eve of Destruction’, and John Wimber who co-founded the *Righteous Brothers* (1962) then long after his ‘conversion’ founded the *Vineyard Churches* whose 80s style music was very influential amongst non-conforming as well as main stream church Charismatics.

⁶⁶ Amongst these are Graham Kendrick and David Bilborough whose songs such as ‘Bind Us Together Lord’ have found their way into most contemporary Hymn/Song Books. Both of these song-writers originate from different ‘house-church’ streams in England. See Ward 2005: 135-149 where he gives an account of the influences of the music of Graham Kendrick and also of John Wimber and the *Vineyard* movement.

Approach

The opening songs of Charismatic liturgy may be loud praise (a Wesley hymn at BCC) or a soft song of entreaty (at BCF). The purpose of the song is to prepare the worshippers, to remind them of God's "amazing love" (BCC/Wesley) and of his willingness for encounter (BCF). For these worshippers, as for Charismatics generally, the function of the worship service is to experience the presence of God, without which the ritual would not have fulfilled its purpose. In both congregations this function is usually announced, and underscored by the opening songs. At BCC the opening songs include the promise that "strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord" and the confession, "this is the air I breathe: your holy presence living in me". At BCF the opening song calls upon God: "draw me close to you, never let me go". In both congregations everything is intended to allow for a gradual ascent to the presence of God. The accompanying movement for such a phase is to stand. The fact that most people do this at Bishopbriggs whereas only a few do it at Bridgeton may indicate something about respective psycho-cultural states of mind on a Sunday morning. Whereas most of the congregation in BCC stand in the approach phase, for the worshippers in BCF the appropriate posture in the approach and preparation seems best expressed in a contemplative seated position.

Praise

In Charismatic ritual conversation, this phase is distinct, since for Charismatics 'worship' is a specific element of the overall ritual. This section is usually loud and exhortational. At BCC the exhortation in the 'songs of approach' is to expect "strength to rise" as they "wait upon the Lord" and the volume of sound builds. At BCF the approach song extends (as Charismatic songs often do), into the element of praise. The movements associated with this can be seen both at BCC and BCF, and include dancing and clapping and at BCC the unfurling and waving of flags, large and small.

Transition

The transition element is common to most Charismatic ritual fields (See Albrecht 1999: 160). Sometimes this is a pregnant silence which may last a minute or two (BCC), and sometimes this silence is followed by 'singing in tongues' (BCF). As described above, this common Charismatic ritual is described as a chant 'in tongues' in which the congregation participate simultaneously, singing in the musical key of the previous song. At BCF this has a sense of crying out, of pleading with the Divine. Standing, a seemingly expectant stillness or gentle swaying, and hands raised 'palms up'⁶⁷ often accompanies this phase. This preparatory episode usually segues to the next phase of 'worship'.

Worship

In Charismatic ritual conversation the term 'worship' is often used to describe the entire doxological

⁶⁷ See Csordas, 2009:109 in which he describes the 'palms up' posture as 'universal posture' amongst Charismatics which signifies 'petition' and an understanding of God as 'paternally and intimately responsive to the well-being of his creatures'.

event, however it more usually alludes to a nuanced connotation: the time or element when the worshipper draws into greater intimacy with his/her God. Worship – the sense of deep and spirit-felt intimacy with the Divine - is the very heart of the Charismatic ritual field (see Albrecht 1999:155, 156; Ward 2005: 199).

Spoken by bandleaders or designated congregational leaders, phrases used in both congregations admit this nuanced aspect of the ritual field:

“We will move into a time of worship” (BCC– about half-way through the service)

“Let’s just enter the presence of God” (BCC – near the beginning of the service)

“Let’s open our hearts to worship God” (BCF – said after a few songs and prayers)

At BCF this element is typically induced with songs such as “Father God” and “Open the Eyes of my Heart Lord”, where the sentiment of longing to ‘see’ God ‘with the eyes of the heart’ is verbally and experientially reinforced. The worshipper expresses the desire to feel ‘the warmth’ of God’s ‘embrace’.

At BCC the same element is facilitated and heightened by the lyrics and tempo of “This is The Air I Breathe”, an expression of desperate longing that the air he/she breathes is “your holy presence living in me”. The music in the ‘worship’ phase is sometimes quiet and intimate (BCF), or alternatively loud, declaring and rising to a crescendo (BCC).

In **PART TWO**, I argue that the pursuit of *presence* is a key interpretation of the Charismatic doxological ritual found in the two house-church congregations. It is noteworthy that the desired purpose of worshippers at BCC and BCF is existential intimacy with the Divine; this is expressed in song lyrics, and is engendered by appropriate music.

At BCC the ‘worship phase’ stimulates vigorous dancing and an increased unfurling and waving of large flags; the man in the wheel chair spins round and round in paraplegic dance then races round the hall. At BCF most of the congregation stand during this phase. One woman at BCF kneels on the hard floor, her hands raised heavenward and her lips moving in muttered prayer.

Drawing Down

‘Drawing down’ happens as the period of intense worship draws to a close and the worshippers move into a short time of stillness and reflection before the next element in the ritual of the morning. Sensitive leadership can use the moment of stillness to transition the congregation and in the observational description of the morning at BCC the quietness is gently punctuated by the reading of a poem which itself serves to heighten expectation of intimacy with God and the workaday application of God’s ‘Kingdom to come’. In this instance, a further short period of ‘worship’ ensues, and a second drawing down follows this before the preacher moves forward to speak.

Transformation of Time

The transformation of *time* has the same significance in the Charismatic ritual field as the transformation of *space* does for the two congregations. Just as ‘sacred space’ does not occupy a place of its own within the *habitus*, but only becomes so with the transformation of secular to sacred through the ritualised divine-human encounter, so certain ‘times’ do not occupy a sacred significance as with other traditions or religions. Juliet Du Boulay (2009: 101) in *Cosmos, Life and Liturgy in a Greek Orthodox Village* relates how time is governed in the Greek Orthodox Village, not by clock or calendar, but by seasonal events such as sowing and harvest and by *liturgical time*. In this way, time is governed by seasonal and liturgical cycles – solar and sacred patterns (Du Boulay, 2009: 101,102). The same could be said of other Charismatics. Csordas (2001: 72) indicates that his Catholic Charismatic communities adhere to traditional liturgical seasons which they infuse with additional activities such as “days of renewal” and regional conferences. Thus, he says, “Charismatics increasingly have rediscovered and cultivated a Catholic sacramental spirituality” (Csordas, 2001: 73). However, for the house-church congregations in this study, with the exception of Christmas and Easter, the notion of traditional liturgical seasons is an unfamiliar cultural concept, just as it was for some of their free-church predecessors.

For the two house-church congregations, there remains the practice of setting a Sunday morning aside for sacred purposes, a persistent legacy from their Evangelical free-church heritage. The stark secularity of their meeting rooms ensures a focus on the rituals of gathering and greeting which in turn secures not only the significance of liminal *space* but also of liminal *time* as they move to transform secular space into sacred space; everyday, secular time into sacred time. The central worship matrix, described above, allows for a variety of expressions in sacred time: loud praise, pregnant silence, or transitional time. As Csordas (2009: 72) comments, “it is not only the organization of time that is transformed, but also the experience of its duration”. For, “the temporal aspect of glossolalia is virtually one of pure duration,” he argues “as it is speech with no semantic dimension, no argument or conclusion” (Csordas, 2009: 72).

Music, Movement & the Ritual Field

The abstraction ‘ritual field’, used above and throughout this study, encompasses a conceptualization that emphasises unity of contexts, elements, and dynamics of an overall ritual. In these Scottish congregations as with Albrecht’s Californian congregations, the ritual field is shaped and surrounded by a wall or cacophony of sounds in order to “support and give a sense of security to the Pentecostal worshippers” (Albrecht, 1999: 143). They “symbolize an entrance into the felt presence of God”, and as such they constitute the function of “an auditory icon” (Albrecht, 1999: 143).

To this I add a further observation that each phase within the ritual field evokes different and distinctive *somatic* gestures appropriate to the music. Thus quiet and intercessory lyrics (with their concomitant music) appear to evoke standing, gentle swaying, raised hands, kneeling, or a gentle waving of a prayer/worship flag (BCC). Worship music can be quiet (as at BCF) or loud, building to a crescendo (as at BCC), and stimulates swaying, hands being held aloft, dancing, waving of flags, or prompts the man in the wheelchair to spin and race around the perimeter of the hall.

In the Charismatics' doxological rituals, music and movement are symbiotically related. The somatic movements of these worshippers always appear to be genuine responses to the mood music that is being played. However, another significant element must not be overlooked, that being the psycho-cultural context of each of our congregations, which as we have noted above, appears to have a marked effect on the postures they adopt. Whereas in the relatively more affluent Bishopbriggs, the congregation give themselves to greater abandon in worship/dance; at the inner city church in Bridgeton the somatic gestures are no less intense, but take on a greater appearance of struggle and supplication.

The Existential Experience and the Ritualization of Life

For Jennings (2008), Poewe (1994) and Droogers (1994), the repertoire of Charismatic ritual elements is centred on existential experience. Mark Jennings, in his ethnography of an Australian Pentecostal/Charismatic service characterizes its ethos as "ecstatic experience" and argues that "music is used in deliberate ways to assist people in leaving behind the profane and encountering the sacred" (Jennings, 2008). Karla Poewe (1994) argues that Charismatics have shifted the traditional religious epistemological ground from proposition to experience. André Droogers (1994:33) in *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture* argues that the Charismatic *habitus* marks an "epistemological shift away from naïve realism to *existential* holism". This is also decidedly true of the music/movement rituals in the two Scottish congregations. However, contra Jennings, I argue that the centring on the existential Divine-human encounter experienced in the two congregations is not intended to leave behind the profane, if by that we mean the 'ordinary' or the 'problems of life'. Rather it has the effect of transforming the horizons of the worshipper so that life itself becomes ritualised. I now explore these two aspects of the Charismatic *habitus* more thoroughly.

Encountering the Divine – the Existential Journey

The express purpose of the Charismatics' ritual field is an encounter with the Divine. I have argued from the above observation that music, symbiotically with gesture and movement, takes on the function of an auditory icon to facilitate this encounter. This is never more clearly expressed and understood than in those moments when familiar lyrics from traditional hymnology or Psalms are refocused on an existential sought-after experience. In *Selling Worship*, Pete Ward (2005:197-204)

notes that whereas songs and hymns have been used as a means to engender community solidarity or as a means of teaching - as for example by early Methodist leaders - in Charismatic worship they are essentially songs of “narrative encounter”.

In the following observation at BCC from March 2013, the lyrics of a Psalm (also used in traditional hymnology) are adapted in the lyrics and tempo of a Charismatic song. It is also worthwhile taking note that other facets of the existential nature of Charismatic doxology weave their way through the following ritual matrix: the pursuit of presence; the appropriate accompanying bodily movements; and the use of story to aid and clarify Divine revelation and help.

BCC: 10th March 2013

10.35am The meeting has been started by the leader who has welcomed everyone. The worship leader who is standing on the small, slightly elevated platform with the rest of the musicians announces the first song and invites the congregation to stand. A song is projected onto the two screens in front of the congregation.

Praise is rising, eyes are turning to You
We turn to You
Hope is stirring, hearts are yearning for You
We long for You
‘Cause when we see You, we find strength to face the day
In Your presence, all our fears are washed away,
Washed away.

A woman (who looks in her 50s) is dancing at the back. The tempo of the music is upbeat and is getting louder. Large flags are being unfurled and waved at the front of the auditorium. The song continues:

Hosanna! Hosanna!
You are the God who saves us,
Worthy of all our praises.
Hosanna! Hosanna!
Come have Your way among us,
We welcome You here Lord Jesus.

Hear the sound of hearts returning to You,
We turn to You.
In Your kingdom broken lives are renewed,
You make us new.
‘Cause when we see You, we find strength to face the day.
In Your presence, all our fears are washed away,
Washed away.

10.55am: People are still arriving and taking their seats. It is Mothers’ Day and the meeting leader has taken a pause in the proceedings to ask some of the children present to share what they have done for their mums that morning. Stories about chocolates and flowers abound.

The meeting leader reads from 2 Timothy⁶⁸, a passage that speaks about Timothy's mother and grandmother. The leader stresses the importance of mothers for spiritual growth. He then prays for the mothers in the congregation.

11.00am: The worship leader announces a song. Flags are being waived by children and adults. Hands are raised around the room. CB (of African ethnicity) goes to the front and shares a story about her mother and what an influence she has been.

11.10am: The next song appears on the screen. Most people stand to sing; some are jumping up in joyful dance movements as the intro is played; children wave flags.

Chorus

Bless the Lord, Oh my soul
O my soul,
Worship His holy name.
Sing like never before,
Oh my soul,
I'll worship His holy name.

The sun comes up it's a new day dawning,
It's time to sing your song again.
Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me,
Let me be singing when the evening comes
You're rich in love, and you're slow to anger,
Your name is great and your heart is kind.
For all your goodness, I will keep on singing,
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.

11.20am: The children leave the hall for their various classes.

The worship leader says, "Let us continue in our time of worship"
"Let's open our hearts"
"Let's just enter the presence of God"

11.25am: The worship leader announces the next song and the congregation sing:

More love, more power
More of You in my life.
More love, more power
More of You in my life.

I will worship You with all of my heart,
And I will worship You with all of my mind,
And I will worship You with all of my strength,
For you are my Lord,
You are my Lord.

More faith, more passion,
More of You in my life.

⁶⁸ 2 Timothy 1:5 reads "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grand-mother Lois and your mother Eunice, and am persuaded now lives in you also". (NIV)

More faith, more passion,
More of You in my life.

The singing is followed by a quiet interlude. Most people remain standing. A woman from the congregation (HC) comes up to the microphone. She says “I just have a sense that God is breaking yokes (she points to her back and shoulders).....that he is breaking chains right now and you can move forward”. She then sits down and another song is sung. This time the song is quiet and invitational: “Come to the river”. The woman of African ethnicity (CB), who spoke earlier, is gently and slowly waving a large flag over the congregation in time to the music. She moves up and down the aisles.

An interpretation of relationships in lyrics to music, movement to liminal space, and each and all to the Charismatics’ understanding of worship, is gleaned from observation of a BCC Sunday meeting. Firstly, there is the use and interpretation of phrases familiar to Christian congregations as the opening lines of Psalms 103 and 104, generally rendered as “Bless the Lord O My Soul” or as the first line of a traditional hymn, “Praise my Soul The King of Heaven” (Henry Francis Lyte 1793-1847).

Traditionally this song ascribes praise and blessing to God the Creator, who is great and removed from the sphere of the worshipper (Psalm 104); it ascribes praise to the “King of Heaven”, who is similarly distanced from the “feeble frame” of the worshippers from whom tribute comes. When sung at BCC, the same words are sung in the context of a worship experience where an opposite sentiment is being expressed and expected: the personal experience of God in an intimate reciprocal blessing. Furthermore, the experiential expectation is heightened not only by music, but also by gestures of raised hands, flags waved and dancing movements.

“Bless the Lord O my Soul” gives way to the worship leader’s exhortation to expect further Divine intimacy. He encourages the worshippers with “Open your hearts” and “Let’s just enter into the presence of the Lord”: the service, which began with a passionate plea in song for the presence of God – “We long for you” - continues with an invitation to “Open up our hearts” in a more intimate pursuit of presence. The song is followed by another in which the congregation take up this invitation in further experiential words that implore the Almighty for “More Love” and “More of You in my Life”.

There follows a quiet and meditative song and an ensuing ‘word’ from one of the congregation (this concept will be explored in Chapter Eight), which encourages the congregation to break free from their bondage (to realise their true selves). Appropriate stillness fills the hall. Another quiet song is sung as the band play, and one of the congregation wafts a large translucent chiffon flag over the congregation at the front and down the aisles.

The invitation to self-realization through intimate encounter with God is reinforced throughout by stories and laughter about Mothers' Day gifts, a more distant story of the spiritual influence of a mother (from CB) and the link made with the Scriptures in the reading from 2 Timothy.

The Ritualization of Life - the Sacred Self

Contra Jennings (2008), whose ethnography of an Australian Pentecostal assembly confirms to him the popular conclusion that the primary function of Charismatic/Pentecostal ritual is to "leave behind" and temporarily forget the ordinary, I argue that the house-church congregations consider their Sunday gatherings as holistic experiences to be savoured, and construe their rituals to meet and transform their workaday lives.

To understand this evaluation of the Charismatic *habitus* a first consideration is given to a theory of self. Csordas (1994) proposes a working phenomenological theory of self which is intended to be sufficiently general in application across cultures and *a priori* defining concepts. He conceives of self as an "indeterminate capacity to engage or become orientated in the world" (Csordas, 1994: 64). In the light of this, he argues that ritual performance has the capacity to constitute and reconstitute the self, and that in Charismatic Renewal "performance *transforms* conventional dispositions that constitute interpersonal and geographic spaces" (Csordas, 1994:68. Italics mine). In *Language, Charisma & Creativity* he writes :(Csordas, 2001:42)

I became concerned with the creative process by which this *sense of otherness* was mobilised to *transform* daily life. In the first place, Charismatics aspire to a culturally coherent world of ritual, experience, language, value, interaction, and presupposition.

The process of this synthesis is a cultural one.....enacted both in ritual performance and in everyday social practice. Its modus operandi is not one of conversion in the usual sense from nonbeliever to believer, but of cultural creation that forges a *sacred self*. (All italics mine)

In other words, the Charismatics' cultural & ritualistic orientation to a 'sense of otherness' constructs a sacred self which is not confined to the sacred space - although that is where it is forged - but is actuated to transform daily life. Thus life for the Charismatic becomes ritualised.

For Csordas the sacred self is construed for the Charismatics in the matrix of Divine-human ritual encounter, but continues into everyday life. Is this true also of the Scottish Charismatic house-church congregations in this study? In particular, can the Divine encounter – which as I have argued is the desired and expected result of the ritual matrix – become transformative in this on-going sense?

To explore this possibility further I consider two examples of what the congregations "do and say" (Collins, 2004: 99). The first is the same gathering at BCF as identified above, but occurs at a later stage in the proceedings. The second is an excerpt from an interview with a member of the BCC who has been identified in the above observations.

BCF: Sunday 30th May 2010

As the music/movement at Bridgeton draws down to its close, BQ comes to the front. He thanks the musicians for their leading. He says that “God has been present in the worship”. He challenges the small congregation to “open the door and allow God to come in and “be at home in all our lives”. He then allows for a transition element, he asks the congregation to reflect on this. He moves into the next element, to pray for J, one of the girls present who has just been offered a new job as a receptionist at the Bridgeton Learning Centre. He reminds the congregation that this is a responsible position in meeting the community. He reminds the congregation that everything is to be done in the name of Christ. One or two of the congregation then ‘lay hands’ on J who by now is standing at the front. BQ, together with a few standing near, offers prayers for J’s emotional stability and her ability to cope with the public. Others in the congregation are seated, but some raise their hands in solidarity towards the praying group.

BCC: 11th February 2010 - Interview with CB

I asked to interview CB because in the first instance her different ethnicity gave her prominence. Also, the ease with which she joined in the Bishopbriggs Sunday rituals – especially in the waving of flags – provoked special interest.

At the beginning of the interview she tells me that she is from Sierra Leone and that she has three children. She had to flee with her family because of the civil war in her home country. Her uncle and several of her family were killed. Ten years previously she came to the U.K. as an asylum seeker, and lived in London for a while. She was then sent to Glasgow to the infamous Red Row tower blocks. Since then she had been granted refugee status and in December 2009 she had finally been granted British Citizenship. I interviewed her in her new apartment in Springburn, a few miles from Bishopbriggs, off the A803, towards Glasgow. She had applied for several jobs in the Care sector as she had done some auxiliary nursing in Sierra Leone. She had encountered some racism in her job interviews but was undeterred. I posed several questions about her faith, the people at BCC and her interpretation of flag-waving during the BCC services.

Me: So you have been struggling a long time to stay in this country?

CB: Yes. I was told “hold on to your faith”. “God has his own time”. Then I got the letter last December...aaah...I could not believe it. I have been 10 years in this country.

Me: Did you receive support from your church?

CB: Yes...when I need prayer...I phone the people...or I just phone KS (the Pastor)...they encourage me and say ‘walk by faith’.

Me: Tell me, what do you get from waving the flags?

CB: Aaah...aaah. How can I explain it? I wish I could express myself in my own language in prayer (in the church) (But) when I wave the flags it helps me to express myself.

Me: What is your own language?

CB: Creole...spoken in many West African countries.

Me: So then, you find a certain freedom in waving flags?

CB: Oh yes! Let me tell to you why I am there. I do not go to an African church...an African church now...there is so much suspicion there. “Oh she is an asylum seeker” (they say)...but at Bishopbriggs I do not have to look over my shoulder...they give you all manner of respect...love and support...mentally, emotionally, financially, you name it. I think that’s why that church is still going. I can express myself and no one puts me down.

Contra Jennings (2008), I contend that the experience of encounter forged in sacred space and created by sound and movement in the congregations is not an attempt to momentarily forget the world and its problems. Rather, I have shown that for the worshippers of BCF or BCC, the experience becomes transformative as they move back into the world and thus it functions in “making (the world) a sacralized human space” (Csordas, 2001:74 Brackets mine). At the very least this is the case for J (BCF) and CB (BCC), and I surmise this to be the case from others in both congregations as will become apparent from other interviews later in this study. I now amplify and move this argument forward by using the above observational texts to support the suggestion that the ritual field which cultivates a sacred self in fact allows for permeable boundaries through which the sacred matrix affects everyday life.

Ritualization, Sacred Self and the Permeability of Boundaries

BCF: 30th May 2010 - Praying for J

The move *outward* from ritual to everyday life is reinforced by the events which happen at BCF after the intense songs of the worship phase have taken place – that is, the prayers offered for one of the congregation by ‘laying on of hands’.⁶⁹ Both the context and the content of the prayers are significant. J is about to take on a new post in the community. The congregation are represented through the ‘laying on of hands’ by Billy Queen and others who make supplicatory prayers that J will find the same strength from God on Monday as she has found in the Sunday gathering. The ritual is extended: it goes beyond the space in which it has been acted out into the workaday life of this one woman. The sacred space takes on the characteristic of a transforming space, the sacred-self moves into secularity of the week and the world becomes “sacralized human space” (see Csordas, 2001:74).

⁶⁹ Both Albrecht and Csordas observe and interpret this gesture as a typical to the Charismatic ritual repertoire. (Csordas, 2001:109 and Albrecht, 1999: 173) As we also note in the next chapter, this ritual forms a significant part of the matrix of Charismatic rituals which acts symbolically as an embodied gesture of solidarity between the person being prayed for and the rest of the congregation.

BCC: 11th February 2010 - Interview with CB

Of interest is the part the Sunday rituals play in CB's struggle to come to terms with and to live in an alien and sometimes hostile culture. The unconditional acceptance and support she receives from her chosen congregation is obviously enormously significant in this respect. (In the next chapter I examine more closely the tactility prevalent in the embodied rituals at BCC and the relationality they both imply and foster). This allows her to join in the Sunday worship at BCC without fear or reserve. However, what is of special significance at this point is the freedom she feels to unfurl the flags along with others, and to allow such actions to be a vehicle for unfettered prayer - unfettered that is by fear of others, or her inability to express herself as she might want to in the English language. It is clear from the above interview that such unhindered rituals add a significant dimension to the affirmation and worthiness of her identity, even as a stranger in a strange and hostile land, and empower her to persevere in seeking a job and to achieve her goal of becoming a fully qualified nurse.

The imagining of a 'sacred self' is a useful notion as an interpretative tool for what happens at an individual level as a result of the Charismatic ritual field. I concur with Csordas (1997, 2001) that in the Scottish context, as in his American (Roman Catholic) context, the distinctly Charismatic ritual field forges sacred selves that become mobile and operational in mundane circumstances. The sacred self is an aspired-to permanent *habitus* in which both ritual and every day social practice form a sacred continuum. Csordas again (Csordas, 2001: 68):

For these reasons I will insist as much as possible on the permeability of boundaries between ritual events and everyday life....

Stated in other words, my analysis will show the *creation of meaning* to be a function of the continuity between *performance* and everyday practice. (Italics mine)

I understand Csordas to have a double intention here. In the first place he contends that it is the "creation of meaning" by the ritual field within a created sacred space that carries the continuity of the sacred self into everyday practice. This observation concurs with that of Catherine Bell (1992) in *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* in which she insists that genuine ritual is to be assessed, not by its propensity for repetition but by the meaning that participants give to its performance (Bell, 1992:90). In second place Csordas sees *continuity* itself (between performance and everyday practice) as giving meaning to the ritual field. In other words, it is the practical outcome in everyday practice which creates meaning for the ritualists in their performance(s). Either way, a continuum of meaningfulness is created by the ritual matrix, which carries into the world. Such a continuum of meaningfulness I suggest can be observed in the likes of J and CB: into J's workplace and into CB's search for one.

Conclusion

Contemporary music in the Rock or Folk idiom is of cardinal importance in the Charismatics' ritual field. This ritual field it is critical in catalysing deep and meaningful experiences which our

Charismatic congregants understand and experience as Divine-human encounters. Music therefore symbiotically promotes different and varied somatic movement(s): symbiotic not simply because the movements ‘follow’ the music (as on the dance floor), but also because the movements somehow retain and promote an embodied ontological link in the process of the Divine-human encounter.

Our two congregations choose to use *secular* spaces to gather, or they deliberately *secularise* their spaces for use by other groups during the workaday week. In each case, spaces they use on a Sunday are used by other groups during the week for exercise classes (Bishopbriggs and Bridgeton), children’s parties, indoor bowling, and badminton games (Bridgeton) external conferences and seminars (Bishopbriggs) and so on. However for two to three hours every Sunday *secular space* is transformed into *sacred space* by the drama of the rituals performed there. In this ritual drama, both intense music and symbiotic movements combine to move our congregants from one to the other. The plain surroundings only serve to throw into stark relief the epiphanic nature of the ritual field. The plain buildings serve to lower the boundaries between the secular and the sacred, a deliberate policy on the part of the congregations.

In the next chapter I interpret the purpose and nature of the somatisation prevalent in the ritual fields of the two congregations.

PART TWO: *Rituals That Live*

CHAPTER SEVEN The Embodied Self: *Ritual Embodiment, Relationality, and the Ritualization of Life*

Introduction

Mary Douglas, who wrote *Natural Symbols* (1970) against the background of the social and cultural upheavals of the late 1960s, understood that society's perception of the physical body was constantly being "constrained by the social categories through which it is known" (Douglas, 1996: 73). As she admits in the introduction to the 1996 edition, "so many things have changed since 1970" (Douglas, 1996: xi) and constraints which social culture, especially religious groups place on attitudes to the body have changed radically. Whereas for Douglas (1996: 73) attitudes to the physical body are of interest primarily because they reflect the values of the "social body", Csordas notes that a return to an interest in the physical body as an "experiencing agent" (Csordas, 1994:3) and the seat of "existential immediacy" (Csordas, 1994:10) is currently of interest amongst scholars of varying disciplines.⁷⁰

In his robust analysis of the Catholic Charismatic movement, Csordas (1997:10) argues that the Charismatics' turning to embodied ritual leads to a "theory of self grounded in embodiment". Albrecht (1999:147) and Coleman (2000:48) also note the surprising turn to somatic expression within avowedly Protestant non-aligned congregations and the embodied nature of their *habitus*. Csordas (1994:20) admits that there are variations of definition in the term 'embodiment' depending on the context. Following Csordas (1994:20), I will use this term to signify rituals in which physical bodily functions express meaningfulness and "in which meaning is taken into or upon the body".

In my interpretative analysis so far, I have identified movement as significant to the Charismatic ritual field for the two congregations, particularly in relationship to *space* and its transformation to sacred space. In this chapter I explore more fully the *somatic* nature of movement within the overall ritual matrix. Following Albrecht's (1999) helpful classification of ritual elements in the studies of his Californian Charismatic churches, I do something similar with additions and modifications to suit the temperament and socio-cultural ethos of the Scottish congregations in which touch, movement, and other somatic gestures play a significant role. I argue that the embodied nature of the ritual field is designed to foster and strengthen mutuality and relationality within the matrix of Divine-human encounter. These somatic qualities become a 'gateway to' and also contain the existential immediacy sought after by the worshippers as Divine-human encounter, and along with their proclivity to

⁷⁰ See Catherine Bell, 1992:94 In her chapter 'The Ritual Body' she echoes the sentiments of Csordas (1997:12,13) and Droogers (1994: 33,34) (vis-à-vis the Charismatic movement), that a renewed interest in the body has been sparked by a move away from the "mind centred notions of knowledge".

mutuality, are also to be considered as a function of being-in-the-world which also promotes a “sacred self” (Csordas, 1997:24), a proposition I began to argue for in Chapter Six.

Finally, I argue, following further reporting and analysis of observation, that the ritual field in which human touch and sensuality play a part also displays a therapeutic efficacy that further transforms the worshipper’s orientation in the world. In conclusion, I contrast this use of the body in the two Protestant non-aligned congregations to the attitudes held by their theological and ecclesiological predecessors, which makes their ready acceptance of somatic gestures as an epiphanic gateway even more surprising.

Thick Gatherings: Touch, Gesture and Dance.

I begin with two observations: the first from BCC in Bishopbriggs, the second from the BCF congregation in Bridgeton.

BCC: 19th April 2009

The modern entrance foyer stretches across the full width of the building. As I enter I am greeted by an official ‘greeter’ and given a copy of the news-sheet for that day. To my left as I enter is a lounge area with large comfortable settees. Young families populate this area, chatting and drinking coffee. Many others are standing around chatting. Some are drinking coffee/tea. People hug and chat. The foyer is filling up.

10.45am: The meeting begins. The hall is only about half filled. As this is my second visit I want to be certain of the capacity of the hall, so I take a few moments to approximate the number of chairs facing the front platform. I calculate about 150.

10.45am: More people arrive. Mothers are pushing children in pushchairs. As people find their seats they wave to one another across the room in recognition. Some hug those they are sitting next to. In the left hand corner of the room I recognise a woman from my last visit who is unfurling a large flag of deep pink chiffon. The singing gets louder as more people arrive. The large pink flag is now being waved slowly in the area at the front of the congregation where the introductory speaker had been standing. The flag waver keeps time with the music. People continue to arrive until the hall is full. The songs become more thoughtful and quieter. Some people standing, some sitting, flag-waving and swaying continue.

11.15am: The tempo of the music is raised. Another flag is unfurled and is waved vigorously. The young man in his electric wheelchair at the front is spinning his wheelchair around in a dance. A lady at the back is running up and down in flowing dance movements. The music again gets louder as the song progresses. Some of the worshippers wave their hands ecstatically. At the end of the song the congregation clap together in a ‘clap offering’.

(This gesture consists of the whole congregation raising their hands aloft in a ‘clapping’ action.) The sound of clapping resounds around the room. This gesture is considered an ‘offering’ of praise to God, sometimes called a ‘clap offering’ in Charismatic ritual language.

The ‘clap offering’ brings the first part of the meeting to a close with a flourish at about **11.40am**. Notices are given out – although the majority of them have already been flashed onto the overhead screens. Children go out to their various ‘classes’ and IB goes to the front of the congregation to preach. It is 11.50am.

12.25pm: IB concludes her preaching. The congregation are encouraged to respond. The congregation sing “This is the power of the cross”. Most of the congregation are standing in contemplation. The song is quiet. A few have their hands raised. A woman dressed in white is dancing a spontaneous but formal dance at the front just below the platform of musicians. She performs long flowing movements. The congregational leader thanks the preacher for her message and invites anyone needing prayer to gather at the end of the service at the front. Several people move out to the front of the congregation by the platform. One or two people can be seen kneeling. The final song is sung.

12.40pm: The service ends. Many stay in the hall and begin chatting in their seats, or stand between the chairs in small groups. Outside in the foyer people are queuing for refreshments. They stand around laughing, talking and drinking as children play between their legs. In the corner a trio appear to be in prayer, their arms wrapped around each other.

1.00pm: People are still talking in the car-park. Small groups form then disperse and others seem to reform. Men and women stand together, some with pushchairs. The Assistant Pastor is pushing a pushchair whilst holding a small child, and talking animatedly. I leave at 1.00pm. In the car-park people are still standing, talking.

BCF: 23rd May 2010

It is a bright morning in May. I pass through the entrance foyer and reception desk into the Café area - a modern brightly lit room at one side of the Community Centre. I am laughingly told that I am just in time for a ‘roll & bacon’. The woman serving, whom I know to be one of the leaders of the church, gives me generous hug. It is about 10.30am and some folk are sitting at tables. A man in a wheelchair is at a table, with a woman on one side, and a couple of children aged 10 or 11 on the other side. I have already spent some time in this small inner-city community in the East End of Glasgow, and I note that some of the congregation bear many of the hallmarks in body and demeanour of their fellow citizens in this largely deprived area of Glasgow. Single mums with children mingle with a known asylum seeker, a Hungarian musician and a couple of Slovak construction workers. As I continue standing more folk arrive and are offered bacon rolls and tea. They appear to relish their breakfast and

eat hungrily. I ask if this happens every Sunday and I am told it happens as often as possible – not every Sunday, but once or twice a month. There is a lot of laughter. Children chatter noisily. Some people hug in greeting. In a corner of the room another of the female leaders is talking earnestly to a young girl who appears to be about 16. The girl is weeping and wiping her eyes with a tissue she has been handed.

11.00am: (nobody seems in a hurry) I follow others into a medium sized hall where about 30 chairs are set out in a semi-circle. Over to my left tables are laid out with paper and crayons at which some children are playfully chattering and enthusiastically ‘colouring-in’. Three musicians at the open end of the semi-circle strike up the first song. Most of the small congregation rise to their feet. On my left a mother attends to her two young children and then joins the others in singing, her hands raised. Her face is etched and drawn, and her voice is hardly audible.

At one point the musicians play quietly on their instruments – repeating the melody of the previous song. A quiet chanting fills the air as some of the congregation ‘sing in tongues’.

The meeting comes to an end at about **12.30pm** after BQ has spoken and the final song is sung. The woman on my left is still on her knees on the hard floor. Her two children have long since left her side for the ‘colouring tables’. People gather in twos and threes, some standing, some at chairs. BQ comes over and places his hand gently on the shoulder of the woman to my left, and appears to pray for her. She is weeping quietly and is offered a tissue.

At about **1.00pm** people call ‘cheerio’ or ‘see ye after’. Many hug each other; some of the girls also kiss each other on the cheek. I hug the people I know well, shake hands with some and join others as they begin to drift out of the door.

Worship and Embodied Rituals

Charismatic rituals and rites can be helpfully categorised for ease of explanation and interpretation. Albrecht’s (1999: 150-195) general categorisation of the rites within his Californian Charismatic congregations is useful for my own interpretative purposes, although for the most part I select domains which appear obvious in observing above the ritual matrix of the two congregations.

Gathering and Greeting Rites

At both BCC and BCF the rituals of gathering-greeting are given significance by the fact that these take place in a space which is designated for this purpose. At BCC, the foyer area has been specifically designed and built as a liminal space for ‘fellowship’ (the Charismatic word for such activity), prior to entering the space that becomes sacred, as noted in Chapter Six. What takes place in the gathering-greeting rituals at both BCC and BCF is of vital significance in the overall ritual field. These preliminaries prepare the worshippers for the existential encounter that is to follow. They act as

a first stage of withdrawal from the cares of everyday living; yet paradoxically, these rituals allow those cares to be put into perspective and brought into the province of intercession with the Divine. Hugs, kisses, laughter, eating and drinking relax the congregants through touch, eye contact, and the resulting mutual affirmation. The somatic nature of the gathering-greeting rituals have incarnational function as portents of the more intense Divine-human encounter to come are signalled through human touch and encounter, and evoke anticipation and preparedness for what is to follow.

At BCC tea/coffee are served as people arrive. A lounge area at one side of the foyer is populated by young adults and their children relaxing, chatting, and laughing. As more people come in they are greeted by official 'greeters', but very quickly they appear to ignore the official welcoming couple and move on to greet others in the room – hugging, kissing or just extending an inclusive arm.

The BCF leadership, possibly in recognition of the fragile nature of their congregation, give space, time and effort to the gathering-greeting ritual. As well as allocating a separate Café area for this purpose, with tables and chairs set out, they provide a breakfast as often as the availability of volunteer cooks allows. This form of service allows for mutual affirmation in hugs and laughter, the renewing of bonds of friendship, and allows those who have not eaten that morning (anecdotally, much of the congregation apart from the leadership) to satisfy basic bodily needs before entering the space that will become sacred throughout the next part of the ritual field. The time and effort given to eating together by this congregation attests to the *Sitz im Leben* of parabolic interpretation given to them in Chapter Five.

Laughter plays an important role in the ritual field of the two congregations. It appears significant particularly in the gathering-greeting rites and also in the later farewell-leaving ones. Laughter is apparent whether in the fragile congregation at Bridgeton or the more affluent gathering in Bishopbriggs. In *Laughter and the Absurd Economy of Celebration* Jerome Miller (1995) points out that laughter comes in many forms, including the comic and the absurd. He argues that laughter also has a serious role in being a leveller, whether through 'satiric irreverence' or the incongruities of a situation. Echoing Miller (1995), I observe that in both churches laughter works significantly as a leveller in gathering-greeting rites before the main rituals of worship take place, and as an agency for solidarity in the later farewell-dispersing rites.

However, the laughter that pervades the ritual field of the two congregations also presents another characteristic, more akin to the understanding of the laughter of *Carnival* as proposed by Chad Martin (1999). In *Carnival: A Theology of Laughter and a Ritual for Social Change*, Martin (1999) presents laughter as a key element in the religious carnivals of the world, especially those of South America: "By experiencing carnival, Christians learn to express the light-hearted side of Jesus while exposing their downfalls and therefore create an opportunity for social change" (Martin, 1999: 44). In the two

Glasgow congregations, laughter serves to ease tensions, to affirm one another, and to facilitate a sense of well-being. It adds to the transformational nature of the overall ritual field.

Praise & Worship: Kinaesthetic Dimensions

In Chapter Six I identified ‘praise’ as a different element in the ritual field to ‘worship’. Preceded by the period of ‘praise’ the central element of the Charismatic ritual field is ‘worship’, which I note as a nuanced Charismatic notion for the period of intimate connection in the Divine-human encounter, and entails the symbiotic relationship of music to movement in the matrix of the ritual field. As Albrecht (1999: 155) notes, the term ‘worship’ has become a “folk term among Pentecostals and Charismatics” to identify this particular encounter which in California as in Glasgow, refers to the existential heart of the service.

Having been prepared by the embodied rituals of gathering-greeting, the two congregations now *move* physically, psychologically and spiritually into ‘praise’ and ‘worship’ in which embodied performance provides a gateway for access to the Divine. What follows is an interpretation of the kinaesthetic dimensions of these central elements of the ritual field.

Singing, loud singing, quiet singing, ‘singing in tongues’

The two congregations sing Charismatic songs (as described in Chapter Six) from words projected onto a screen (or two screens at BCC). The auditory use of the body is of course common to all traditions of the Christian church (In Eastern Orthodoxy and in the singing of Psalms in Free Church Presbyterianism, no musical instruments other than the human voice are permitted). In the two Charismatic congregations, devoid of many traditional sacred symbols, the playing of music accompanied by singing assumes an iconic role. Often the singing is loud, and, aided by some enthusiastic musicianship on guitars and/or drums, rises to a crescendo in the BCC gathering.⁷¹ Csordas makes the point that “the effect of loud praise (in Charismatic ritual) has its locus in physical engagement of the body in the act of worship” (Csordas, 2001:110). At times the singing can be quiet and contemplative (BCC), and/or infused with pathos and pleading (BCF). At other times, a quieter song in a different mood (BCC) follows the loud singing, and/or the quieter song segues to ‘singing in tongues’ (sung *glossolalia*) (BCF).

Clapping, ‘raising of hands’, ecstatic waving

Within the Charismatic ritual field, singing rarely comes alone.⁷² The most common gesture to accompany the singing is the raising of hands, sometimes a simple gesture with one or both palms raised in ‘praise’ or held aloft in celebration. These gestures are discerned in both congregations.

⁷¹ Csordas 2001: 109 comments that “loud praise” was viewed by his Catholic Charismatic congregations as being “edifying and expressive of real feeling”.

⁷² See Albrecht, 1999:148 “Human physical movement is closely tied to the movement of the Spirit”. Also Csordas 2001:99, 109

Often clapping accompanies the singing and occasionally the congregation give a ‘clap offering’ as at BCC: this is loud clapping with hands held aloft, considered to be an ‘offering’ of praise to God.

A respondent from BCF (SD) explained the posture of hands held aloft or ‘hands held out’ as a sign “about receiving”. Another from BCC (KK) said that “hands held straight up” is a “strong declaration (of faith)”. The same respondent said that when she held arms “wide open” she was “opening (herself) to God”. Yet another (male) respondent at BCC (PH), whom I had noticed was routinely holding his arms aloft in moments of ecstatic worship, said that the act of ‘raising of hands’ was a “reaching out” and a “gesture to the Lord” of “leaving yourself open”. At BCC some women engage in more frenzied ecstatic waving in time to the music.

Swaying, dancing, spinning

The tempo of Charismatic music invariably invites bodily movement. A gentle swaying will accompany contemplative songs, visible in both congregations. Sometimes the swaying will turn to dancing, usually involving one or two participants, as at BCC. On occasion the dancing becomes more ‘formalised’, as at the end of the meeting in BCC. And in what seems particular to BCC, solo dancing can turn to more ecstatic ‘spinning’ as the wheelchair-bound man spins his wheelchair in a rapturous dance around the hall.

Flag waving

This rite is only practiced at BCC. Flags appear as large translucent banners, waved in time to the music. Smaller flags, sometimes carried by children, are waved more vigorously. On occasion, the larger flags are waved over (notionally) the congregation in a more prayerful element of the service. The use of flags is common to various world faiths and is an element in many Christian festivals as a vehicle of celebration and prayer. Further observation and exploration of this rite is continued later in this Chapter and again in Chapter Nine.

Standing, sitting, & kneeling

There appears to be no fixed rule about when the congregants stand, sit or kneel, in either of the congregations. A majority in both congregations stand at the sound of the first song; thereafter their bodily disposition appears to follow the musical and/or lyrical mood of the songs and the response of the congregants to these. Some of the congregants appear to stand for the whole length of the ‘worship’ period. Others sit, then stand, and sit again repeatedly.

The bodily position of kneeling appears in two functions. The first is ‘openness to God’ in response with hands raised (BCC). The second is ‘intercession’; at BCF this seems to indicate an imploring attitude, even a pleading attitude in prayer.

The Rites of Response

Laying on of Hands

The rites of response usually follow the sermon in the two congregations, and proceed from a specific invitation to respond to the preaching. At BCC this includes the invitation to come to the front for prayer. Those who sense they have been challenged by the preaching and need prayer move out to the front. Some kneel, but mostly they stand in small groups and ‘hands are laid’ on the respondents by various members of BCC. At BCF there is no such invitation to move anywhere, but as observed, the concluding rites at both meetings appears to include prayer either in small groups as at BCC or by the leaders as at BCF. In each case somatic gestures are called for. For the most part it is the ‘laying on of hands’, in which palms are gently laid on or held close to the respondents. The alternative, seen at different times in both congregations, is to huddle in small groups with arms around each other as prayer is offered. A respondent at BCC (PH) described the meaning of ‘laying on of hands’ as “impartation through you to give access to what is in heaven”. Another (JA) explained that praying for each other by the ‘laying on of hands’ was in order “to release the Kingdom of God into people”, and added that in her experience “God really wants to do things” (in that person).

Weeping

Tears often accompany the act(s) of response: observed at BCF. The same is true of BCC judging by the response of two of my interviewees, although in a larger group this is more difficult to observe. Charismatics consider weeping to be a natural response to the Divine-human encounter. The central ritual within the Charismatic *habitus*, already described as an existential encounter with the Divine, inevitably evokes emotions of conviction, sorrow, grief, pain or joy: exemplified later in this chapter in an interview with VM.

Christian spirituality has a long and rich history of the ‘gift of tears’. Within Orthodoxy, as far back as the fourth century church, this gift was seen as a prerequisite to the spiritual struggle:

First pray for the gift of tears, so that through sorrowing you may tame what is savage in your soul. And having confessed your transgressions to the Lord, you will obtain forgiveness from Him' (Evagrius of Pontus, *On Prayer*, 5).

In his essay on the Worship of English Congregationalism in *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches Past and Present*, Alan Sell (2003:88,89) catalogues the emergence in the late 16th Century of the Separatist movement, whom he characterises as the “charismatics of their day”, in their insistence on extempore prayer. He quotes from a deposition lodged against them in 1588, in which is described their worship rituals: after eating together they prayed, and “one speketh and the rest do groane, or sob, or sigh, as if they would ring out teares” (Sell 2003:89).

Does the shedding of tears carry the same weight for these contemporary Charismatics as it did for ancient saints or the radical movements of the 16th Century? Without doubt, the weeping observed in

the two Scottish congregations is in some instances a 'sorrow over sin' and is no less deeply felt. One respondent at BCF (SD) described the place of weeping as "being at the bottom" and "feeling guilty about having made a mistake". However a majority of the respondents to this question are typified in this response from one at BCC (KK) who said she was "expressing something deep" or was "hurting(and had to) get that out". At BCF a female respondent (G) said that weeping came "when overwhelmed with despair and disappointment" or when she realised that "there is hope in God". At BCC a respondent (KK) said that weeping happened to her when she was "overwhelmed by the fact that God hears my prayers". I observed that women more than men seemed to allow themselves to weep. However a male respondent from BCC (PH), when asked what he expected from worship on a Sunday, volunteered the information that he often wept at meetings. He described this as a "burning emotion" when he realised that "God really loves me". He said that as a man he had the habit of "locking things away". Coming to BCC he said, had been painful, as he learned to be vulnerable before God in worship and that he often "ended up (prostrate) on the floor" (The floors at BCC are carpeted and lend themselves to this kind of posture). The same respondent said that when this occurred he gained release "from pain and bitterness".

At BCC weeping generally expressed the release of emotional hurts or the realisation of the love of God. At BCF this is added to by the disturbance and stress of poverty and debt: I construe that in such instances, tears may also flow out of pain, grief or confusion. Such tears are not to be dismissed. Together with other somatic expressions within the Charismatic ritual field they function as a transformational means of therapeutic efficacy.

Farewells and Dispersing Rites

At BCC refreshments appeared to be served at the end of the meeting as well as at the beginning, and so formed part of both gathering-greeting and farewell-dispersing and rites. At BCF so much (essential) time is taken up at the beginning in the gathering-greeting when refreshments (sometimes meals) are served that there is often less time (as they have to leave the building), to do the same at the end.

As a feature of both congregations, somatic gestures used in prayer are not confined to a formal event, but can be witnessed in all parts of the various gathering places as people huddle, talk quietly or 'lay hands' on one another as part of the rites of departure. A respondent at BCF (CA) offered the explanation of 'laying on of hands' as a demonstration of "love and affirmation", adding that "touch is what we were created for".

The rites of 'farewell' and 'dispersing' can be lengthy and drawn out, even at BCF where time is shortened. Children play at the back of the hall or continue at the 'colouring tables' (BCF) whilst their parents chat, laugh, drink (only at BCC) and/or pray for one another. These rites have a significant part in the overall ritual field of the Charismatic *habitus* as a whole. The farewell-leaving rites affirm

the Divine-human engagement; asseverate the human bonds that have served as a vehicle for that engagement, and serve to further these into the week ahead.⁷³ As a means of Divine-human encounter, the incarnational nature of these rituals and rites cultivates a distinctly Charismatic *habitus* in which its impact spills forward into the everyday and has the function of “what we can call the ritualization of life” (Csordas, 2001:74).

Relationality

The impulse toward community has characterised the Charismatic Renewal from its outset⁷⁴ and the two congregations in this study are no exception. The Charismatic congregations in Glasgow in this study are gathered communities. Neither of them represents a geographical locale as does a parish church; neither do they come from all parts of city sprawl. The Bridgeton congregation displays an inner city solidarity, shared speech, appearance and demeanour and live variously in Bridgeton and neighbouring districts. The Bishopbriggs congregation began as an idealised community with many living in the same street but is now dispersed as far afield as Kirkintilloch (5 miles), Lenzie (7 miles) and some inner city districts.

In *Interpreting Culture in a Scottish Congregation*, an ethnographic study of a city church, Al Dowie (2002:159) observes that his congregants were similarly not linked through geography, but are “bound together...particularly through attachment to the symbols of tradition ...as expressed in the building, the history, the music and the services of worship”. Solidarity in his city church is attained through attachment to liturgical tradition, architecture, a shared recognition of historical heritage and a common culture.

Simon Coleman (1998) also comments on the spatial fragmentation he observed in the Swedish Word of Life Charismatic community. He suggests that his community overcome their fragmentation through the use of state-of-the-art, technological means of communication (Coleman, 1998:248). Unlike Dowie’s Scottish congregants, or Coleman’s Swedish Charismatics, I suggest that the congregations in this study choose to reinforce their solidarity through *human touch*. Although there is an undoubted solidarity underlying the shared non-conformist stance of our two Glasgow congregations in which traditional religious symbols have been avoided, I argue that avowed and sought-after solidarity ‘in the Spirit’ is renewed and strengthened on a weekly basis through embodied symbolic rituals. Rituals which appear to be existentially individualistic nevertheless foster mutuality

⁷³ For the significance of *affirmation* within a coherent ritual system see Csordas, 2001:21. He argues that within the Charismatic ritual field “ritual creates society as a self-affirmation”.

⁷⁴ The Charismatic Movement witnessed an almost universal emphasis on ‘community’ and ‘relationships’ as noted in Ch.4 in which I reference the book by Michael Harper and its effect on the emerging Charismatic communities in the U.K. Csordas (2001:77) recalls that the Catholic Charismatics invoked the “communalism of the ‘early Church’ and the symbolism of the Church as a ‘mystical body’” Walker also notes the enthusiastic communalism of the early house-church movement in which participants ‘discovered’ and experienced a ‘breakthrough in real relationships’ (Walker, 1984:53).

through the web of somatic gestures detailed above: hugs, ‘laying on of hands’, ‘huddling’ and expressions such as laughing and/or weeping together. In his article *Subliminal Eroticism in Postmodern Charismatic Worship*, Martyn Percy (1999) observes that in the Toronto Charismatic congregation “Believers receive these experiences largely on their own: there is remarkably little intergroup touching” (Percy, 1999: 9). Contra Percy, I observed a central theme of somatic solidarity in every part of the ritual field of both congregations: this is particularly noticeable in those elements that deliberately express ‘intergroup touching’, in the rites of gathering-greeting, of response and of farewell-dispersing. These I argue, function to *reinforce* communality on a weekly basis. An extract from an interview with married couple to whom I give the collective name I&G, members of the BCF congregation, offers insight into the way the ritual field of this congregation brings solidarity. The couple moved from Bridgeton where they were born, raised, and now live on the south side of Glasgow about ten miles away:

At the home of I & G, Corkerhill, Glasgow: 16th June 2010 - Interview

Me: Why do you still travel to Bridgeton? Is it not quite far away?

I&G: No not at all. It’s only half an hour on the bus, straight along Paisley Rd. West. Sometimes R (her son) takes us in his car. When we get there we always feel we are part of the family. They are still family.

Me: Why? What makes them family?

I&G: We feel safe there. We feel loved. People there are struggling, but you can just be yourself. They are not afraid to hold you when you need to be held.

Me: Does your worship at Bridgeton play a part in this?

I&G: Certain songs...really get to you. They lift you up. You feel safe...feel loved

I&G: Makes you feel that God loves you. You can be yourself. The people take you as you are. No airs and graces. People are genuine and pray for you when you struggle. Even when you don’t feel like worshipping...you feel loved...you can be yourself.

As the above interview reveals, solidarity comes from mutual affirmation giving rise to a sense of “feeling loved” within the space that is crucially a ‘safe place’. Spatial fragmentation is overcome I argue, through affirmative rituals grounded in embodiment.

For Coleman/Collins (2000: 319) “Charismatic dispositions turn commitment into much more than just cognitive assent to the validity of certain theological positions”. For the same reasons I argue for an observed re-socialisation within the *habitus* of our two congregations since their Charismatic dispositions turn commitment into mutual affirmation in which “collective action makes sense and seems fitting, because its symbols and assumptions have become – admittedly to varying degrees – a part of the self”(Coleman/Collins, 2000: 319). For Coleman/Collins (2000) , as for Csordas (2001), Charismatic ritualistic behaviour in collective action does more than make sense within the *habitus*; it

functions to impact and transform the self which for Csordas (2001:67) is not a “kind of Cartesian mind” existing as a lonely entity, but is essentially a “social self”. For Csordas (2001: 67), following Bourdieu, the self is a “capacity for orientation” and exists only in relationship to “other selves”

In *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, Catherine Bell (1992) points out that ritual operates in two seemingly opposite ways. It works to “differentiate different communities” and consequently to “integrate” those communities (Bell, 1992: 125); this would correspond to the above observation I make of the congregations in question. However, the same community rituals appear to simultaneously enable “each unit in the system to experience both its own autonomy and its dependent place within a network of relationships with other groups” (Bell, 1992:125). In Chapters Ten and Eleven I argue that a communality grounded in ritualistic embodiment is an essential ingredient of the functionality of mission, as re-socialisation within the Charismatic *habitus* is extended to concern for the wider community. Firstly, a theory of self and self-process is essential to an understanding of such relationality.

Embodiment, Self-Process and the Ritualization of Life

For Csordas (1997:7), following Merleau-Ponty, embodiment is the “existential condition of possibility for culture and self”. Over against a representational view, he argues that the body is to be thought of rather as the existential ground for “being-in-the-world” (Csordas, 1997:11). Hence we must speak of existence in terms of “lived experience” (Csordas, 1997:11). For my purposes, this argument is a useful interpretative tool: in allowing the embodied dispositions of the worshippers in the two congregations their “lived experience” to be interpreted as the existential ground of self, it also allows for a significant understanding of being-in-the-world. For Csordas (1997: 24) the“(Charismatic) ritual system is embedded in, and helps continually create, a behavioural environment in which participants embody a coherent set of dispositions or *habitus*” (brackets mine). These ritualistic elements constitute the webs of significance of embodied existence “within which the sacred self comes into being” (Csordas 1997: 24). For the congregants at BCC or BCF I argue that in similar fashion their rites of embodied Divine-human encounter constitute a being-in-the-world which has transformative effect. Consider the following excerpt from an interview with VM in February 2010. VM is one of the women who waves flags, as observed above at *BCC*:

The woman who waves flags: 1st February 2010 - Interview

Me: How did you happen to come to this church?

VM: It was through M. It was when there used to be a Café downstairs. I came in one day for a coffee before going to work and she started to talk to me. I was at a very low point in my life. I had a very low opinion of myself. I started coming along to the church and enjoyed it.

Me: What happened next?

VM: After some time I became a Christian and was baptised in 1991. Life began to change. I began to have hope for the first time in my life.

(Further into the interview)

Me: Why do you wave flags on a Sunday morning?

VM: Waving flags brings me into the presence of God. I am a very shy person, and would not put myself out in front before I came here. Flag waving means freedom. It makes me free to be me. Flag waving is my way of worship. I use it as a means of release. Worship allows me to be free.

Me: Could you explain a bit more?

VM: I find prayer difficult using words. Waving the flags helps me to focus. It is my way of praying. It is intimacy with God. God speaks to me when I am waving my flags.

Me: What does God say to you?

VM: He helps me understand my situation. He gives me strength. I wrote a song “Sailing Close to You”: this is how I feel when I put my flag up.

In the above interview, VM asked not to be recorded digitally and her story was documented in shorthand notes to the best of my ability. This request underlines her innate need for privacy, and the wish to maintain dignity in her diffidence: yet she continues in the face of her discomfort to wave her flags at BCC as part of a visible public ritual and later in the week as a solo (public) rite, which will be the subject of further analysis in Chapter Nine. For the moment I explore the meaning implicit in this woman’s participation in collective somatic acts, by which she steps out of her personal comfort zone to create a ‘sacred self’ which dramatically expresses her sense of being-in-the-world.

Meaning and Self Process

Her “dancing with flags”, VM claims, is a non-verbal portal for communication with the Divine: “God speaks to me when I wave my flags”. This encounter-event brings meaning to her life: “Flag waving means freedom. It makes me free to be me” and “My flag-waving is intimacy with God”. As she later describes the hardships of her family life, she explains that: “When I wave my flags, I lose myself in the love of God”. The significance of her act happens through a collapsing of the subject-object duality within an embodied ritual in which God is both subject and object.

A collective congregational activity in which an individual is encouraged to engage in somatic activity, in which she can ‘become herself’, has implications for being and meaning. For Merleau-Ponty (1962: 146,147) contra Descartes, the notion of meaning is given greater weight when it is understood as *experience*; in particular somatic experience. Csordas (1997:10) following Merleau-Ponty, argues similarly that meaning is created within the Charismatic somatic ritual field, which fashions a self “grounded in embodiment”; that is “meaning is taken into the body” (Csordas, 1994:20 & 1997: 70, 71).

Embodied ritual, such as that of VM's dancing with flags, orientates a being-in-the-world. VM's own understanding of her performance is that "He helps me understand my situation" and "He gives me strength". This carries the promise of therapeutic efficacy; a transformation. In his analysis of Catholic Charismatic congregations Csordas (1997) argues that ritual systems that claim a Divine-human encounter create a behavioural environment in which a sacred self is fashioned. For VM, the ritualised experience in Divine-human encounter creates and locates a sacred self within the somatic ritual field which furthers a transformed orientation in the world. The public and corporate rites of the central doxological ritual are mirrored in smaller groupings and private week-day practice: not only does ritual practice impact everyday life as exemplified in VM's story, it is also repeated throughout the week, an aspect I explore next.

The Ritualization of Life

The somatic practices witnessed above in the central ritualistic event of the Charismatic *habitus* are repeated throughout the week in private prayer, small prayer and study groups, 'cell groups', *ALPHA* meetings and so on where singing, praying with hands raised, standing and/or kneeling, 'speaking in tongues' are evident. A weekday meeting of BCF where particularly Charismatic rites form part of the overall ritual field is described and analysed in Chapter Ten. At BCC, this much larger congregation also meets during the week in six small (house) groups, for a larger Monday Prayer Time meeting, in running the *ALPHA* course, as well as assisting in the Senior Citizens' Lunch Club and the Youth Café⁷⁵. A respondent at BCC (KK) when asked about the use of 'tongues', such as 'singing in tongues' in their meeting, said that it seemed like "angels engaging with you in worship"; and that it "changed the spiritual atmosphere". The same respondent when asked what 'tongues' meant to her in her personal prayer life she said that it meant "my spirit is one with God's Spirit", and again that 'tongues' "builds me up. It is easier to sense what God is saying, commencing on a spirit level". The ritualization of life happens in two ways: practices as described above are incorporated into habitual behaviour; they are elevated beyond habit and invested with the sacred. Also, Charismatic ritual in the strict sense, e.g. 'laying on of hands' or 'speaking in tongues' is extended beyond the boundaries of ritual events, eventually permeating everyday life. The therapeutic efficacy of such ritualization, attested to in the above interview results from the radicalization of orientation towards the sacred.

Concluding Remarks

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty's (1962) existential analysis collapses the subject-object duality by acknowledging that in the world of "lived experience" our bodies are not objects to us. On the contrary, our bodies are part of the perceiving subject and as such they enter

⁷⁵ Information gleaned from the weekly news bulletins of BCC.

epistemologically into the subject-object equation⁷⁶. I have argued from the ethnography of the two congregations that they deliberately bring somatic gestures into their encounter with God and make it part of their receptivity and meaningfulness in the experience of the Divine-human encounter. Their somatisation enters ontologically and epistemologically into their relationship with God. Following Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Csordas (1997:8) this acknowledges the part which our bodies play in the epistemological equation and begins to collapse the subject-object duality. This also accords with observations made by Poewe (1994), Droogers (1994) and Roelofs (1994) on the changing nature of Charismatic epistemology, from “naïve realism to existential holism” (Droogers, 1994: 33).⁷⁷

The BCC and BCF’s deliberate use of somatisations is surprising: firstly because their Protestant predecessors maintained a strict subject-object duality by which they lived, a duality in which ‘the Word of God’ (i.e. the Bible) was considered objective truth.⁷⁸ In *Re-forming the Body*, Philip Mellor and Chris Shilling (1997) argue that the Protestant attitude to the body in the Reformation was determined by a shift in perspective in two major aspects. The first was sociological. This entailed a shift from a collective “effervescence of sacred forms of sociality stimulated by religious ritual” to an increasing individualism brought about by the Reformation’s “focus on words” (Mellor/Shilling, 1997: 38). Medieval Church rituals they argue, had stimulated a structured opening for the body towards its natural, social and supernatural environment. This was superseded by a move from body to mind by the Protestant Reformation (Mellor/Shilling, 1997: 38).

The second cause for surprise follows closely on the first and is epistemological. The Reformed “focus on words” implied an epistemology which mirrored that of the Enlightenment, which in religious terms meant a focus on ‘the Word’, and in the wider context raised the cognitive and rational above the sensual, collective and semiotic. This dislocated people from their “natural, supernatural and social environments” as it prioritised “cognitive belief and thought as a route to knowledge” (Mellor/Shilling, 1997: 42). The Protestant *flesh* was made subordinate to *linguistic* symbols and narratives and individualised private bodies (Mellor/Shilling, 1997: 46) became subordinate to cognitive control. Thus Protestant orders of congregational worship became focused on the cognitive and the individual, in which the body played no responsive part, and was subordinate to the mind.

⁷⁶This is Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological argument throughout. He states for example: “It is false to place ourselves in society as an object amongst other objects, as it is to place society within ourselves as an object of thought, and in both cases the mistake lies in treating the social as an object” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:362). See also Csordas, 1997:8 where he brings Merleau-Ponty’s arguments to bear on an analysis of Charismatic ritual behaviour.

⁷⁷See Poewe 1994:234-258 in which she argues that Charismatics and scientists alike have developed an epistemology in which reality is “tacitly known” (p.245). I develop this further in Chapter Eight. Also Roelofs 1994: 217-233 where his study of Flemish Catholic Charismatics leads him to argue for their use of metonymy as an epistemological “use of signs” (p.233).

⁷⁸As noted in Chapter One the Charismatic house-church movement is essentially Protestant, since Catholics tended to stay in their denomination and did not form separate congregations. The house-churches can trace their ancestry to Protestant non-aligned movements and the Evangelical discourse which was strong in the U.K. until the mid-twentieth century.

Mellor and Shilling (1997: 42) contend that Protestantism “was an important factor behind the formation of modern, individualised, bodies insofar as it encouraged people to lose their bi-directional relationship with nature and with sacred forms of sociality”. Along with this came a distinctive shift in sources of identity. The ascent of linguistic epistemology placed on written words led increasingly to “cognitive narratives of the self” (Mellor/Shilling, 1997: 43). Pure religion was to be symbolised by *words* and was alienated from sinful bodies and institutionalised sacred referents (Mellor/Shilling, 1997: 43). Icons, paintings and graven images were frowned on. The focus on the ‘Word of God’ prioritised the linguistic signs of the Scriptures above all sensory knowledge (Mellor/Shilling, 1997: 43) and enabled people to conceptualise their lives (and hence their self identities) as religious narratives (see Mellor/Shilling, 1997: 43,44). As Protestant believers stood alone before God, the separation of sensory knowledge from ‘truthful’ conceptual discourse led to an increasingly hostile attitude towards embodied and baroque ritual (see Mellor/Shilling, 1997: 43). Whilst they were suspicious of natural desires, feelings and all sorts of entertainment, Mellor /Shilling (1997: 44) claim that the pursuit of “healthy bodies” became important to many Puritans. Protestantism, they argue, promotes the “cognitive control of the flesh” as a means to a “worldly source of identity” (Mellor/Schilling, 1997: 45). In Scotland, Protestantism took on a distinctly Presbyterian nuance, which equally promoted a cognitive control of the self and remains deeply engrained in cultural perspectives.⁷⁹

Callum Brown (2001: 173) points out that Evangelical resurgence in early twentieth century Britain came to a climax in the Billy Graham Crusades of the 1950s to which several older members of the Scottish house-churches can trace their spiritual journeys. The crusades promoted the objectivity and authoritative truth of Scripture which appears anecdotally in phrases such as “The Bible says”, Billy Graham’s legendary mantra. However, early traces of the existentialism of the Charismatic movement can be found in the mood music and evangelical fervour of the same crusades; in the feeling-orientated atmosphere, in the invitation to respond for individual cleansing from sin and in the existential certainty of conversion.

However much the mood music of early and mid-twentieth century Evangelicalism portrayed a tendency to the Christian-life-as-personal-experience, it never lost its dogmatic adherence to a revealed and objectified epistemology in the *words* of the Bible⁸⁰: God certainly did not engage ontologically with worshippers in somatic expressions of doxology. I suggest that we observe in the

⁷⁹ See William Storrar (1990: 30,31) in *Scottish Identity: A Christian Vision* who claims that John Knox (1514-1572) championed a vision for a Protestant Scotland which was not based on patriotism but sought to “reform the Scottish Kirk and nation on Biblical and not nationalistic grounds”.

⁸⁰ For example, the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (the standard-bearer of the Evangelical movement in the 20thC), born in 1928 out of secession from the SCM, has as central to its cause the belief that “ The Bible, as originally given, is the inspired and infallible Word of God. It is the supreme authority in all matters of belief and behaviour.”

habitus of the Charismatic house-churches not only a “subjective turn” (Heelas/Woodhead, 2005) but also a surprising shift to somatisation.

On the one hand intentional and critical somatic expression within the epiphanic experience contributes further to the general spirit of non-conformity and a certain degree of “aesthetics of dissent” as Coleman and Collins note in the congregations they studied (Coleman/Collins, 2000:320). On the other hand, the two congregations did not voice dissent against the established church, but against the cultural strictures of other non-aligned denominations. Conversations with the two congregations (especially BCC with its larger percentage of older members) were peppered with phrases such as “in the(other denomination named)....we did not...” or “ I was brought up to show no emotion in church” and “you sat up straight in church and listened to the preacher”. Then there are also those, such as VM (above), who has little or no church connections in her heritage. There is no spirit of protest in her flag-waving dances, simply the relief of self-expression and a realised identity found in somaticized ritual.

PART TWO: *Rituals That Live*

CHAPTER EIGHT Divine Revelation, Divine Love: *Charismata, Embodied Imagery, Existential Immediacy and Therapeutic Efficacy.*

Introduction

In Chapters Six and Seven I argue that the symbiosis of Charismatic music and somatisation behaves as a gateway to Divine-human encounter within the central ritual events which take place in the two congregations. I now build on this multi-layered matrix the notion of an imaginal process which weaves its revelatory efficacy within the Charismatic *habitus*. The Charismatic conception of revelation is that it is immediate and Spirit-inspired. I do not mean to imply that these congregations have done away with a traditional Protestant focus on the Bible as the Word of God. On the contrary both congregations consider the Bible their key source of authority and guidance. Rather, as noted in Chapters Six and Seven, as the term ‘worship’ is nuanced in the Charismatic ritual matrix as the moment of epiphanic engagement with the Divine, so ‘revelation’ also takes on a personal and existential nuance as the moment when God reveals himself in personal and intimate terms. As will be demonstrated in the ethnography, for congregants in this study revelation is realised in a context in which use of the Bible is simply an element (albeit an important element) of patterns of imaginal insight which weave together to form a revelatory occurrence. An exemplary instance of this has already been noted in Chapter Five, when in recounting the beginnings at BCC and in the subsequent building programme, the couple interviewed (HC/FC) offered a synergy of both Scriptural reference and revelatory “words given” to support their claim for God’s endorsement of their project (pg.69). Members of the two congregations, for both collective enlightenment and personal direction, endorse this mode of revelation; it is a strong navigational factor in difficult times and times of change and transition, which they both faced towards the end of my fieldwork with them.

Arguments in this chapter follow those of the previous two chapters in which I contended for an observed turn from “naïve realism to existential holism” (Droogers, 1994: 33) in the two congregations. In this chapter I explore the Charismatic use of imagery which occurs in *charismata* or ‘gifts of the Spirit’⁸¹, the most common being ‘words’ or ‘images’ which the congregations consider are given by the Spirit for guidance.

Within the two congregations, the dominant theme of revelation is the overwhelming, life-affirming and intimate love of God. It is also the most prominent theme of much of the preaching I have

⁸¹The Charismatic Movement is one in which its adherents claim for themselves the ‘gifts of the Spirit’ or *charismata* manifested on the first day of Pentecost as narrated in Acts 2 and listed in St. Paul’s letters.e.g.1Corinthians 12 and Romans 12:4-8

observed.⁸² Sermons would begin with verses or chapters from the Bible, but were always personalised and applied. Preaching then can also be considered revelation, not necessarily because of its accurate exegesis of Scripture, but because its Spirit-inspired nature reveals more of God to the hearers. In this sense revelation (as personal and existential), takes on a therapeutic function in reassuring the congregants of their acceptance before God, and obviating a sense of worthlessness.

For Thomas Csordas (1997:74) following Geertz, the persuasive force of religious change lies in the power of the imagination, which is at the heart of the human creative capacity to transform one's orientation in the world. Given that much of the content of Charismatic revelation is about the love of God, I argue that Spirit-inspired revelation is to be considered as *image-in-feeling* which - embodied as it is within the *habitus* - operates on the self to affect a different orientation in the world to therapeutic effect.

The theme of revelation as explored in this chapter follows and enfolds the arguments of the previous chapter in which I contend that Charismatic embodied Divine-human encounter collapses the subject-object duality prevalent in the traditional Protestant faith. In the course of this chapter I also look at the ways in which some Charismatic Protestant theologians have struggled with this development in their faith, believing as they do in the necessary immediacy of Divine-human encounter, but wanting to retain a substantial and authoritative measure of objectivity in the narrative of Scripture.

It is to be noted that, whilst I major in this chapter on the theme of revelation, the following observations also contain instances of the nuanced Charismatic motifs contained in Chapters Six and Seven as well as those still to be explored in this chapter. The observations include the particular Charismatic concept of worship; a heightened epiphanic expectancy through music; an expectation of the *presence* of God; displays of somatic expression in dance; the raising of hands; the waving of flags (adults and children); an instance of a man lying prostrate in the aisles; the preponderance of the theme of God's love throughout.

The Thick Gathering: Charismata & Ritual Imagery

The two scenes of participant observation that follow are from BCC, early 2013, at a time when the church was going through a period of transition. The young Pastor (GC) had recently moved to other employment in Glasgow and the congregation were seeking guidance regarding their future. During this time various Charismatic Pastors and/or leaders were invited to speak.

⁸² Preaching is also a means of *exhortation* to practical Christian living; a feature examined in Chapter Nine (pg. 140) from the preacher IB.

BCC: 20th January 2013

10.15am: I enter the BCC building and notice coffee/tea facilities being laid out. Cars are arriving and the car park is filling.

10.20am: The band is practicing at the front of the hall on the raised platform. Children are playing at the back of the hall and in the foyer as more families arrive.

10.40am: The service starts. There are 6 musicians in the band: 3 guitarists, 1 drummer, 1 keyboard player, 1 vocalist.

First song is “Here is hope”. A woman is dancing at the back with arms raised

10.50am: A family with 3 young children arrives in the foyer. The oldest of the children does not want to go into the main hall and sits obstinately on the sofa.

The next song is being played and sung: “We stand and lift up our hands, for the joy of the Lord is our strength”. The majority of the congregation raise their arms and hands.

Flags are being waved as the song picks up the tempo. Children are waving smaller flags at the back of the hall and out in the foyer.

The song ends and a young woman walks to the front to speak. She says that God is speaking to the congregation about “walking with Him”. She relates a story of a walk she took with her mum when God spoke to her about ‘walking’; Adam and Eve walked with God in the garden; our relationship to God is a journey in which He expects us to be moving forward with Him. “What does the Lord require of you?” she asks.

RM (a man in his mid-forties) goes to the front to speak. He tells the story of a walk he had in Glen Coe. He had GPS and maps. He was cold and soaked through in his walk. He felt God speak to him and say “Do not be afraid. You only have to know the next two steps”.

(RM is one of the Elders at BCC. A professor of Physics at a West of Scotland University).

11.10am: Children leave for their various classes. The worship/band leader introduces the next song and he says, “Let’s move into a time of worship”:

Your love never fails...
you stay the same through the ages...
your love never changes...
for you say that you love me...you love never fails.

11.15am: The next song is “Be still for the presence of the Lord is moving in this place”. A woman is dancing more formally, with seemingly choreographed balletic movements, at the front of the hall. A time of quiet ensues. The leading musician prays aloud. He says “We need

you Lord”. Some are singing in tongues quietly. Next song begins: “I lift my hands to the coming King”. The majority of the congregation raise their hands in the air.

11.30am: The visiting speaker goes to the front to preach.

BCC: 17th February 2013

10.00am: People start arriving: some older couples, some younger families. An older couple arrive. He is walking with the aid of a stick. Two families arrive in cars: their children skip into the building. The parents greet each other with hugs and walk into the building. Another family with three young children arrive.

10.40am: Meeting begins. The leader says that it is the beginning of Lent, and reads from Matthew’s Gospel. He prays for the congregation that “Word and Spirit” may combine to enable their worship. The first song is introduced and sung:

Come now is the time to worship
Come just you are before your God

The music gets louder. Most of the congregation are standing, many with hands raised. Some have both hands held aloft. Some are swaying to the music.

One day every tongue will confess
One day every knee will bow
Still the greatest treasure remains for those
Who gladly choose you now

A woman at the back who has been holding up her hands starts to dance. People are still arriving. More chairs are being put out. There is now less room at the back. The next song is introduced:

Hope is here, shout the news to everyone
It is a new day
Peace has come, Jesus saves

A woman in the foyer is waving a flag in time to the music. The leader of the meeting says, “Be open to God breathing on you this morning”. A moment of quiet ensues. The leader says, “We’ll have some more worship” and introduces the next song:

Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,
wait upon the Lord, we will wait upon the Lord.

Many in the congregation have their eyes closed and hands raised. Music rises to a crescendo:

You are the everlasting God,
You do not faint,
You won't grow weary.
You're the defender of the weak
You comfort those in need
You lift us up on wings like eagles.

11.05am: Congregation sit. Offering is taken. Children leave the hall and go to various classes. Leader says, “We’ll worship some more. Let God speak to you. Share if you feel God speaking to you”. The next song is introduced:

Hope that lifts me from despair
Love that casts out every fear
I will stand on every promise of your word

11.15am A man who looks to be in his early 60s comes to the front to speak. He says he has been given 3 pictures (images) from God for the church. Picture 1 is of a fairground. It is an old-fashioned fairground with merry-go-rounds and horses. The merry-go-round is fun but soon the revellers have to get off. The merry-go-round leads nowhere. Picture 2 is of a big-dipper. People get on and enjoy the ride. There is great exhilaration in the ride, but again it is only going up and down. It soon has to end. Picture 3 is of a bungee-jumper. The bungee-jumper has to leap into space. He trusts those who have tied the bungees and that they will hold him. He believes that God is calling the church to take a leap of faith into the unknown at this time of uncertainty.

11.20am: The worship leader thanks the man and asks the congregation to reflect on the ‘words’ which have been shared. He introduces the next song and says, “Let’s worship some more”. The next song is being played. It is quieter than previous songs. Some hands are raised. Most people are standing. A few are sitting. A man is lying prostrate on the floor in the middle aisle, in front of me.

11.40am: A visiting speaker gets up to preach. She is the leader of a well-known Charismatic ministry. She reads out a Psalm from a version which she claims renders the poetic intentions of the Psalmist. She says, “We don’t need (at this point) to pray any more. We just need His presence: His weighty and thick presence. We need to breath in His presence.” She says that a mark of the Lewis Revivals was the “manifest presence of God”. She illustrates her sermon from OT passages about King David, in which she speaks about the “keys for transition”. She knows that the congregation are going through a transitional phase, which may be troubling for them, she says.

12.30pm: Preacher finishes. The final song is sung: “Lord let your glory fall”. After the song some go up to speak to the preacher. Others sit quietly. Most drift into the foyer and start chatting. Coffee/tea being served. Children play in the foyer.

For Karla Poewe (1994:244), the religious language of Charismatics is essentially metonymical rather than metaphorical. Following Edmund Leach (1976), Poewe (1994: 245) identifies the metonymic structure as consisting of three parts. The first is that of *Sign*, where A stands for B (e.g. ‘crown’ for

'monarchy'). The second is *Index*, where A indicates B. The third is that of *Trigger*, where A triggers B in the imagination, with little necessary relationship either in reality or in imagery to B. This is a useful tool in analysing imagery woven into the above scenes from two different Sunday gatherings at BCC. In the first instance, the imagery of 'walking' or 'a walk' (first observation) is a *sign*, readily understood in terms of 'journey' in which 'walking' suggests 'the journey' or 'movement forward'. Secondly, the imagery of walking is an *index*: interpreted by the woman and by RM to indicate the relationship to which God is calling the congregation. Thirdly, it becomes a *trigger* as both the woman and RM challenge the congregation: "What does God require of you?", "You just have to know the next two steps". Thus imagery which is personally conceived in private moments becomes a vehicle for Divine revelation in a congregational setting.

The same can be said regarding the three images (pictures) given by the speaker in the second observation at BCC: a merry-go-round, a big-dipper, and a bungee-jumper. In the first place, they are a representative *sign*. Within the imaginal web that is the Charismatic ritual matrix, they are readily visualised and understood as types of going round and round in life; are you just going up and getting nowhere, or are you willing to take a leap, a risk, a step into the unknown? Finally, the images are a *trigger*, issuing a challenge as interpreted by their author, to "take a leap in this time of uncertainty".

I suggest however that the above observations also invite a more complex analysis. Language is used to evoke an event, a drama, in which the congregation are participants or actors. The congregation is invited to view themselves walking on a hillside, to be at an old-fashioned fairground where they ride on horses or to be at a more modern fairground where they are riding the big-dipper. Finally, they are invited to picture themselves taking a bungee-jump. The initial impact of the revelation makes the congregants *feel* something. In the first instance, revelation comes through *feeling*: feeling the wind on the hillside, feeling the cold and the wet, feeling the thrill of the merry-go-round or big-dipper, or experiencing the fear and/or exhilaration of the bungee-jump.

Interpretation of the conceptualised scenes shifts. The congregation is drawn into the drama, to become part of the narrative: actors on an imagined stage where layer upon layer of interpretation create a thick description in which God participates. In two imaginal scenes the congregation experience exhilaration, journey, comfort and challenge. In both conceptualisations, *movement* is the underlying theme with the symbiotic dialectic of congregational life *vis-à-vis* the comfort/challenge of God as the refrain.

At stake is the enterprise of reconciling language and imagery, representation and *being-in-the-world*. Poewe's (1994:244) contention that Charismatic imagery is metonymical rather than metaphorical is apposite here: imagery is not used in the way that a good preacher might use it e.g., God's calling is *like* a journey where you get wet and cold. For the speakers as well as the congregants, God incarnates

the images or ‘words’ in the experience of the individual congregant and communicates through them directly to the collective congregation.

Roelofs (1994: 223), following Poewe (1994), suggests that Charismatics use metonym because as an imaginal process it is an “oblique way of making a direct reference”, a means of reference which is clear to all within the Charismatic circle who are familiar with the metonymic trope, but not necessarily to outsiders. I suggest however, a more potent use of imagery, not limited to insider familiarity, is to be observed in the above: that of *image-as-feeling*. In the first observation the congregation are invited to experience a walk, either with the woman’s mum or with RM as he walked the hillside with his family. They are invited to *feel* the cold and the wet, and the sensations of anxiety this might bring. Then they are invited to *feel* together with RM, what God is saying to them through the enacted and felt imagery. The same could be said of the set of images offered as ‘words’ in the second observation. The congregation are invited to *experience* the images. The speaker says “Imagine you are at a funfair, the old fashioned type with a merry-go-round and horses which go up and down. You climb aboard the horses. You are going up and down and round and round”. The imaginal scenes of big-dipper and bungee-jump are introduced in the same way. The imagery is not confined to the understanding of the Charismatic congregation, but in its initial stages would be familiar to most people. To the church congregation the imagery may seem more restricted in application, nevertheless I suggest that the trope *image-as-feeling* is not limited to insiders but such is the scope of its felt imagination that it could have been understood by anyone in the congregation that day, whether regular attendee or not.

Thus, the significance of the imaginal matrix is not simply the image itself, but the *feeling* it engenders. The use of imagery within the process draws the congregation into participation in a drama, not in action but in sensation. The *image-as-drama* becomes a *sensation-in-drama*, and this in turn becomes a means of revelation. For Csordas (1997:85), following Peirce, the fundamental structure of the sign is a tripartite composition of Sign-Object-Interpretant, which is *image-as-sign*. A complementary aspect to the notion of *image-as-sign* is to be found in a phenomenological approach which allows for an embodied *image-in-consciousness* (Csordas, 1997: 80, 85), an approach more akin to what I am proposing here. Whereas *image-as-sign* lends itself to textuality, *image-in-consciousness* or *image-as-feeling* is biased towards existential and embodied immediacy.

Interviewees

During research at BCC, interviewees seemed concerned that I should be aware that “God speaks through the Bible” and that the “Word keeps me in check”, and added that the Bible speaks “right into your situation”. A respondent (PH) said that God also spoke to him through worship “to the heart”. He added that God spoke to him through dreams, and that recently he had been learning to “know which dreams to take seriously”. Another interviewee at BCC (KK) said that God spoke to her through

“impressions” and “thoughts/pictures in her head”. She added that she expected “pictures when praying for people” and was anxious to let me know that hearing from God was a “combination”: it was “experience and Scripture”. She said that “impressions” needed to be “backed up by the Bible”, that “Sometimes a Scripture jumps out” and you “see things you have not seen before”.

Respondents at BCF also seemed to suggest that, as a matter of course, God spoke to them through impressions and pictures in their minds and in their feelings. CA said that at the age of seventeen she had “encountered God again in a new way” and asked Him “now that you have my life, what do you want me to do with it?” Having thought she would do something with art, God led her to be a psychiatric nurse, through which she learned to “love broken people”. When asked how she knew it was God directing her, she replied, “God spoke . . . through feelings of peace or disquiet”. On the particular aspect of psychiatric nursing CA described going “into the job-centre” and the job “jumped off the wall at her”, giving her a “real sense that this was for me” or “this is what I am meant to do”. This was “confirmed to me along the way” she said, as both she and her accompanying father “felt comfortable” in the hospital where she was interviewed, and was finally trained.

Transitions and Change

Both congregations in the study struggled with a period of change and transition during the latter months of my research. At BCC their Pastor (GC) had moved to another Christian ministry in the city of Glasgow, and BCF was feeling the need for renewed vision and purpose in their Sunday gatherings and mission structures. Both congregations turned to their understanding of revelation in images and ‘words’ to give them direction during uncertain times.

On Sunday 13th 2013, BCC gave time to ‘hear from God’ in what they termed a “Spirit Service”.⁸³ The service began with words of reassurance from the Biblical text of Joel “I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh”. The speaker emphasised the equality of all in the congregation before God, saying that the ‘word’ of God would be “accessible to all”. An image of “the open hand of God pouring out blessing” was given as “an encouragement”. The poem ‘The Vagabond’s Song’ (Bliss Carman) was recalled to remind the church of their vision to be “welcoming to everyone . . . including those who feel they don’t belong, who have questions”. The speaker exhorted the congregation to believe that “God’s vision is big, so much bigger than you think it is”. A ‘word’ was given to “encourage one another to follow God’s prompting” by recalling the “Olympic flame and small flames coming together to make one large flame”. A similar ‘word’ about variety and unity recalled “the botanical gardens and consideration of the variety of plants”. The speaker concluded by saying that “there are different things and seasons for different people at different times”. Further comments were made: “plants

⁸³ Although not present at this meeting, a summary of the meeting at which ‘words (of revelation) were given’ was handed out on the 20th January 2013 when I made a visit to BCC.

grow from energy given from the sky” and “in the last days I will pour out my Spirit on everyone”: the church was to remember that growth only came “from above” and “by the Spirit”.

At BCF revelation is also experienced through an imaginal process which includes dreams, impressions and feelings. In conversation with BQ in April 2013 he recalled a “dream he had been given” by God at the beginning of the work at Bridgeton and wondered if this dream was now more relevant to their vision going forward. I asked him to write it down for me:

We were in the new centre and were getting ready for a Sunday morning service and I was in a bit of a panic as it felt like we were not ready. Local people from some of the community groups we had worked with were there with their families and we were all sitting around tables chatting, drinking tea and eating biscuits. We had a bit of worship and then it was time for me to preach, but nobody was listening, they were too busy sharing with each other and praying for each other and in the end I gave up trying to preach and my sense of panic left as I realized that God was ministering to everyone without my preaching, which was actually a relief to me.

For BQ this dream amounted to confirmation from God of the direction he and the congregation were taking and became instrumental in their deliberations. Towards the end of April and into May 2013, they decided more effort and time would be given on a Sunday morning to communal activity of eating and socialising around the tables in the Café area, with the view to furthering their ministry and service to a greater number of local people.

It is worth noting that Charismatic imaginal epistemology transcends educational and social classifications and barriers. RM above (a Professor of Physics), who in his profession is bound to an empirical epistemology, appears to be comfortable with an imaginal ontological process when considering the forces which shape the entirety of his life. The same holds for the psychiatric nurse (CA above) and the Council maintenance worker (J.McK), whose story is told later in this chapter.

For Csordas (1997: 81) following Merleau-Ponty, *image-in-consciousness* allows for a phenomenological dimension within semiotics that is decidedly embodied. I argue, following Csordas (1997) that for the two congregations, imagery is likewise embodied in consciousness: in my categorisation this corresponds with feelings, emotions, a sense of wonder, and a sense of the numinous. In this perception, the imaginal process is in keeping with the other somatic manifestations of the Charismatic *habitus* noted in Chapter Seven. Furthermore, the embodied imaginal process takes on an iconic nature. The congregants ‘see through’, or more precisely ‘feel through’ the image(s) to existential revelation, whether of God or some related aspect of the Christian life.

Karla Poewe (1994), following the scientist/philosopher Michael Polanyi, sees in this imaginal process a similar epistemology of much contemporary science. Polanyi insists, she says, on the notion that “scientific knowledge consists in discerning Gestalten that are aspects of reality” (Poewe, 1994: 245. Polanyi 1969:138). In this, Polanyi (1969: 140) follows the perceptions of Gestalt theory and

psychology that indicate an “act of integration” in a holistic knowing process. Polanyi (1969: 140. Poewe 1994:245) calls this *tacit knowing*. This process of discovery, in which the scientist assumes the “possibility of revealing hidden truths”, is a metonymic process (Poewe, 1994: 245).

Poewe’s reference to Polanyi points to a Charismatic notion of revelation which bypasses a strictly cognitive one in the traditional Protestant sense as one much more integrated into the wholeness of human perception. Whatever weight we allow Poewe’s comparison of Charismatic epistemology to Polanyi’s theory of *tacit knowledge*, it remains a helpful epistemological perception which allows for the literary, the poetic and the numinous as well as the empirical. Karla Poewe makes precisely this point when she argues that the Charismatic hermeneutic opposes the “Enlightenment mind-set, which censored experience of the transcendent” (Poewe, 1994:250). In this she argues, as I have suggested in the previous chapter, that “they (the Charismatics) are putting back precisely what the earlier Protestants removed, namely, the sense of the numinous” (Brackets mine) (Poewe, 1994: 250).

Theological Struggles

The above epistemological shift raises a host of problematic questions that face Charismatic leaders, most of whom were schooled in a traditional Evangelical subject-object duality of the written Word. In the Evangelical context which shapes the theological/doctrinal context for the Protestant Charismatic movement generally, and the house-churches in particular, I detect a struggle to marry the concept of immediate and existential revelation as on-going God-speak, with the theological notions they have been trained in.

For example, Tom Smail (1993:50) makes the observation that “charismatic renewal has to do with experience *of* God rather than thinking *about* God” (italics original), and that its central contribution lay in the emphasis on the “here and now activity in his Spirit of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”. Smail (1993:50), a Scottish Presbyterian, makes the astute theological assessment that the God of the Charismatics is the “God of contemporary eventfulness, who touches and changes people and makes them new for himself”. He nevertheless warns that all interpretations of the gospel “need to be submitted afresh to the fullness of God’s truth as it revealed in Christ and witnessed in the Scriptures, so that all our theologies can be corrected by the living word of God” (Smail,1993:53). However positively he views the revelation of *charismata* he continues to maintain his Reformed emphasis on the Bible as the “living Word of God” (Smail, 1993:53). Similarly, Nigel Wright (1993), a Baptist theologian, affirms the need and the role of the prophetic in the church when exercised in the Charismatic sense, as I have outlined it above. He stresses, “The Spirit of God always comes incarnationally” and “comes to fulfil his purposes *in* our humanity, not independently of it” (Wright, N.1993:119. Italics original). He argues, “the belief that God communicates with his people must be taken seriously, and in fact is fundamental to Christian living” (Wright, N.1993:120), adding that

Charismatic God-speak is not threatening “if it is understood that the Scriptures always remain normative” (Wright, N.1993: 120).

Jack Deere, an American Presbyterian and former professor of Old Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary, confesses his struggle with the idea of immediate and Spirit-inspired revelation, towards the end of his volume *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Deere, 1993). He outlines the complexity of problems of misguided revelation and its potential abuse. Writing about embodied revelation, he comments on “the tensions I struggled with when I first started to study the subject with an open mind” (Deere, 1993: 214). He says however, “After years of practical experience and intense study on the subject of God speaking, I am convinced that God does speak apart from the Bible” and adds the caveat “but never in contradiction to it” (Deere, 1993: 214). Both Wright and Deere were deeply influenced by the John Wimber phenomenon of the 1980s which I have referred to in Chapter One.

In *Desiring the Kingdom*, the Pentecostal Reformed scholar James K.A. Smith (2009), proposes an altogether different approach, which takes as its starting point the fact that humans generally engage with the world, not as passive cognitive receptors, but as fully participatory beings in which senses, imagination and desire all play a part. Smith (2009:41, 42) contends that the cognitivist approach arises from an Enlightenment (Cartesian) framework, absorbed into Protestant Christianity. He argues that this does not represent a genuine Reformed emphasis which in actuality offered a “more holistic sense of our identity as believers” (Smith 2009:43): contending that human beings are *desiring* creatures before they are *thinking* ones. In the “structure of desire or longing”, he argues, the primary motivation for humans is that of *love*: for Christians this is expressed primarily as love for God (Smith 2009:50). In our relationship of love to God, worship is to be seen less as a cognitive act informed by propositions and more as “a practice of desire” (Smith 2009:136). In the light of this Smith (2009: 195) argues that the Scriptures should be seen less as the source of dogma to inform worship, and more as the script for a narrative in which the Christians become engaged as lovers and worshippers. An engagement in worship, he argues, takes precedent over cognitive information. Worshippers engage primarily with their imaginations and with their bodies, which in turn educates and develops their thinking and behaving (Smith 2009: 195).

In *Thinking in Tongues* James K.A. Smith (2010) takes his epistemological argument further, and in so doing reveals his Charismatic/Pentecostal credentials. He argues that Charismatics naturally adopt a “narrative epistemology” (Smith 2010:62-71) in their predisposition to give testimony of God’s action in lives corporately and individually understood: an epistemology which occasions “narrative knowledge” (2010:64) and “emotional understanding” (2010:65). He argues that Charismatics/Pentecostals are “moved by stories” in which imagination plays a significant part (Smith 2010: 80) and proposes the role of the imagination as an “epistemic vehicle” (2010: 85). Smith’s analysis not only supports my argument regarding the use of language in the two

congregations, his approach is also gives helpful insight into how it may be possible to reconcile their practice of revelatory imagination with an avowed belief in the Bible as inspired by God. Instead of taking as his starting point the thorny issues of objective ‘authority’ for the Christian, he turns the argument on its head by situating *knowledge* in the interaction of the whole human being - body and soul – with the knowable (whatever that might be).

For Smith (2009: 50 – 62), the purest and most persistent driving force in the human frame is *love*, which implies that at root he/she is *homo liturgicus*, a worshipping creature. The Christian worshipper is therefore called primarily to be a *lover* in which the heart (*kardia*) or “gut” (Smith 2009: 57) and the imagination (Smith 2010:80-82) have formative significance. Love emanating *from* God and the reciprocal love or desire *for* God is not only the motivation and subject matter woven in the ritual matrix of the two congregations as seen in the above observations; it is also the burden of perceived revelation. I come to this next.

Divine Love

The dominant theme of much imaginal revelation within the ritual matrix of the two congregations – song lyrics, musical atmosphere, preaching and somatic gestures - is the *love* of God. It is offered as *image-in-consciousness* (Csordas 1997: 81) or *image-in-feeling* to be experienced as the overwhelming and unconditional love of God. Following Smith (2009), I argue that it is known essentially in embodied doxology and narrative.

In *Sweet Rapture: Subliminal Eroticism in Postmodern Charismatic Worship*, Martin Percy (1999) detects a sublimated, at times overt eroticism in the language, symbols and practices of Charismatic worship within the *Toronto Airport Vineyard* church, Canada in which the love of God is a dominant theme. Different cultural restraints and/or expectations may account for a lack of such displays of eroticism in the two Scottish congregations, suggesting these are either subliminal or non-existent.⁸⁴ Notwithstanding the lack of overt eroticism in their worship, the music and songs, somatic manifestations and embodied imagery and the preaching practices of the congregations maintain the same dominant theme.

In Chapter Six I argued that music and movement combine to catalyse experiences of the Divine-human encounter within the Charismatic *habitus*. This was followed in Chapter Seven by further exploration of the ways in which somatic gesture embody the experiences and promote a function of *being-in-the-world* which develops a sacred self. I now add to this, the notion of *image-as-feeling*, which functions within the complex matrix of Divine-human encounter to bring existential experience of the love of God to the worshippers with radical therapeutic effect.

⁸⁴ Plato understands the ‘erotic’ as passionate ‘divine madness’, a sentiment which is entirely in keeping with the ritual experience of the two congregations. I explore this theme in Part Three.

Music, Songs, Stories & Preaching

A prevailing leitmotif of the unconditional love of God weaves through the matrix in dialectic fashion, through music, song and somatic expression, through preaching and its accompanying response. The following two observations are from BCC in January 2010 and BCF in May 2011

BCC: 31st January 2010

11.15am: Announcement given about the funds needed to complete the next phase of building the hall next door. Following this the children leave the main auditorium for Children's Church. Singing resumes. The woman who had arrived with her family earlier is waving a large chiffon flag in time to the music at the front. Another woman is dancing at the front of the congregation, also in time to the music. The song being sung has the refrain "we welcome you here Lord Jesus". GC the newly appointed Pastor speaks at the end of the song. He says "It has to be a deliberate decision to draw close to God". He says: "(you) need to be proactive in seeking God. What do you want from him? What do you really need?" The band leader takes over. He says "When you lift up holy hands, what does this mean? What does this signify, except a desire for 'heaven to come down'?" The next song is introduced. Most of the congregation stand. A host of hands are held aloft in a 'palms up' posture from men as well as women. They sing:

No one but you Lord
Only you can fill my heart with laughter
Only you can fill my deepest longing
No one but you Lord can satisfy the deepest longing of my heart.

When the song has been sung a few times, silence descends on the room. The congregation continues to stand. Many still have their hands raised. Most have their eyes closed. Some sway in time to the music which now picks up the refrain in a quiet mode. A sense of contemplation fills the room.

The band leader uses his position at the microphone to speak. He says he has a 'picture' of a diamond which refracts the light. The "light" is "the love of God, which spreads out everywhere ...to all those now standing to seek God... this light however cannot be kept isolated...by its nature it is also to be refracted into the community".

11.40am: GC gets up to speak. GC is characteristically emotional. His theme is "Life lived in the love of God". His sermon is based on Romans Chapter 8. He weaves the story of his own spiritual journey into his sermon. He tells of how he was brought up in the Brethren denomination where the love of God was taught, but never expected to be experienced. He says that when he was 'baptized in the Holy Spirit' he was engulfed by God's love for him. He relates his experience as a father when his child became ill, and how this was nothing

compared to God's love. He pauses on several occasions as if to collect himself.

12.15pm GC stops preaching. He invites those who need prayer for past or present hurts to come forward at the close of the meeting. After the final song, a few of the congregation come forward where GC and others (who also appear to be leaders in the congregation) 'lay hands' on them in quiet prayer. Around the room the same rites of 'laying on of hands' is also to be seen. Some of those being prayed for appear to be weeping quietly.

BCF: 8th May 2011

The djembe player begins to drum and this leads into a song:

Draw me close to You
Never let me go
I lay it all down again
To hear You say that I'm Your friend
You are my desire
No one else will do
No one else can take Your place
To feel the warmth of Your embrace
Help me find my way
Bring me back to You

Chorus: Oh, Oh, Oh
You're all I want , You're all I've ever needed
You're all I want , Help me know You are near.

Three of the congregation rise to their feet and raise their hands. Everyone else sits; some remain quiet and contemplative. A few more people join the congregation and sit at the back. It is now about 10.45am and the chairs are mostly all filled. As noted previously, hardship and struggle is etched in drawn faces and plain apparel. Yet there is a quiet and concentrated strength about the congregation.

The song is sung a few times and there follows an interlude. The musicians continue to play quietly. A soft humming develops to gentle 'singing in tongues' that rises and falls. The next song is introduced, "Father God":

Father God I wonder how I managed to exist
Without the knowledge of your parenthood
And your loving care
But now I am your child, I am adopted in your family
And can never be alone
For you are always there beside me

A few more people stand and hold up their hands, their eyes closed. One of the girls sways gently to the music. Another song is introduced:

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You
I want to see You

Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You
I want to see You

To see You high and lifted up
Shinin' in the light of Your glory
Pour out Your power and love
As we sing Holy, Holy, Holy

Most of the congregation are now standing. Many are swaying, raising their hand with their palms held upwards. The singing gets louder, and one of the women to my right kneels on the hard floor, her hands still raised, her eyes closed. She stops singing, holds out her hands further in what seems imploring prayer, and speaks softly under her breath.

The task is to reconcile imagery, representation, and *being-in-the-world*. The above ritual matrices display a rich and complex tapestry in which song, dance, music, spoken exhortation, imagery (a diamond) and narrative preaching are woven. In the first instance, Poewe's (1994) argument for the metonymic nature of Charismatic language is useful. The above scenes give ample evidence of metonymy as sign index and signal. Poewe (1994:246) is right to conclude that for "charismatics, knowledge (is) mediated through signs" and is what "Charismatic Christian(s) mean by revelation"(brackets mine). Again I suggest that the Charismatic imaginal process is better served by a phenomenological and holistic approach which allows for embodied *image-as-feeling*. The embodied images in question are corporate ones in which members of the congregation participate in a communal imaginal process in which metonymy functions usefully as a means of provoking an embodied communal experience. For Charismatic Christians, I suggest, this is what is meant by revelation.

Secondly, the leading theme of the above observations - love of God - needs to be explored. At both BCC and BCF the dialectic of *felt-need* and *love of God* runs through the central ritual matrix of the Sunday gatherings.

At BCC the dialectic is initiated to express *felt need* by the exhortation from the GC, "... need to be proactive in seeking God. What do you want from him? What do you really need?" The dialectic is established as the song responds in expressing the *love of God*, "No one but you Lord can satisfy the deepest longing of my heart": the congregation engage with the dialectic vocally, somatically and emotionally. GC's poignant narrative of his own spiritual journey in God's love adds a further dimension. Finally, the call to respond ends the dialectic process.

At BCF the affirming gathering-greeting rites that precede the main doxological event already trigger the dialectic. The feeling of affirmative love is then heightened through the first stage of the Divine – human encounter with the words of the first song, "Draw me close to you, never let me go" and "No one else could take the place to feel the warmth of your embrace". Time is given to meditate on the

meaning of this encounter through the Charismatic practice of ‘singing in tongues’; the theme is rehearsed again in the song “Father God”, and continues until the dialectic is resolved and the experience is psychologically embedded through raised hands, kneeling and prayer.

It is not only image *vis-à-vis* consciousness (Csordas, 1997:85) that configures the dialectic, but also more particularly the arena of consciousness as felt need *vis-à-vis* love of God. The first song at BCF issues a cry of felt need - “draw me close never let me go” - repeated in the chorus “You’re all I want; you’re all I ever needed”. The motif is given time to settle and resurges as the love of God is evoked in the song “Father God” which itself contains the dialectic of felt need *vis-à-vis* the love of “Father God”.

At BCC the dialectic plays throughout the doxological rituals: from the opening words of the worship leader to the songs being sung; from the dance movements to the preaching; it continues to the end, where prayer is offered for those who are in need of an “experience of God’s love” through the laying on of hands. I observed and conclude, contra Percy (1999), that the existential dialectic of *felt need/love of God* is not gender specific.⁸⁵ Both men and women appeared responsive to the message: the male worship leader introduced the theme; the women who wave flags and dance at the front of the congregation took it up in dance; it sustained with much emotion by GC, the (male) preacher for the morning. Men as well as women were observed having ‘hands laid’ on them in prayer at the end of the service. Nevertheless, my interviews with men from the congregations revealed a common difficulty, that of allowing emotion in their ‘opening up to God’ or to one another. A male respondent at BCC (PH) whom I had noticed regularly raise his hands, said in response to a question about worship, that for him this was to “experience God’s love” and “was a place of intimacy”. I explore the difficulty of male emotional/somatic response further in this chapter.

The experiential-expressive and the cultural-linguistic

The Christian tradition has a rich and extensive historical tradition of exploring religious experience as love of God. In recent times George Lindbeck (1984) in *The Nature of Doctrine* settles on Bernard Lonergan (1971) who follows Ignatius Loyola, Rudolph Otto and Paul Tillich, as an example of an exponent of a *experiential-expressive* model of theology in which religious experience is primarily to be expressed as “God’s gift of love” (Lindbeck, 1984: 31). The Charismatic tendency is a prime example of the *experiential-expressive* model that expresses the ‘gift of God’s love’; one, which Lindbeck sees typified in Lonergan, and claims, is inferior to the *cultural-linguistic* alternative. I suggest however that Charismatic congregations inhabit and represent a cultural-linguistic world that

⁸⁵ Percy (1999) argues that the subliminal eroticism he found in the congregation(s) he observed – in particular the ‘Toronto Airport’ church - was prevalent amongst (middle-class white) women which he suggests was a means to empowerment for women in a male dominated congregation. As women are given prominent status in leadership and in preaching in the Scottish congregations (see Part One: Ch.3), I suggest that such a need is not so apparently necessary.

differs from that of other Protestants in Scotland, and is not at odds with Lindbeck's schema and subsumes the first approach into the second, as Lindbeck himself seems to suggest is possible. That is, the experiential-expressive becomes a cultural-linguistic *habitus* and conversely the cultural-linguistic approach "accommodates the experiential-expressive concern" (Lindbeck, 1984: 35).

I have identified the dialectic dynamic of *felt need/love of God* in the above observations, which, as I have suggested, brings a particular contemporary Charismatic emphasis to the theme of the love of God. Percy (1999) is correct in arguing that this is a phenomenon of the late twentieth century, engendered and influenced by streams of non-aligned Charismatic movements of North America and Australia.⁸⁶ However what he fails to recognise is that this is a contemporary appearance of an ancient dialectic theme which is historically evident within Judeo-Christianity: for example, despair to deliverance in many Psalms, and the existential certainty of God's love proclaimed by Paul to the church in Rome, in spite of hardship and persecution (Romans 8:37-39).

There are also echoes of this dialectic in many of the hymns of past Reformers to whom present day Charismatics look for inspiration. In the Eighteenth Century, Charles Wesley wrote in personal and experiential terms "my chains fell off, my heart was free"⁸⁷: words that have been adapted in many Charismatic songs, albeit nuanced with a greater personal and existential slant as noted in Chapter Six.

The Fatherhood of God: Therapeutic Efficacy

A parallel theme with theological nuance which runs alongside that of the 'love of God' is that of the 'fatherhood of God'. As with all Charismatic theology, this theme does not remain cognitive or theoretical. In the two congregations, members are taught and encouraged to *experience* the 'Father-heart of God' (a metonymic phrase prevalent in Charismatic circles), through engagement in worship, and/or by the 'laying on of hands'. Contra Percy (1999:18), I do not dismiss this popular Charismatic theme as idealistic, but argue that it has powerful and therapeutic effect. I offer a supporting narrative from a member of BCF whom I designate J.McK., a near sixty-year old heating engineer for a large housing association in Glasgow. I have attempted to replicate accurately his strong Glasgow accent and his meandering pattern of speech:

⁸⁶ Percy (1999) identifies in particular the influence of the Vineyard Churches and their leader, the Californian John Wimber, of whom the Toronto Airport congregation were part until disowned by Wimber in 1995. I suggest however that the theme of the experienced and embodied love of God stretches beyond Wimber to become a global phenomenon with influences from other American and Australian Charismatic streams. For an Australian perspective see Mark Jennings 2008.

⁸⁷ These lines come from the well-known Wesleyan Hymn "And Can it Be?" written in 1738. Several contemporary Charismatic songwriters, including Tim Hughes in his song "Holding Nothing Back" available on YouTube, have incorporated Wesley's words.

J.McK: April 2011- Interview

J.McK: I come from a Catholic background...that's ma roots. R (his wife) is from Church of Scotland. Both my parents are dead. I lost both my parents quite young...in different accidents. So I grew up within in a Catholic structure...I suppose as with most young men I never really had much interest to do with church or what was going on in the church...but ...when the kids came along we thought of getting them baptised...but because R & I have a mixed marriage...we married in a registry office...the (Catholic) church did not recognise our marriage...so we went through the process to satisfy or pacify the church. R was quite willing to allow the children to go through the Catholic structure...which I unwillingly went down...we got the kids baptised...I think that was the last time I was in that church...then a whole load of circumstances started me thing about God..

Me: So you started thinking about God?

J.McK: Yea.... my brother in law started going to a Pentecostal church...and I also began to think about bringing up the kids...yea I had went to a school run by the Marist Brothers...and there were issues...don't know how to put it...let's say I was a victim ...some issues with one of the teachers...I found it difficult to talk about with my mother...being about eight ...being the only boy in our family...and my father had been killed as I told you, when I was about three years old. It turned out that this brother was touching some of the boys ...you know? Eventually he got caught.

Me: How did that affect you?

J.McK: I grew up with lots of anxieties...guilt...and it did sort of haunt me as I got to 13/14 ...and became sexually aware o' these things....so there were things in the Catholic church....so maybe I had some bad feelings towards the church. I was in touch with a Father D...and he looked after the working class half of the Parish...he was on my side of the fence so to speak. One Sunday I took my daughter Lisa to her first communion...sat at the front...there was a bit of guilt there...and I felt God was speaking to *me* directly, you know. They were starting some new house-groups where they were discussing their faith. They were 'renewal' house-groups...L (his daughter) said I should sign up to go to one...believe that even then God was speaking to me...there were issues needing sorted out ...a lot of healing needed to take place..

(J. McK then tells of how he joined one of these groups that by his description was obviously Catholic Charismatic and was led by a "lovely old couple". He also started to go to the local Pentecostal church with his brother and sister-in-law. He enjoyed the warmth of both groups.)

J.McK: I got prayer one night at the Pentecostal church ...and that had a big impact on me...I seemed to be talking about God all the time...I was speaking in tongues and praying in tongues...I was just trying to embrace this...what had happened to me.

Me: How old would you have been?

J.McK: About 20 years ago...so I was going to these two meetings....I got in touch with this Father O’G and he invited me to some bigger meetings...Wednesday night at St. Mary...I was overwhelmed by all these people....about a hundred of them...they were all praising God & speaking in tongues..

(He continued for several years attending Catholic Charismatic meetings as well as the local Pentecostal church. He also began attending Catholic Charismatic retreats for men in which they focused on men’s issues.)

J.McK: But then R (his wife) said to me “when is any of this going to start happening in the house? When are all these changes going to take place?” I thought she was out to spoil my fun. I was still full of anger. I was the angry man in oor hoose. At the same time I was praying and asking who my father was. This had been too painful for my mother...my mother’s father died when she was young...I never knew the history of who my Da was...I knew I had to look at these issues...to do with all the issues growing up...had been prayed with many times. ..at these meetings.....when I could open up.

Me: So you were trying to relate these issues to your faith?

J.McK: Yea... one day I looked in the mirror and asked myself the question “Did ma Da ever love me?” I had never known ma Da. (At this point he pauses, choking a little with emotion). Then that verse came from John’s Gospel into my mind “If you have seen me you have seen my Father”. I was looking at myself....and suddenly I realised that having known Jesus, I knew ‘the Father’ and in a strange way the love of God the Father and a recognition of my own faether in the mirror came together. I was overcome.

Me: Did that help you understand God’s love?

J.McK: Yes it helped me accept it. I struggled with the idea that God loved someone like me. Was I being totally honest with God? Was I just being a ‘happy clappy’ Christian? I began to learn more about my own faether through a man I met in Partick who was his best friend. I realised we were so alike...the Scripture “If you’ve seen me, you have seen my father” kept coming back to me ...there’s healing in a’ that.

I look back now and see that it was all a journey...it doesn’t happen overnight...God does not want us to miss out in all that he has for us ...so He takes us through this journey...that just overwhelms me, that God would love you that much...that’s the kind of impact it has on us today, you know...I’ve moved on...it was potentially destructive...there was also possibly a period when I drank too much...I’m much more at peace now...life’s precious.

(John went on to explain that the Catholic Charismatic groups he attended shut down because of opposition from new priests. His association with the group from the Pentecostal Church grew and later he joined the leadership of the group that formed the BCF.

I suggest we understand that the therapeutic process may begin in a meeting, but transcends that event and continues as an everyday process. Sometimes, as in the above case of J.McK what begins in a meeting or meetings, is activated through everyday events (such as looking in a mirror) when previous rituals play powerfully on the imagination to transform the subject's orientation in the world. This, as I have indicated following Poewe (1994), is also what Charismatics call revelation: not propositional statements about God, e.g. God is Love, but when (as above) the imaginal process links images of e.g. 'God as father', conceived in a former corporate ritual matrix, and gives them powerful and emotional existential impact.

'Fatherhood of God' is a popular subject in present-day Charismatic circles. Theological status and existential impetus for this came from Tom Smail (1980) in *The Forgotten Father*. His stated aim, he claimed, was to rectify an unhealthy bias within the evolving Charismatic movement towards the Holy Spirit, by reintroducing God the Father to Charismatic theology. In his first book *Reflected Glory* (1977), Smail had followed his Evangelical disposition to Christology and writes primarily about the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the person and work of Christ (Smail, 1980: 19). Following Greek Orthodoxy, he suggests in *The Forgotten Father* (1980) that Charismatics review their pneumatology to understand that "the ultimate source of the Holy Spirit is not the Son but the Father" (Smail, 1980: 20). However Smail's concern is not solely theological. His objective was also to renew the Christian's understanding of God as Father, set "within the whole context of God's revelation and action in Christ" (Smail, 1980:51). Smail reminds his readers that the "Christian's cry to Abba" is rooted in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Thus on the one hand "it has doctrinal content" (Smail, 1980: 51), and on the other hand, it can and should, according to Smail (1980: 51), be a "transforming spiritual experience".

The concept of 'God the Father' is clearly not new. What is new is the way that this concept has been modified from 'God the Father' to the 'Fatherhood of God': that is from objectified theological abstraction to a personalised and therapeutic notion. I suggest this shift is typical of the Charismatic theological enterprise: from abstraction to personalisation; from objectification to intimacy; from thoughts about God to experience of God (Smail, 1993: 50). Since Smail's 1980 publication, many related books have appeared, and a host of Charismatic ministries in America, Australia and the U.K. have surfaced which purport to promote this forgotten theme. Most prominent amongst these in the UK is the ministry and writings of Mark Stibbe. Onetime Senior Leader of the Anglican St. Andrew's, Chorleywood he is currently the founding leader of *The Father's House Trust* and author of several books on the subject. In keeping with other authors of the same genre of approach, Stibbe's assertion is that fatherhood has become dysfunctional and damaging in Western society, and that the Christian remedy lies in an understanding and appropriation of God as father. In *I am Your Father* (2010:37) he writes "I've written this book to help those with hearts broken by their earthly fathers to find their Heavenly Father and the love of all loves".

Stories in which a realisation of the 'Fatherhood of God' has a transformative effect are frequent in the study of house-churches. They illustrate the argument that imagery and representation (as *image-in-feeling*) play a part in the therapeutic and existential process of *being-in-the-world* within the Charismatic *habitus*. However, this social theory is only part of the story. Participants in the matrix of music, song, somatic expression and preaching view their actions primarily in a theological frame to which the matrix bears witness and which results in the Divine-human encounter. Such encounters are transformative and radically affect outlook and behaviour, as illustrated in the story of J.McK.

Revelation and the Therapeutic Process

The above observation furthers an understanding of the linguistic-cultural *habitus* of the Charismatic house-churches and gives greater insight to the notion of 'revelation'. Together with re-formed concepts of 'worship' and 'God the Father', the concept of 'revelation' in the Charismatic vocabulary does not radically alter the traditional Protestant view of a once-for-all revelation, but rather nuances an understanding of revelation to mean that which is personalised. This is borne out by the J.McK story above. Having been schooled by Roman Catholic Brothers, the concept of God the Father was clearly not new to him. Although reluctant to talk about the formative events of his school days, it is evident that he suffered childhood abuse and this had affected his adult orientation in the world. His hurt was compounded by the loss of his father, whom he never knew, and by the pain transferred from his mother, caused by the same set of circumstances.

When J.McK began to associate with Charismatic Catholics and Protestants, he encountered the notion of the Fatherhood of God, as was promoted in Charismatic circles at the time. Nevertheless, by his own admission, none of this influenced his temperamental anger: "I was the angry man in oor hoose". In interview he confessed to being confronted by his wife RMcK (I interviewed them together) who asked, "When is any of this going to start happening in the house? When are all these changes going to take place? ". His testimony is of an epiphanic moment: "Scripture kept coming back to me...If you've seen me you've seen my Father". For J.McK, this was a moment of *revelation*, not in abstract theological terms, but in personalised, intimate and existential terms, which was therapeutic. He said "there's healing in a' that ...I look back now and see that it was all a journey....it doesn't happen overnight...God does not want us to miss out in all that he has for us ...so He takes us through this journey....that just overwhelms me, that God would love you that much". For J.McK, it was the beginning of a journey. Following Smail, God not only revealed Himself in history but He is also "God of contemporary eventfulness" (Smail, 1993:50).

For Percy (1999: 17) the turn in the Charismatic mood in early Restorationism⁸⁸ from "tribalism to the therapeutic" and "from aggressive power to emotions and passion" amounts to "something

⁸⁸ Restorationism is the name given to the early house-church movement as explained in Chapter One.

suspiciously narcissistic”. Unlike Percy, whose exploration of Charismatic worship centres on North American middle-class congregations, I suggest that the emergence of a positive, visceral form of religion with therapeutic effect is to be welcomed in the Scottish cultural landscape. In *The Scot’s Crisis of Confidence* Carol Craig (2003) gives an insightful appraisal of the socio- psychological legacy of Scottish religious history. She writes “apart from football, guilt is still a national pastime” (Craig, 2003:183) and argues that it arises from the country’s religious history which leaves both Catholics and Protestants feeling guilty if they “catch themselves being happy” (Craig, 2003:184). Against this background, I suggest that a boost to self-esteem in the grace and love of God does not appear narcissistic; rather it appears to offer genuine hope. Stories such as those of GC and J.McK above seem to attest to this.

Concluding Summary

In this chapter I have highlighted the extensive imaginal process prevalent in the Charismatic *habitus*. I have linked that “persuasive force which lies in the power of the imagination” (Csordas, 1997:74) to the ritual matrix of two congregations in which this compelling mix has the potential to transform the worshippers’ orientation in the world.

In Chapters Six and Seven I argued that the two congregations deliberately meet in plain or secular spaces in order to underscore and bring into relief the sacred nature of their epiphanic rituals. I have also contended that Charismatic forms of embodied rituality in the congregations have cultivated a *habitus* in which the traditional subject-object differentiation has been collapsed. I now suggest that the redefining of revelation as immediate existential disclosure is also a deliberate reaction to the perceived sterility of forms of religion in which God is objectified and held at a distance, either through a reification of written Word and/or a separation of clergy from laity.

In the first place, I have shown that language, imagery, and experience are symbiotic within the Charismatic ritual matrix to effect revelation. I have suggested this is best understood as the phenomenological approach of *image-in-consciousness* or preferably in the more embodied sense of *image-in-feeling* in which the imagination also plays on feelings as part of the imaginal process. This approach does not contradict the Spirit-inspired understanding of the Divine-human encounter to which these congregations aspire, but rather it is a means of exploring the genuine human element in the encounter. In this I have suggested that an *experiential-expressive* model is helpful, which nevertheless is subsumed into a *cultural-linguistic* Charismatic *habitus* whose essential framework is theological.

Secondly I link this idea of revelation to a dominant theme amongst Charismatics; i.e., the love of God. Once again in the Charismatic/Neo-Pentecostal enterprise traditional views of God are given a

nuance of immediacy and intimacy. The enterprise of reconciling imagery, representation and *being-in-the-world* is resolved in the collapsing of the subject-object duality within the Charismatic ritual matrix through an imaginal embodied process in which the love of God takes on existential meaning and therapeutic efficiency.

Percy (1999:6) reminds us that this is not a new phenomenon, but that Christian spirituality has a “rich and indulgent history of erotic language in addressing God”. In this he follows Caroline Walker Bynum and Victor Turner who ascribe to symbols an “orectic” quality, that is to say they “have a sensory dimension wherein their power lies” whose “function is to provide liminality” (Percy, 1999: 6). I have argued in this chapter that although the Scottish congregations do not exhibit eroticism in the way Percy claims for their North American counterparts, there does remain the sense that embodied imagination amongst these Scottish Charismatics functions as a liminal process to usher the worshippers into the presence of God whose overwhelming characteristic is liberating love.

PART TWO: *Rituals That Live*

CHAPTER NINE Narrative & Ritual: *Public Stories, Private Meanings*

Introduction

In *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals*, Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley (1998: 25) suggest that since both narrative and ritual are “significant ways in which human beings make meaning, they are more than just complementary, their relationship is symbiotic”. Their robust analysis of the relationship of ritual to narrative deduces “It is difficult, if not impossible, to treat narrative adequately without ritual, even though they are distinct” (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 25). In this chapter an exploration of the relationship of *ritual* to *narrative* reaches into the heart of the *habitus* of the two congregations to discover how they “make sense of what they do” (Collins, 2004: 9).

Human beings are both storytellers and story ritualizers. They construct and enter into meaningful rituals on a regular basis, whether simple and individual, such as the sequence in which one gets dressed in a morning, or more complex, such as family meals or the communal solidarity of a sports team. For Anderson/Foley (1998: 27), ritual provides “time, space, symbols and bodily enactment for disclosing, entering and interpreting the many stories that comprise our individual and communal narration and gives shape and meaning to our lives”.

In Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, I argued that in the two congregations, music and somatisation function as gateways to Divine-human encounter within the matrix of the central ritual events, and concluded Chapter Eight by introducing the way in which the Divine story interrupts the human story in therapeutic fashion. In this chapter I return to the narrative quality of the congregations’ communal and individualised stories. I argue that the ritual field within the congregations also functions as a gateway to fulfil the human need to ritualise story within the Divine-human concurrence. In fieldwork interviews I became increasingly aware that the ritual matrix of the congregations was an enactment of either a communal story, or the ritualization of a personal narrative before God. This allowed the Divine to become co-author in life-stories, and for the rituals to craft a different narrative.

Public Ritual, Official and Communal Meanings

Following Margaret Mary Kelleher (1988), Anderson and Foley (1998) make helpful distinctions between *public* meaning, *official* meaning and *private* meaning within what are ostensibly public rituals. Public meaning in ritual is an interpretation shared by the majority of ritual participants and is also apparent to those observing the ritual from ‘the outside’. The *official* meaning is that given to the ritual by its originators. In this interpretation Anderson/Foley (1998: 29) claim the ritual mediates a “discernible story line”. For example, the major story line embedded in the symbolic rituals surrounding the inauguration of an American President or the crowning of a British Monarch is clear

to a world-wide audience who will nevertheless observe such events from the horizon of their own world views. The *official* and *public* meanings may only differ from each other by symbolic significance added by the public over the years; by ways in which the *official* meaning has become eroded over the same amount of time or by different horizons of interpretation. Naturally, public and official meanings of the ritual will be clearer to those more acquainted with its procedures and nuances, and may become clearer to the outside observer on scrutiny.

For Kelleher (1988: 6), every person engaged in public ritual has also a *personal* horizon of meaning which “can be understood as the limit or boundary of the world within which that person lives”. She suggests that the two poles of meaning, the public and the personal, nevertheless “condition each other” (Kelleher, 1988: 6), and are not fixed horizons but flexible boundaries (Kelleher, 1988: 6, 7). In this chapter I examine *communal* stories told in public rituals, and *private* stories in which the personal horizons of participants condition the stories they ritualise in the public arena. I later explore this latter phenomenon of storytelling, but focus initially on the *communal* stories ritualised by the two congregations.

Myth and Parable

It is helpful to consider the distinction Anderson/Foley (1998) make between *myth* and *parable* in understanding the different ways stories are fashioned. Anderson/Foley (1998: 12-16) follow John Dominic Crossan (1975) in suggesting that myth and parable define the limits of a story’s possibility, and that all narration can be understood as existing somewhere between these two opposite forms. In *The Dark Interval: Towards a Theology of Story* Crossan (1975) takes his cue from Claude Lévi-Strauss in defining the key understanding of myth as *reconciliation*. He stresses that myth is not necessarily a story that is untrue in its “popular usage as synonymous with sophisticated lying” (Crossan, 1975: 48), but is a story genre whose focus is that of mediation and reconciliation (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 13). For Anderson/Foley (1998: 13), myth “bridges the gap between apparent irreconcilable opposites” For example, classic fairy tales such as *Beauty and the Beast* present irreconcilable stances which become resolved in the end. Mythic narration is of the type in which we can be confident that ‘everything is going to be alright’. This understanding of myth differs significantly from Hopewell’s (1988): Crossan’s notion defines a genre of story in which opposites are reconciled, whereas for Hopewell (1988) the term myth appears in its classical sense as a fanciful untrue story which nonetheless bears helpful consonance for the congregations whose ethos he wishes to interpret.

Parable on the other hand is not about reconciliation but about *contradiction* (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 14). Crossan (1975: 55) explains that parable is about contrasts and opposites: “Parables are meant to change, not reassure us” (Crossan, 1975: 56). For this reason, parables are stories that are more

complex and tend to be avoided in favour of myth, because humans prefer to live in hope rather than contradiction, and parable is a genre more difficult to master (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 16, 17).

However, parable and myth are complementary forms of story necessary to human existence. Parable disallows us from living in a dream world. Parable challenges us to face up to the tensions and contradictions in life. By contrast, narratives which lose the mythic are without hope of reconciliation and ultimate peace (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 16). Myth allows us to hope for a ‘better tomorrow’ where seemingly impossible contradictions will be reconciled, and ‘everything will turn out for the best’: narratives that are out of touch with the parabolic trap humans in a dishonest and ultimately destructive dream.

Myth and Parable through Ritual

The narrative embedded in the ritual field of the two congregations, is best understood as weaving together the *mythic* and the *parabolic*.

I begin with the parabolic. For Crossan (1975: 57) as for Anderson/Foley (1998: 14), parable creates opposites and irreconcilability. Parable challenges complacent security (Crossan, 1975: 57). It is for that reason that “parable is often an unsettling experience” (Crossan, 1975: 14). Most significantly, parable allows room for vulnerability (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 14).

I return to the Parables employed in Chapter Five to further interpret the congregational character of the two congregations. If as argued they are authentic interpretations, one would expect that they not only contain the parabolic motifs noted by Crossan (1975) and Anderson/Foley (1998), but that these are also present in the *habitus* of the two congregations. Do the Parables contain unsettling opposites and images of irreconcilability? Do they allow room for vulnerability? And if they do, do these give further insight into the characteristics of the congregations? In particular, I ask if these motifs can be illustrated by the ethnography and its interpretation arising from the previous five chapters.

BCC: The Wise & Foolish Builders

This Parable immediately sets up opposites of *Wise* and *Foolish* builders, a motif carried throughout the story. The *wise* man builds his house on solid rock. The *foolish* builder builds his house on sand. The *wise* builder puts in the toil and struggle of digging deep; his concern is to build a future home that will be secure. The *foolish* man is lazy and builds on whatever he finds to hand. The house of the wise builder stands; the house of the foolish man falls.

In BCC there is a constant awareness that having come this far in building the church will fall into complacency and opt out of the struggle to ‘build on the solid ground’: their radical calling to live out the teachings of Christ. For BCC the continuing building process is both literal and prophetic, as explained and illustrated in Chapter Four. Although David Black had completed the building of the houses and offices of the Bishopbriggs complex by the early 1980s, it remained for KS to complete

the building of the main hall in 2005. In terms of the congregation's prophetic calling, I recall the words of DF the architect, recorded in Chapter Five, that the greatest danger to the young congregation was one of "being comfortable".

The parabolic genre also allows for *vulnerability* (Anderson/Foley1998: 14). In keeping with my schema of illustrating the parabolic nature of our congregations' habitus from the ethnography already described and analysed, I return to participant-observation of Chapter Six: 15th March 2009. There is a confession of weakness and vulnerability in the initial song being sung "strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord". The sense of desperation and vulnerability before God continues in the repeated chorus of the next song "And I'm desperate for you: And I'm lost without you". The desire to meet with God, which is at the heart of the *habitus*, is tempered by reticence in the doxological flow, and an awareness of the worshippers' inadequacy.

Further observation from the BCC service in March 2009 continues from the observational piece in Chapter Six. Following the 'worship' phase of the ritual matrix and its accompanying somatic expressions (Chapter Six), the preacher for the morning steps forward: IB, a woman in her mid-seventies, a founding Elder of BCC:

11.45am: The congregation, she explains, are following a course of studies in the book of Colossians. Her theme is "Rescue, Reconciliation & Redemption". She is the leader of the church's "mission to the city" and she illustrates her preaching with many examples of her theme from the people she ministers to. She explains that "salvation is not superficial". She explains that acceptance of the unlovely is a vital part of the gospel. She challenges the congregation not to remain in their 'comfort zone'. She calls for rededication to the gospel of reconciliation and redemption.

12.25pm: The congregation sing the final two songs. They are encouraged to respond to "what God has been saying" in the preaching. The congregation sing "This is the power of the cross". A woman dressed in white is dancing a spontaneous but more formalised dance at the front just below the platform of musicians.

The congregational leader thanks IB for her message and invites anyone needing prayer to gather at the front at the end of the service. The final song is sung.

The service ends. Many don't leave the hall but begin chatting in their seats, or stand quietly between the chairs in small groups. Small groups are in the front of the hall where some have hands laid on them in prayer. I notice a young man kneeling on the step of the platform at the front.

In parabolic fashion, the preaching is permeated with the unsettling opposites: rich and poor, the comfortable and the unlovely, and the challenge to the congregation to leave their comfort zones. The congregation are unsettled by the challenge. The rites of response follow the preaching: the order of events as interpreted in Chapter Seven. Small groups gather for prayer. A young man is kneeling at the platform. Presumably he also is responding to the challenge of living between the comfortable and the needy: tension, contradiction and vulnerability, marks of the parabolic.

BCF: Lost & Found Sheep

Opposites and unsettling contradictions are set up immediately in this narrative, giving an atmosphere of dark and light to the Parable: *one* lost sheep, which the shepherd goes after, and *many* sheep, left behind in the wilderness⁸⁹. Lost and found: anxiety and pain is followed by joy.

For Anderson/Foley (1998: 31), the parabolic genre is one that “admits the discordant and embraces the painful”. Discordant and painful scenes appear to play out during my visits to BCF and to illustrate this I revisit the participant-observation of Chapter Seven, 23rd May 2010:

It is a bright morning in May. I pass through the entrance foyer and reception desk into the Café area - a modern brightly lit room at one side of the Community Centre. I am laughingly told that I am just in time for a ‘roll & bacon’. The woman serving, whom I know to be one of the leaders of the church, gives me generous hug. It is about 10.30am and some folk are sitting at tables. A man in a wheelchair is at a table, with a woman on one side, and a couple of children aged 10 or 11 on the other side. I have already spent some time in this small inner-city community in the East End of Glasgow, and I note that some of the congregation bear many of the hallmarks in body and demeanour of their fellow citizens in this largely deprived area of Glasgow. Single mums with children mingle with a known asylum seeker, a Hungarian musician and a couple of Slovak construction workers. As I continue standing, more folk arrive and are offered bacon rolls and tea. They appear to relish their breakfast and eat hungrily. I ask if this happens every Sunday and I am told it happens as often as possible – not every Sunday, but once or twice a month. There is a lot of laughter. Children chatter noisily. Some people hug in greeting. In a corner of the room another of the female leaders is talking earnestly to a young girl who appears to be about 16. The girl is weeping and wiping her eyes with a tissue she has been handed.

Scrutiny of the above reveals the discord and pain within the gathering of single parents, asylum seeker, the hungry, the nervous, and the poor. In the midst of discord, a meal is being served. The meal at BCF is a celebration of life in the Kingdom: life in the midst of sorrow: further contradiction.

⁸⁹ Jeremias and Bailey (Jeremias 1963: 133; Bailey 1976: 149) comment on the unlikely scenario that a 1st Century middle-eastern shepherd would leave the 99 “in the wilderness”. This I argue is part of the art of the parabolic genre in which opposites are laid out starkly to boost its meaning, however impossible they seem.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep is also that of *vulnerability*: loss of livelihood and shame. Life in the BCF congregation is similarly vulnerable: poverty, ill health and loneliness. Even as they consume a hearty breakfast, there is a confessed need in those who have come to be fed. I sense vulnerability in the demeanour of the young woman who seems agitated and distraught; she allows AM to pray for her with a hand gently laid on her shoulder. The church leaders, the ‘shepherds’, are alive to the struggle of their ‘sheep’.

Conceding the Parable, Embracing the Myth

For Anderson/Foley (1998), parable and myth are complementary forms of story necessary to human existence; healthy congregational life is one that concedes the parabolic whilst at the same time embracing an overarching narrative with mythic consonance. To reiterate, an essential understanding of *myth* is not restricted to stories of ancient gods and goddesses (Anderson/Foley 1998: 13), nor is *myth* necessarily untrue. Rather the genre refers primarily to *mediation* and *reconciliation* out of apparently hopeless and contradictory situations (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 13). Crossan (1975: 51), following Levi Strauss, explains that “myth performs the specific task of mediating opposites”.

The Parables that interpret the two congregations (Chapter Five) not only contain Crossan’s parabolic genre, they also embrace the mythic:

- The house built on the rock proves the wisdom and skill of the wise man. The house on the rock remains standing despite storms and floods. Those in the house remain sheltered and secure.
- The sheep that wandered from the sheepfold is found. The shepherd rejoices and returns to the village with the good news, his shepherding skills vindicated. A celebratory party ensues and the whole village rejoices together: resolution is achieved out of an apparently hopeless situation.

I argue that the ritual matrix of the two congregations is essentially a means of storytelling in the context of the Divine-human encounter. The sacred story with mythic consonance, repeated and ritually affirmed weekly by members of the two congregations, is that God has chosen to co-author a redemptive and reconciliatory narrative for them in Christ. As noted in Chapter Eight, this is reinforced by constant reminders of the unconditional acceptance and love of God in Christ.

For Stephen Crites (1997), *story* shapes the life of a Christian congregation on three different tracks. Firstly there is the Divine story which is ‘out there’. In the gatherings of the two congregations this is presented in word, music and movement. Secondly there are the personal commonplace stories of the congregants, their lives and their demeanours. Thirdly, there is the narrative of the “temporal experience” as the two previous tracks intermingle (Crites, 1997: 81).

Chapters Six, Seven and Eight make clear the existential and participatory depth of the rituals in the two congregations, throughout which the Divine story is woven together with the human experience. As interpreted above, the ritual field of the congregations contains aspects of *parabolic* storytelling, which includes the discordant and the painful. Congregants are allowed, even encouraged, to admit discordant circumstances, to become open or “vulnerable” to another story of peace and strength, a crucial feature of the mythic genre (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 14).

I recall two pieces of observation recorded in Chapter Six, to illustrate storytelling which lives between the *parabolic* and the *mythic*: rites within the ritualistic field eventuate a different narrative through the Divine-human encounter.

BCC: 15th March 2009

Firstly, I return to the BCC gathering and recount the observation made when most of the congregation are seated and the initial songs have been sung:

The next song is projected. The lyrics resonance Isaiah: “Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord”; the music is entirely contemporary. The tempo is now rocking. The drumming seems louder than before.

A family of African origin (CB and family) consisting of a mother, an adult daughter and two younger children now come into the hall. Many hands are raised. Some are swaying gently to the music.

The leader returns to the front. He prays for God’s presence to be felt. Suddenly all is very quiet. Small children still run around at the back of the hall. Quietness continues for half a minute. The worship leader introduces the next song.

10.55am: The next song is projected

This is the air I breathe
This is the air I breathe
Your holy presence living in me

This is my daily bread
This is my daily bread
Your very word spoken to me
And I I’m desperate for you
And I I’m lost without you

This is the air I breathe
This is the air I breathe
Your holy presence living in me

And I’m desperate for you
And I’m lost without you.

Some small children are waving small flags at the front. The large pink flag is now being waved in a gentle flowing motion, over the congregation at the front. Still more people arrive and take their seats. The place is now quite full. Some people are swaying to the music. Lots of hands are raised. Mothers are holding young children at the back whilst singing and swaying.

The worship leader speaks. He says that he believes God has a specific word he wants to bring to everyone in the congregation. He encourages everyone to be listening out for God's voice. He then takes up the leadership of the same song. The music gets louder and is building to a crescendo. The congregation repeat the refrain to the last song "I'm lost without you".

The leader introduces the next song.

11.10am: The next song "Who is there like you?" is now being sung. A young couple in front of me seem lost in the singing and in each other. The congregation sing "lift up holy hands" and most hands are raised. Over on my left a woman in her 50's is dancing. In front of her CB is dancing vigorously. She picks up one of the flags arrayed at the front and begins to incorporate using this in her movements. The sound rises to a crescendo. The band is getting louder, as is the singing. The congregation are singing "your power at work in me is changing me".

11.35am: The children and youth leave the congregation. Another song is sung: "These are the days of Elijah". A smaller pink flag is unfurled and is now being waved vigorously. The young man in an electric wheelchair at the front is spinning his wheelchair around in a dance. Now and again he races around the hall whilst singing. A lady at the back is running up and down in flowing dance movements. The music again gets louder as the song progresses.

11.40am: The congregants remain standing and become quiet. In the stillness, the Community Pastor (GC) comes to the front and reads a poem about 'blossom and the Holy Spirit'. Another song entitled "Hear the call of the Kingdom" is sung. This song seems to invigorate the congregation, and the singing rises to a crescendo. The congregation then quietens; GC thanks 'God for his presence' and for 'touching our lives'.

The above includes several instances of Charismatic somatic ritualistic behaviour. Having already passed through the gathering-greeting rites, this behaviour includes 'loud singing', 'dancing' and/or 'swaying', 'raising of hands', 'flag waving' and 'extemporaneous prayer'. In a short period, the ritual field moves the congregation from the *parabolic* to the *mythic* in which contradictory situations become resolved.

The significance of the observation is clearer when for example, I focus on one of the worshippers. In this instance, interviews (stories told in private) become relevant to an understanding of stories ritualised in public. CB (asylum seeker/refugee from Sierra Leone) arrives in the congregation to the

song “This is the air I breathe, your holy presence living in me. And I’m desperate for you”. She becomes part of a congregational ritualization of the move from hopelessness and contradiction to the salvation and hope: from the song “I’m desperate for you” to frenetic dancing, loud music and poetry. In this way, CB and congregation live between the parabolic and the mythic, acknowledging the former and existentially embracing the latter.

Secondly, I recall an observation at *BCF: 30th May 2010*

The djembe player begins to play and leads into a song:

Draw me close to You
Never let me go
I lay it all down again
To hear You say that I’m Your friend
You are my desire
No one else will do
No one else can take Your place
To feel the warmth of Your embrace
Help me find my way
Bring me back to You

Chorus: Oh, Oh, Oh
You’re all I want, You’re all I’ve ever needed
You’re all I want , Help me know You are near

Three of the congregation rise to their feet and raise their hands. Everyone else sits. Some remain quiet and contemplative. A few more people join the congregation and sit at the back. It is now about **10.45am** and the chairs are mostly all filled. Hardship and struggle is etched in drawn faces and plain apparel. There is a quiet intensity about the congregation.

The song is repeated a few times. The musicians continue playing quietly. There is now an interlude: quiet humming which breaks into a ‘singing in tongues’. This is a beautiful chant-like sound that grows and diminishes. The song “Father God” is introduced:

Father God I wonder how I managed to exist
Without the knowledge of your parenthood
And your loving care
But now I am your child, I am adopted in your family
And can never be alone
For you are always there beside me

A few more people stand and hold up their hands, their eyes closed. One girl sways gently to the music. The song “Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord” begins. The singing gets louder, and one of the women to my right kneels on the hard floor, her hands still raised, her eyes closed. She stops singing, holds out her hands further in what seems to be imploring prayer, whispering softly and imperceptibly. After a while the singing draws down and Billy Queen moves onto the next part of the service.

In addition to the ostensibly Charismatic rituals common to both above congregations, the ‘raising of hands’ and ‘swaying to music’, the Bridgeton congregation break out into a Charismatic song, singing in *glossolalia*, as described in Chapter Six. The instances of *parabolic* storytelling appear more evident in the songs and somatic dispositions of Bridgeton than of Bishopbriggs. Nevertheless, the above observations reveal both congregations living and worshipping in the tension of the *parabolic* and the *mythic*, accepting the parabolic yet moving in ritual encounter with God towards the redemptive. As argued in Chapters Six and Seven, music and accompanying somatic movements act as a doorway to epiphanic experience. Sometimes the music is loud (BCC), sometimes it is quiet and emotive (BCF). Whatever the mood or language used, it is invariably accompanied by ‘swaying’, ‘dancing’, ‘standing and/or kneeling’, and ‘raising of hands’. The movements, in particular the ‘raising of hands’ would appear indicate an openness to the Divine, a movement from one story to another.

Different aspects of the ritual tell the same story. As if to emphasise the enigmatic hopelessness of the situation, the refrain “I’m lost without you” is sung again at BCC following an exhortation from the worship leader to “listen out for God’s voice”. At BCF the lyric “Draw me closer Lord” compels the woman to her knees in supplication. Her hands extended in silent prayer, her gestures reflect the hope of the congregation, for God to write his story into their stories of struggle and impossibility. Somatic gestures become part of the enacted story, telling of mythic consonance and existential eventfulness, in which the congregation’s faith narrative is strengthened by connection with that of the Divine.

Public Ritual, Private Meaning

Public rituals, such as those witnessed in the two congregations on a Sunday, also hold personal and idiosyncratic significance for individual participants. For Margaret Kelleher (1998: 6) “the public world of meaning must be distinguished from the meanings that are personally appropriated by members of the assembly”. Members of the two faith communities also appropriate the public rituals to interpret personal stories before God.

BCC

I return to the personal stories of the women who engage in ‘waving flags’ in the Bishopbriggs congregation as noted in Chapters Six and Seven. I revisit these, for together with the women’s very public ritual of ‘flag -waving’, they most readily typify the way in which public and communal activity is used to ritualise personal narrative. One of these women is CB, noted in observations in Chapter Six and again above. CB is from Sierra Leone. She arrived in the U.K. as an asylum seeker. After many years of struggle, she was granted citizenship. I asked CB what the church, and in particular her ‘flag waving’ meant to her:

Me: Do you receive support from your church?

CB: Yes...when I need prayer...I phone the people...or I just phone KS...they encourage me and say 'walk by faith'.

Me: Tell me, what do you get from waving flags?

CB: Ah...ah...how can I explain it? I wish I could express myself in my own language in prayer (in the church).....when I wave the flags it helps me to express myself.

Me: What is your own language?

CB: Creole. It is spoken in many West African countries..

Me: So then, you experience a certain freedom in waving flags?

CB: Oh Yes... let me tell to you why I am there...I do not go to an African church...an African church now...there is so much suspicion there..."oh she is an asylum seeker"(they say)...but at Bishopbriggs I do not have to look over my shoulder. They give you all manner of respect...love and support...mentally, emotionally, financially, you name it. I think that's why that church is still going. I can express myself and no one puts me down.

In subsequent observational visits to BCC, I noted that CB's performances were ritualising a personal drama not generally known to the assembled gathering. In this instance, public meaning can be distinguished "from the meanings that are personally appropriated by members of the assembly" (Kelleher, 1998:6). In successive observations, knowing CB's story, I watched as she arrived, and noted that both she and her children mingled with ease in the gathering-greeting rites of the congregation. I realised that these communal rites were vital for the love and support CB needed as a stranger, in a strange land. I watched as her family took their seats near the front of the congregation. I noticed the way in which she held her hands aloft in praise and quickly joined others in their flag-waving. I eventually understood that CB's public performances were enactments of private and family struggle (parabolic stories of pain and fear), as well as (mythic) stories of answered prayer and of acceptance in both human and Divine encounters. Dramatised in somatic gestures, CB was powerfully portraying in dance movement what she could not say in words using the English language.

The second story from BCC is that of VM, whose dancing-with-flags was noted in Chapter Seven's interpretation of ritual embodiment. For VM the public performance that takes place on a Sunday is re-enacted in a semi- public fashion on a weekday. Every Monday, before going to work, VM goes to a small hall in BCC where she plays a tape of music and waves flags in a solitary hour of prayer. I interviewed her on a Monday after having witnessed the lone ritual of her moving about the room gently waving one large flag, then two smaller ones. When asked what her solitary flag waving meant to her, VM described situations in her family life in some detail: caring for a sister with learning difficulties and a mother recently diagnosed with bone cancer. Of the ritual, she said:

I have lots of things to sort out...my family problems...this gives me time to sort a lot out in my mind...I pray for my family...I have a lot of sadness in my life...my

flags help me to focus and pray...when you are on your own God meets with you...this is a journey with God.

Public performance sometimes tells a personal story.

In BCF congregation, similar patterns of public ritual that hold idiosyncratic significance can be discerned and appreciated. The context of the following is the above observation, 30th May 2010. As the service draws to a close:

The song “Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord” begins. The singing gets louder, and one of the women to my right kneels on the hard floor, her hands still raised, her eyes closed. She stops singing, holds out her hands further in what seems to be imploring prayer, whispering softly and imperceptibly.

SD, the kneeling woman has two children who accompany her to the meetings. She had visited other larger Pentecostal congregations, but felt that “there were too many egos”. She felt comfortable and at ease in the BCF congregation. She said she came to BCF because she felt she “could be real”.

Me: How long have you been coming to this church?

SD: About a year and a half...I used to go to another church is Glesga’ (she names a church in Glasgow)it was much bigger...but there were too many egos...too many egos. In this church I can be real...I can be myself.

Me: Tell me more about yourself.

SD: Well, I’ve suffered from mental health problems...fearfulness... I think has to do with my anxieties. I feel accepted here, not just a number...they (the church) meet you where you are the noo.

Me: What do the meetings mean to you?

SD: Well, as I say, you can be yerself...you can express yerself...you can be real...in the meetings I pray for my family...especially my husband.

Me: Is there something wrong with him?

SD: Well...he’s an alcoholic...his legs are in a bad way...the doctors say he will die if he doesn’t stop drinkin’. I pray that he will come to know Jesus.

In SD a personal story was readily discerned. The detail of SD’s narrative, wrapped in habitual somatic gestures and noticed during several visits to BCF, was more fully appreciated following our conversation. Her supplicatory gestures conceded the parabolic yet embraced the mythic.

Concluding Remarks: Weaving Together the Divine-Human Narratives

In *System, Story, Performance*, David F. Ford (1997: 191,192ff) argues that there are three categories through which human and Christian identity can be conceived: “system”, “story” and “performance”. Ford suggests that within these three categories, “story” has a primacy, inclusive and “coherent with other modes” (Ford, 1997: 193), and is the thread that binds the other categories together. “Performance” he argues, “is the “thrust of present speech, action, suffering and thought” and is “at the cutting edge of history” (Ford, 1997: 202).

His understanding of “performance” is further subdivided into three categories; the first being “an active relationship with God most explicit in worship” (Ford 1997: 203). This dimension of the Charismatic house-church *habitus* has been explored within the ritual field of the two congregations in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. The second is “life together in Christian community” (Ford, 1997: 203). This aspect has been explored in the ethnography of previous chapters, and argued for in Chapter Seven. The third, “speech and action in witness” (Ford, 1997: 203), is addressed in Chapters Ten and Eleven.

In this chapter I have shown the way in which “performance”, understood as the ritual field of the two congregations – Ford’s first category of his subdivision – is symbiotically linked to “story”. Congregants generally use ritual “performance” as the dynamic in which to interpret story in communal rites in which there is shared narrative. The shared narrative is most commonly of a *parabolic* nature flowing into a more *mythic* consonance, in which God becomes co-author of communal hope and joy. The Parables of Jesus, used to interpret the congregations in Chapter Five, embody this continuum: from parabolic to mythic, from foolish to wise, from lost to found, from sorrow and struggle to rejoicing.

The ritual-narratives of the two faith communities also express individual stories. Congregants use communal ritual to enact personal stories as a means of prayer: i.e. “performance” before God. Although communal aspects of rites appear similar in the two congregations, I suggest that they express different meanings, since personal narratives differ from individual to individual. Rituals, which at first sight look similar, may nevertheless tell different stories. I noted in Chapter Six and Seven that the ‘praise’ at BCC appears more exuberant than at BCF. At BCC there is ‘frenzied dancing’ and/or ‘formal dancing’. This is absent in BCF, where dancing appears restrained and is often reduced to ‘gentle swaying’. As noted in both this and previous chapters, the gesture of ‘raising hands’ seen in both congregations, might more often be an expression of ‘praise’ at BCC but is more likely to indicate supplication at BCF. For Ford (1997:203) “performance” is a “hot” concept pointing to a “concentration and coherence of relationships” in a “journey of intensification”. The embodied

rituals explored in Chapters Six and Seven, identify a journey in which Christian identity is intensified and consolidated both individually and communally.

For Anderson/Foley (1998: 42), public worship – the Divine-human encounter – is an indispensable way for “believers to exercise and acquire faith” thereby “enabling believers to engage with God in the active co-authorship of their life stories”. They argue for public worship as a critical exercise in meaning-making for Christian believers, which nevertheless often fails and appears irrelevant because it is “inattentive to the human story” (Anderson/Foley, 1998: 42). They maintain that Christian public worship is only meaningful to the extent that it allows the integration of human with Divine narratives. Together with global studies on the Charismatic rituals - California (Albrecht, 1999), Charismatic Catholicism (Csordas, 1997, 2001) and Sweden (Coleman, 2007) - the ethnography of the two Glasgow congregations suggests that the Charismatic ritual field has developed a number of standardised rites. These may contain similar human elements although the ritualised stories will differ considerably, depending on geographical, cultural and socio-economic contexts. This is apparent in the given ethnographies, where a man ‘raising his hands’ in BCC is ritualising a different story to the asylum seeker in the same congregation, or the Hungarian worshipper in BCF, all of whom perform similar somatic movements. In the same way, a woman ‘dancing’ at BCC will be enacting a different story to the women ‘swaying’ or ‘kneeling’ in the BCF congregation. Furthermore, we can speculate, if only to conform to stereotype, that Scottish women will be ritualising a different narrative to the women who dance in the Californian congregations, who according to Albrecht appear to maintain an altogether sunnier disposition (Albrecht, 1999:148).

Anderson and Foley’s robust linkage of the need for ritual to the human story; and their reasoning that Christian worship fails to ritualise communal and personal narratives “at its own peril” (Anderson/Foley, 1999: 42), may give further insight into the possibility that Charismatic congregations continually emerge, particularly within the Protestant/Evangelical constituency, for reasons other than the simple ‘Charismatic’ experience. Are people drawn in the first instance to something beyond the label ‘Charismatic’ to flexibility of ritualistic modes which allow for communal and personal stories to be expressed and interpreted? The adoption by some Protestants of somatisation and semiotics, in contrast to the passivity of individual listening to words, has become a reoccurring motif in this thesis, and is further explored in Part Three. For the moment, I suggest that the ritualising of story in the two Scottish congregations creates opportunities in which God co-authors a new story or a different life narrative, as has been noted above in the lives of CB, VM and SD.

PART TWO: *Rituals That Live*

CHAPTER TEN *Mission: Doxology, Congregational Culture and Boundaries of Story Telling*

Introduction

The ethnography I now consider is a progression from that of the previous six chapters and their interpretation of the *habitus* of the two Charismatic congregations. Chapter Five interpreted the ethos of the two congregations by the use of the Parables of Jesus, which had significant resonance for the faith communities and their stories. Chapter Six argued that the ritual fields of the two congregations functions as a catalyst for a Divine-human encounter, creating sacred space from secular space. In Chapter Seven bodily movement takes on a different nuance as it characterizes the somatic gestures contained in the ritual field. In the same chapter I also contended that the ritual matrix functions to overcome spatial fragmentation through somatic gestures including hugs, ‘laying on of hands’, ‘huddling’ and expressions of solidarity such as laughing or weeping together. As a result, the Divine-human web, woven together with the human-to-human encounters in the ritual matrix, is carried into the everyday.

Chapter Eight builds on the multi-layered ritual matrix noted in the previous two chapters - the notion of an imaginal process that weaves its revelatory efficacy within the Charismatic *habitus*- where revelation for these Christians is an existential immediacy relevant to everyday life, in particular bearing a resonance of the love of God. In these chapters, I detect the emergence of a common theme: the permeability of boundaries between ritual events and everyday life.

In Chapter Nine the notion of permeable boundaries is strengthened by the arguments that narrative – both corporate and personal – is enacted within the ritual field of the two congregations and I argue that the ritual field (embodied and revelatory) facilitates the weaving of the human with the Divine stories. I now add the notion that identity, corporate and individual - forged by story and ritual – further blurs the sacred/secular distinction and allows the congregants’ *habitus* to become missional in character. The sacred overruns into workaday lives and weekday activities. Chapter Nine concludes with David Ford’s triumvirate of categories that he contends are formative of Christian communal identity, i.e. system, story and performance (Ford, 1997: 191,192ff). I noted that for Ford the notion of “performance” embraces three formative aspects of church life: “witness in speech and action”, “worship” and “community” (1997: 202, 203). To follow Csordas (2001:68), the creation of meaning is a symbiotic relationship of ritual and the performance of life in which meaningfulness translates from ritual to “life beyond the (ritual) events themselves” (Brackets mine).

The ethnography in this chapter turns from the central Sunday ritual field to weekday evenings in which members of the congregations are engaged in activities inclusive of their wider communities. We witness members of the congregations as they bring their spirituality to bear upon activities that they consider “witness in speech and action” (Ford, 1997: 203). The ethnographic analysis will be augmented by further parabolic interpretation with reference to the Parables of Jesus and their consonance for the congregations, as initiated in Chapter Five. I begin with an observation from BCC.

The Youth Café: BCC

In Chapter Four, I note that in the original construction of the BCC complex rooms were built along the side of the Centre which were designated ‘café area’, designed to catch passing interest from pedestrians who walk from houses beyond the complex to the supermarket, recently built close to the Centre. Initially the café was well received and used by local people and members of the congregation, but for several reasons, the usefulness of the space as a general café ended after a few years.

The arrival of KS as Pastor in 1992 heralded a renewed vision to use the building for mission. As noted in Chapter Four, contact with mothers with young children and with the elderly was initiated under the previous leadership of David Black. KS revitalized these missional aspects, beginning with an agreement with the adjacent supermarket for BCC’s premises to become the official crèche for the store, staffed by members of the BCC congregation. This greatly increased the contact the church had with the local community and allowed for funds to flow from the supermarket into the church to support its outreach programme. As noted in Chapter Three, the building of the sanctuary space was completed during KS’s tenure, enabling activities such as the lunches for the elderly to continue in the older section of the building.

At this time, it became apparent that the park next to the BCC complex had become a gathering place for many of the local youth, and younger members of the congregation began to socialise with these young people. Good relationships were established, and the vision for a more suitable and permanent safe environment for young people was imagined. During this time a Youth Pastor (JD) was appointed and mandated to develop a youth outreach programme. The former café area was renovated; large comfortable seating was installed, together with state-of-the art electronic games equipment. The kitchen was refurbished, and a team of volunteers led by young adults in the congregation was gathered. Very soon, the Youth Café - open at weekends so as not to disrupt school/family life on weekdays; open immediately after school from 4-9pm, the times the youth had been gathering in the park - was attracting over 100 members, the majority from lower years of secondary schooling. In February 2010, when I first visited the Café, the church had secured enough

funding to employ a young woman (LH) to oversee the work of this particular outreach programme. An observation of the Youth Café follows:

Youth Café, Bishopbriggs: Friday 15th February 2013

4.15pm: I arrive at the Bishopbriggs Centre and enter by the glass doors at the front of the older part of the complex. I turn into a small corridor on my right. I ask for LH, the leader of the youth work at BCC. I am told that she is upstairs preparing for a youth event later in the week. A number of young adults in their late teens and early twenties are busy moving chairs, organizing the games consoles and working in the kitchen which is to the right looking onto the Café area. The Café area itself is an elongated room, furnished with several comfortable looking leather settees, several tables and chairs, and a small counter on which paper plates, cups and cutlery are being set. There are two large television screens in the space and a games console with large screen on a far wall, which I am told is for playing 'Nintendo Wii'. I speak to members of the volunteer team, some of whom I recognise from my observations on a Sunday. I ask them how long they have been helping at the Café, what their motivation is and if they attend meetings on a Sunday. I ask them to fill out a brief questionnaire on their involvement at the Café, which they appear happy to do.

5.15pm: The doors open and LH comes downstairs to join the team.

5.30pm: Two young girls come in and start playing 'football' on the games console.

5.45pm: A few more young people arrive. Chips, pizza and burgers are being served from the counter.

6.00pm: The place is filling up slowly. One of the helpers circulates with a clipboard checking on names. I speak to one of the young adult helpers, and ask him about his involvement with the Café. He has been coming since he was 14 he says; he is now 18. I asked him what the attraction was. He replied "this is a place people listen to you". Four much younger looking girls arrive. I speculate they are in late primary or early secondary school. They go to the counter and order some drinks.

6.15pm: Five girls arrive together and give their names to helpers at the counter, where the young man with his clipboard checks them off. Two of them go over to play guitar on the Wii console. The others order toasties and Panini's. "Is this their evening meal?" I ask one of the helpers, and she says that for some it is their main evening meal, and their parents count on them being fed at the Café.

6.30pm: Six boys arrive and go over to the games console. One of the female helpers engages them in conversation and checks them off on the names list. The place is getting very busy. Every seat is now taken, but more young people arrive and join their friends.

I go into the corridor where LH is seated. She is in conversation with two girls. When I get the opportunity I ask her what she feels the benefits of the Café are. She replies, "Friendship,

affirmation, and many of the young people come here after school because their parents work until 6.00pm and consider the Café a safe place”.

6.45pm: LH excuses herself from our conversation and greets another young girl at the door. I return to the Café area. More young people are eating. I speak with DH who oversees the kitchen. She came into the Bishopbriggs congregation through an *Alpha* course at the Centre. She is now involved in a focus group run by the church to support her in her Christian life. She loves what she does at the Café, and feels it “is so worthwhile”. She loves chatting to the young people and getting to know them. She says many of the youngsters appear able to share confidentialities with the team which they might not feel free to do at home or even with their friends.

In my visit I was concerned to observe at first hand the operation of the Youth Café and the missional efforts of BCC in this regard. However, my interest lay primarily in what motivated and inspired the team of youthful staff and helpers. In particular, I wanted to learn if and how the Charismatic ritual field I that had been observing had shaped their commitment to the Youth Café.

My conversations with the five volunteer helpers in the hour before the Café opened, and their responses to the brief questionnaire I gave them, revealed a wide variety in their commitment to the Christian faith and to BCC, although the concern that the Café be a ‘safe place’ was a common theme among all the respondents (see Appendix 6.pg.202). Three of the team had BCC affiliation, and the faith borne from this connection influenced their part in the Youth Café. One of the volunteers appeared non-committal, and yet another made it clear that he had no commitment to faith or BCC (Appendix 6 pg.202, respondents 4 & 5). The respondents did not include LH or PH, the overall leaders of the team, or DH of the kitchen staff whose story is noted in the above observation. Although not all the young volunteers were of BCC persuasion, it became obvious from my conversations that LH and her team had created a culture of safety and affirmation. This bore a distinct affinity to the ethos of affirming mutuality I had witnessed at the Sunday morning gatherings.

Hoping for further insight to my Café observation, I interviewed LH on a week day in her small office in the same building. The interview is reproduced without grammatical editing or correction.

Me: Tell me a little about yourself.

LH: Our family were part of the original families who lived in the house where the church started.

Me: Oh, I think that was called the Bishop’s house?

LH: Yes, but I don’t have many memories from they days. Anyway when I was about 5 or 6 my mum and dad had separated and my father moved to England. My brother and I moved with him. But then he started to drink a lot...he found it quite hard... and became abusive, so we moved back up here and stayed with my Gran for a while...but moved around a lot...too

many houses to remember. When I got to high school I started smoking cannabis. I left school as soon as I could. I left home when I was 16 because I was so badly behaved...and I moved onto things like cocaine...things were getting that way, was very depressed and thought of taking my own life... I was using it quite a lot ...didn't know any different...it was just what everyone else was doing...This went on for about five years. Then my brother P started going to the Baptist Church, and I went to see him getting baptised. I cried like a baby all the way through, although I didn't know why.

Me: How long ago was this?

LH: About 5 years ago now. Then my mum was invited to the opening of the new building and started to come along here to church. For about a year I was still doing the same as I had always been doing with drugs. I was coming along to an *Alpha* course. Felt I should cut ties with my past. This is why I fell in love with *Alpha* ...and still help out in it here in the church. When I was baptised things in my past seemed to fall away from me...I stopped doing drugs...don't get me wrong, there have been shaky moments when I feel like going back.

Me: Were you baptised here at this church?

LH: Yes, after I was baptised started a course with DNA (a Christian leadership course) which changed my life... so much baggage from my past...to get rid of...it was then I got involved in youth work...God just broke my heart for young people...to think that they are going through what I had went through...but I love it.

Me: Yes, I can see that. I hear you're at ICC just now? Are you taking youth work qualifications?

LH: Yes, that was a surprise...because I was never good at school...it's a four year degree course...only recently has it went professional. Finding it very hard...but really helpful...but am doing well...and feeling really good about myself!

I asked LH how much her Christian witness in her work with the young people is dependent on her church life. She was adamant that her calling was to all the youngsters who attended the Youth Café; being particularly called to offer “friendship and affirmation”. Her own story made her aware that her mission for Christ was much broader than simple proselytising, and included acts of kindness and friendship, the same quality of care and love she had received in her own life. Later in the interview I asked if the worship at Bishopbriggs played a role in this. Apart from the morning gatherings, from which she was absent at times because of her involvement with the church youth, she replied that she attended the evening services which were smaller and often included lengthy sessions of “soaking in the Spirit”⁹⁰. Later again in the interview she said of this evening ritual event, “I get renewed...it's a

⁹⁰ Sometimes called ‘resting in the Spirit’ this is a particularly Charismatic ritual which involves lying on the carpeted floor either on one’s back or on one’s front. See Csordas 2001 (49, 60, 72 etc.) who makes several references to this within Catholic Charismatic circles and describes it as “falling in a sacred swoon” (Csordas,

good space...it's more relaxing...it's all about me and God...also I can express myself, because people know my background and when I'm struggling, and I get them to pray for me".

The capacity of Charismatic rituals to transform is attested to by Csordas (2001) and Albrecht (1999) in their North American contexts⁹¹. For my part, the claim for such a capacity in the Scottish urban context is predicated on the analysis in previous chapters, of the ritual field of the Scottish congregations. The issue at stake is the enterprise of reconciling ritual and praxis: i.e. the symbiosis I have claimed exists between the ritual field and the behaviour-as-witness of the congregants. For Csordas (1997: 64), ritual performance has the capacity to reconstitute the self, and Charismatic ritual performance in particular transforms "conventional dispositions that constitute interpersonal and geographic spaces". David F. Ford (1997:203) gives a more theological assessment of this symbiotic relationship in linking the motivation for "speech and action in witness" to the dynamic of an "active relationship with God most explicit in worship".

From my perspective, this symbiosis is substantiated by the observed ethnography of such as the BCC Youth Café in which the behaviour-as-witness of LH and her team testifies to the transformative effect of the ritual field in which she/they take part. A close reading of the interview with LH bears this out.

Wise Builders

Matthew's Parable of the Wise Builder that I have associated with BCC comes at the close of the commonly titled 'Sermon on the Mount'. His understanding of the injunctions to love (the enemy), to be peacemakers, and to 'go the second mile' are the teachings that constitute the wisdom of the Wise Builder. It does not take a great leap of imagination to appreciate that cultural models engendered in the faith community can be taken on in a social setting where the primary aim is not to proselytise but primarily to provide somewhere that "young people can come and relax and have fun in a safe place" (APPENDIX 6 pg. 166). According to Jesus in Matthew, his disciples thereby become "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13, 14).

The Women's Group: BCF

The story of BCF is told in Chapter Four. In my description of Bridgeton I make mention of the *Open Door* shop front that is the presence of BCF on the central High Street. Shortly after the congregation had begun meeting in the new community centre they began to think of ways to become accessible in a more overt way: the project to turn one of the empty premises in the main shopping precinct into a

2001: 278). See also Albrecht (1999: 148) where his Californian Charismatics "fall under the power". This ritual is intended to be a further impartation of the Holy Spirit.

⁹¹ See Csordas, 2001:63-74; Albrecht, 1999: esp.149

meeting place began, and was completed in 2009. I was aware that a use of the premises was as a Wednesday evening women's group, led by CA, an elder in the congregation. With some trepidation I asked CA if I could attend one of the meetings, and after consultation with the women, permission was granted.

Bridgeton: Wednesday 20th April 2011

I arrive at Bridgeton early because I want to be at the place before the women arrive. On my approach to Bridgeton I pass Glasgow Green. I park in a small car park with broken paving stones and make my way to a premises situated a row of shops - some boarded up - beneath tenement houses. OPEN DOOR is painted in large bold-coloured lettering above the front door. Beneath is written 'A Place to be Yourself'. I go in and am greeted by CA, a slim young woman with broad smile, infectious laugh and seemingly brimming with energy. In the entrance hall is a small counter and further into the room are comfortable worn-looking sofas, chairs and a low table. On a wall is a colourful collage of fabric and paper in which the name of the BCC congregation is just about visible. To the side there is a small kitchen where another woman is standing; she offers me a cup of coffee. Biscuits are offered on a plate, and I take one. I sit on a chair in the corner and remind CA that I "only want to observe". What was I letting myself in for? The women arrive singly and in pairs, and are offered tea or coffee. Soon ten women are seated in a circle. I explain why I have come thank them for allowing me into their gathering. I recognise a few of them from the Sunday meeting, but most of them a new to me. Soon they are chatting noisily, and forget I am there.

I'm not sure what to expect. CA has told me that every week something different happens. She arrays a collection of tea lights on the low table in front of us. A long tapered candle stands in the middle. She lights the tall candle with a match, switches on a small music-player from which comes some soft music, and then switches the main lights off. At this point I find myself wondering how these inner-city women will react to this unusual ritual. They don't appear disturbed. CA reads from Psalm 18:27-28 by the light of the tall candle and a small torch she has brought for this purpose: "You save the humble, but bring low those who are haughty. You Lord keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light". She invites each of the women to meditate on these verses and in their own time to light one of the tea lights as a prayer that God would turn their darkness to light ,whatever that 'darkness' might be. One by one the women rise from sitting to light one of the tea lights from the tall candle. The music continues to play softly. Soon the whole table is bright with burning candles. CA invites the women to pray aloud if they wish. I am forgotten. One-by-one they pray for the situations they face. CA prays for a situation she knows of regarding one of the women. It becomes apparent that about half of the group are not members of the church, although they come regularly to these gatherings. One of them begins to weep quietly and wipes her eyes

with tissues supplied on the table. CA and AMcG, and others I know to be in BCF get up and gently lay hands on the shoulders or the backs of the women. I observe that one or two of the group are quietly and almost inaudibly praying in tongues. I sense I am intruding in some very personal struggles, and more cathartic moments would transpire were I to leave. I slip out at about 8.30pm.

I came away from *Open Door* with a feeling that something deeply significant has just taken place amongst the women. I walk to my car and look across to the Fish & Chip shop where I had intended to buy some food for my supper. A woman with fading peroxide-blond hair was shouting up at the window of the tenement first floor next to the chip shop, “De ye want curry wi’ yer chips?” “Aye” a woman’s voice shouts back. I go into the chip shop where the woman is giving her order, “Wan chips an’ curry and wan fish supper, an’ gie us a pickl’ed onion wi’ that”. The Italian proprietor smiles from behind the counter as he makes up her order. It was obvious she was a regular customer. He then asks for her money and says “No charge for the pickled onion”. I give my order and smile to myself as I leave the shop. The scenes I have witnessed both inside and outside the *Open Door* speak volumes of the struggles and the humour of inner-city life.

The event at *Open Door* is a powerful example of the ritualization of personal stories. Undoubtedly, similar enacted dramas can be witnessed in secular settings for cathartic purposes. Nevertheless, my interest lies in the way in which the ritualization of stories in BCF, as described in the previous chapter, is now reflected in a missional situation outside of the central meeting on a Sunday morning. The issue is the enterprise of reconciling ritual and praxis, worship and performance, the sacred and everyday living. Further analysis of the observed evening in Bridgeton will make this clearer. The candle lighting ritual is one that invites several layers of interpretation.

In the first place the women are simply encouraged to light candles, a commonplace occurrence in many homes, even the poorest. Secondly, the lighting of candles is symbolic, an act which would be understood by all, whether Christian or not, Catholic or Protestant, members of BCF or not. Thirdly, the ‘sacred’ becomes significant as the women are asked bring their stories as prayers before God. They are not being invited to ‘leave their troubles at the door’ and enter a realm of ‘mystical forgetfulness’ for an hour or two so that they can feel better afterwards. Rather, they are encouraged in the ritual of communal candle lighting to allow personal stories to be enacted before God, whom, they have been assured in the Bible reading, “saves the humble, and brings low the haughty”. The ritual process has now become all-inclusive: women who are not regular members of BCF are enfolded into the proceedings. Finally, the Charismatic rituals of BCF assume relevance as CA and AM, with of the other members of BCC move around the room and gently ‘lay hands’ on some of the women most obviously in need of supportive prayer. Some of the women also pray in a whisper ‘in

tongues', a practice I supposed to be familiar to, and accepted by everyone present. It seems apparent that the overall ritual matrix of the evening holds the capacity for the participants to author a different life. They allow space and time for God to become co-author in their life stories.

Shepherds and Lost Sheep

The Parable of the Lost Sheep to which I have compared BCF is once more a useful interpretative tool. I had attended the women's group with preconceived ideas of what the evening might consist of. I had expected a time of relaxed chat over cups of tea or coffee and home-baking, an evening in which I would be a casual non-participatory observer. I was greatly surprised by the intensity of story-telling and the expected Divine-human encounter evident in the group. The spirit of affirmation and solidarity evident at a Sunday morning gathering was also manifest in this women's group. That itself was not surprising given the leadership of CA and others from BCF. However, what was surprising was the way in which all the women were accepting of the sacred as well as the symbolic and commonplace act of lighting candles. As the evening moved on, it became obvious that pastoral skills honed within the central ritual matrix of BCF were evident as CA and others sensitively acted to come alongside them.

Concluding Remarks: Permeable Boundaries and Congregational Mission

It is helpful to begin the evaluation for mission of permeable boundaries by contrasting the ethnography of the two congregations with that of another Scottish ethnographic study undertaken by Al Dowie (2002). In *Interpreting Culture in a Scottish Congregation*, Dowie's (2002) analysis serves as a useful foil to the consideration of permeable boundaries claimed for the Scottish house-church congregations in this study. These concluding remarks are not an intended derogation in any way of other denominational traditions.

Dowie interprets the congregational culture of Riverstane (fictitious name) – an historical and auspicious Edinburgh church – with reference to use of Christian symbols (Dowie, 2002: 140), liturgical colours for seasons of the Christian calendar (Dowie, 2002: 140), architecture (Dowie, 2002: 141ff) and traditional worship services (Dowie, 2002: 144f). His seeming frustration with Riverstane is that their symbolic boundaries strike a note of dissonance at the interface “between insiders and outsiders” (Dowie, 2002: 191) which by definition is the context for mission.

All congregations and communities have boundaries (Dowie, 2002: 190). Boundaries are “intrinsic to sustaining a collective sense of self” (Dowie, 2002: 190). However, the nature of those boundaries he suggests either *ghettoises* a community or allows it to be *accessible*, thus allowing the wider population to benefit from its strengths and insights. For Dowie (2002: 205) “The issue is not whether or not boundaries exist, but rather how the congregants interact with others across the inevitable symbolic boundaries, whether it be the insiders who are socially partitioned from each other, or their

posture towards the outsiders who do not belong to the congregation”. Boundaries can either close a community in on itself, or allow the community to be an influence for good.

The capacity of boundaries to be permeable or not is predicated, I suggest, on the nature of the symbolic rituals that form those boundaries. Following Dowie’s (2002) logic, I suggest that it is the posture of members of a community that determines the character of the boundaries - open or closed - and this is predetermined by whether or not the rituals are affirmative, life enhancing, and story-telling. Boundaries which identify a religious community through “tradition and status” (Dowie, 2002: 185), architecture and buildings (Dowie, 2002: 186,187) and self-importance (Dowie, 2002: 189) have the dual effect of “social segmentation” within the community (Dowie, 2002: 186) and of alienating “outsiders” (Dowie, 2002: 189, 191). Dowie further reinforces his argument by references to Tom Allan (1984), Georges Michonneau (1949), and John Harvey (1987), who similarly and in various contexts, point out that “in the very manner, style, and content of its being, it (the church) seems to keep on erecting and confirming more barriers than it can break down” (Harvey, 1987: 72. Brackets mine). I add Bill Christman (1978), who in *The Christman File*, an insightful review of his Graigmillar, Edinburgh parish in the 1960s, makes similar observations when complaining that the failure of his church to attract outsiders (nominal members of his parish) is that of the faithful worshippers considering the church as “their personal preserve” (Christman, 1978: 36).

Assuming that a congregation has a concern and vision for *Missio Dei*, I call attention to the observation that the “form and function of congregational boundaries” (Dowie, 2002: 195) are of strategic importance when considering missional impact. Rising from non-aligned Evangelical roots, the Charismatic house-church movement is predisposed to a missiology that emphasises propositional address and puts evangelism i.e. propositional proclamation, high on its agenda.⁹² The above ethnography indicates that elements of the current house-church movement understand the significance of permeable boundaries for *Missio Dei*: involving the whole of life, springing from active worship, maintaining affirming relationships, and fostering obedience to the teachings of Christ. I examine this theology of mission further in Chapter Eleven.

⁹²As explained in Chapter One, house-church congregations have their roots in Protestant Evangelicalism from bodies such as the Christian Brethren and classic Pentecostalism (See Walker 1988: 226-265), for whom ‘preaching the gospel’ was a fundamental tenant. This is exemplified in the ready acceptance by these movements of the preaching of Billy Graham, popular in the 1950s, and the current ‘Vision and Values’ of the University and Colleges Christian Fellowship (previously Inter Varsity Fellowship) – the latter is accessed at www.uccf.org.uk/our-vision-and-values.

PART TWO: *Rituals That Live*

CHAPTER ELEVEN Communities of Character: *Congregational Boundaries & Mission in Context*

Introduction

As congregational and Biblical narratives correspond in symbiotic storytelling, and are played out in the active worship and intra-relatedness of the congregation, the synergy is a powerful force in the *Missio Dei* as undertaken by the church. Such thinking is current amongst a range of scholars and missiologists from a wide variety of churchmanship, including Lesslie Newbigin (1955, 1991), Stanley Hauerwas (1981, 1983, and 1989), George Lindbeck (2002), Michael Northcott (1989, 1990-1991) and David Bosch (1991). Chapter Eleven encompasses two paths of reflection and argument, which relate and interweave. In the first instance, further theological/missiological reflection is presented on the ethnographic account given in the previous five chapters, Chapter Ten in particular, reflecting in a divergent rather than convergent mode. This is a good basis for the second path, where reflection is brought to bear on a missiological interpretation of the *habitus* of the two congregations, by revisiting the wider communities of Bishopbriggs and Bridgeton.

As noted in Chapter Ten, Al Dowie's study on Riverstane (2002) acts as a helpful foil to the above notion in demonstrating that congregational culture can set up such boundaries as to actively run counter to the possibilities of congregational mission. For Al Dowie, the congregation in question appears to be at such great odds with his vision of Christian mission as *philoxenia*, hospitality to the stranger (Dowie, 2002: 200-209), that he apologises for appearing to foreground his own interpretation and understanding of the *Missio Dei* over against that of the congregants (Dowie, 2002: 184). In contrast to this, the ritual matrix of the two congregations in this study forms permeable boundaries for their *habitus*, allowing their identities to become effective in their wider communities.

Congregational Culture and the Mission Dei: Theological Reflections

I now explore further theological/missiological reflection on the ethnography and theological interpretation presented in previous chapters, bearing in mind the missional aspect of the two congregations presented in Chapter Ten. The following scholars, noted above, argue persuasively that a church congregation becomes a sign of the Kingdom of God, when by its worship, lifestyle and intra-relatedness it attests to the *Missio Dei*.

Lesslie Newbigin

Lesslie Newbigin is acclaimed as a theologian, a "missionary statesman" (Guder 1998: 3) and is accredited with prompting the *missional church* concept; a notion which has become a popular motivational apophthegm among Charismatic and other Evangelical groups since the beginning of the

21st Century. In *Missional Church: a Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, Darrell L. Guder (1998:3), a founding father of the missional church movement, states that he and others were influenced by a monograph written by Lesslie Newbigin in 1983, *The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches*.⁹³ He claims that the monograph grew out of ‘Gospel and Culture’ discussions taking place in the U.K. whose critical questions and ideas then emigrated to the U.S.A., to forums with similar agendas as held in Britain (Guder, 1998:3). Guder (1998:3) states, “We share the conviction of a growing consensus... that the problem is much more deeply rooted ...and has to do with who we are and what we are for”.

Writing about the nature of the church some years before the Charismatic Movement took root in the U.K., Newbigin began to address his concerns under the title of *The Household of God: Lectures on the Nature of the Church* (Newbigin 1955) in a series of lectures given in November 1952 at Trinity College, Glasgow. Challenging the notion of the ‘invisible Church’, Newbigin (1955: 54) reaffirmed the Church as a “visible community”, in which an understanding of ‘the body of Christ’ is more than an abstract or ‘spiritual’ (invisible) notion, rather it is “the actual visible life of the Christian fellowship in the world” (1955:71). In his lecture ‘The Community of the Holy Spirit’, he emphasises the essential work of the Holy Spirit in galvanising the ‘Body of Christ’ for witness, and calls upon his listeners/readers to give proper consideration to the “Pentecostal angle” (Newbigin 1955: 88,94). In 1952, Newbigin was already equating the incarnate nature of the church with her ability to witness, saying, “In the Church message and being ought ever to be one” (Newbigin 1955: 95) He is highly critical of the Pentecostal streams that created factions and treated the ecumenical movement with contempt (1955:104). However, he was writing before the ecumenical thrust of the Charismatic Movement proper was being realised in the U.K. as noted in Chapter One. As noted in Chapter Four, the congregation at BCC understood the significance of working together with other churches and took the lead in ecumenical bridge-building in the locality.

In his seminal work *The Gospel In A Pluralist Society*, Newbigin (1991) considers the problem of Christian witness lay in the need to present the gospel in a society which has “pluralism as its reigning ideology” without resorting to the past autocracy of Christendom or to viewing Christian discipleship as a purely domestic “religious affair”. The issue for Newbigin is the incredibility of a message in which “the last word in human affairs is represented by a man hanging on a cross” (Newbigin, 1991: 227). His answer to this dilemma lies in the dynamic of the believing congregation (Newbigin, 1991: 227):

I am suggesting that the only answer, the only hermeneutic of the gospel, is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.

⁹³ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches*, published originally by the British Council of Churches for a yearlong discussion programme in the U.K. Reissued by the World Council of Churches in Geneva, 1984, and disseminated in the USA by the National Council of Churches of Christ in New York (Guder 1998:3).

Newbigin suggests that such a community should be marked by certain significant characteristics. In the first instance, it should be a “community of praise” (Newbigin, 1991: 227), which includes thanksgiving (Newbigin, 1991: 228). This is to counteract the “hermeneutic of suspicion” prevalent in modern/post-modern society. Secondly, it should be a “community of truth” (Newbigin, 1991: 228). This notion corresponds to the point Hauerwas makes that the church is to be shaped by a “truthful narrative” (Hauerwas, 1981: 10). Whilst Hauerwas (1981:10) considers that the church should *be* a truthful account of the story of Christ, Newbigin (1991:229) is concerned that the church is a body of believers who *live by* that story. Thirdly, Newbigin (1991: 229) suggests that such a community should be alive to the concerns of its neighbourhood. The fourth characteristic follows from the third: such a community should exercise its priestly function *in* the world *for* the world (Newbigin, 1991: 229-230). Fifthly, this community should be one of “mutual responsibility”, the foretaste of a different social order (Newbigin, 1991: 231). Finally, Newbigin suggests that such a community should be a “community of hope” (Newbigin, 1991: 232), a quality expressed in the two Scottish congregations, as I argue for later in this chapter.

Stanley Hauerwas

In *The Peaceable Kingdom* Hauerwas (1983: 24, 25) argues that Christian convictions are formed by a story which also forms a community. Contrary to “the world sets the agenda”⁹⁴ notions of the late 1960s, Hauerwas contends that the world should not be allowed to set the church’s agenda⁹⁵, rather it is to be shaped by the story of Jesus Christ (Hauerwas, 1983: 36,37ff and 1981:10) and from the “extraordinary Christian claim that we participate morally in God’s life” (Hauerwas, 1983: 27). Hauerwas argues that neither the church or the world can judge what “big words” like “peace” and “justice” look like “apart from the life and death of Jesus Christ” (Hauerwas, 1989: 38) and that having been formed by that truthful story, the church is the “narrative of God lived in a way that makes the kingdom visible” (Hauerwas, 1983: 97).

In the light of this, Hauerwas argues, the church’s primary task and means of witness in the world “is to be the church - the servant community” (Hauerwas, 1983: 99). He continues, “Such a claim may sound self-serving until we remember that what makes the church the church is its faithful manifestation of the peaceable kingdom in the world. As such the church does not *have* a social ethic; the church *is* a social ethic.” (Hauerwas, 1983: 99. Italics mine). For precisely the same reasons, I suggest we can say that the church does not *have* a mission; the church *is* mission. The church *is* the *Missio Dei*.

⁹⁴ This was the famous slogan in the ecumenical report *The Church for Others: Two Reports on the Missionary Structure of the Congregation*. WCC, Geneva 1967.

⁹⁵ See Hauerwas 1983: 100: “The church does not let the world set the agenda about what constitutes a ‘social ethic’, but a church of peace and justice must set its own agenda”; 1981: 85 “The church must serve the world on her own terms. We must be faithful in our own way, even if the world understands such faithfulness as disloyalty”.

This may sound a hopeless affirmation when considering the disunity and contradictions of the contemporary church landscape. However, what Hauerwas is proposing is praxis of commonplace behaviours to be the mark of church life. He argues that for the church to *be* a social ethic rather than to *have* a social ethic, or to *be* missional “we must recapture the social (or missional) significance of common behaviour; acts of kindness, friendship, and the formation of families” (Hauerwas, 1981: 11. Brackets mine).

In *Resident Aliens* (1989:25), Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon argue that the Christian life is less a matter of a “new understanding” and more an invitation “to be part of an alien people who make a difference”. Reiterating Hauerwas “big words”, “peace” and “justice” argument from *Peaceable Kingdom* (1983), Hauerwas and Willimon contend these are words “still awaiting content” (Hauerwas/Willimon 1989:38).

The challenge to the Church is to be different – or alien – by being the church, and for the alien nature of the Church to be a “countercultural social structure” (1989: 46). Furthermore, Hauerwas and Willimon (1989: 49ff) suggest good-humouredly that the life in the “alien colony” should not adopt a fortress mentality but should be considered as a journey of adventure, a people on the move “breathlessly trying to keep up with Jesus” (1989: 52).

George Lindbeck

Throughout this thesis the term *habitus* has been a useful inclusive and coverall concept to identify the ritual matrix and life of the house-church congregations. In this I follow Csordas (1997: 9, 2001: 67) who borrowed this term from Bourdieu, who first coined the idiom to formulate an expression for the “dialectic of the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality” (Bourdieu, 1977: 72). For my purposes, I now transpose this concept from the anthropological and sociological to the theological, and suggest that Bourdieu’s approach bears a resemblance to George Lindbeck’s “cultural-linguistic” perspective.

For Lindbeck (1984: 32) the “cultural-linguistic” framework is one in which “religions are seen as interpretative schemes, usually embodied in narratives and heavily ritualised, which structure human experience and understanding of self and world”. For Lindbeck (1984:35) the “cultural- linguistic” model is a framework that emphasises the degree to which human life and thought is shaped by culture and language. This model synthesises both the ‘internal’ and ‘external’, beliefs and actions, and underlines that for men and women of faith “existence is not primarily a set of propositions to be believed, *but rather is the medium in which one moves*, a set of skills that one employs in living one’s life” (Italics mine). As such, the propositional, although significantly necessary, is not exclusive in its significance. As Lindbeck (1984: 35) comments, “the cognitive aspect, while often important, is not primary”.

Lindbeck's (1984: 35) model also allows for an "experiential-expressive" approach; a characteristic that marks the two congregations. As Lindbeck (1984: 35) points out, the "experiential-expressive" can be better accommodated in the "cultural-linguistic" framework than in the "cognitivist" framework, for which the "propositionally encoded" is of primary significance.

The experiential-expressive nature of the ritual field of the two congregations is not, as propositional cognitivists would have us believe, mere external decoration to make the hard-core propositional beliefs more palatable or accessible. As I have argued in previous chapters, they are a revelatory and embodied means by which faith becomes meaningful. To quote Lindbeck (1984: 36) once more, "the proclamation of the gospel, as a Christian would put it, may be first of all the telling of a story, but this gains power and meaning in the total gestalt of community life and action".

I now push Lindbeck's assertion further in interpreting the *habitus* of the two congregations. It is not only that the "total gestalt of community life and action" (Lindbeck, 1984: 36) add power and meaning to the telling of the gospel, but that for the two faith communities the gospel story becomes the life and actions of the community, a summary, I suggest, of the argument in Chapters Seven to Nine. The two congregations I argue, are Lindbeck's "cultural-linguistic" communities in which the "experiential-expressive" functions as a major contributor. The life (ritualized stories) and actions (behaviour) of the congregations, i.e. "the total gestalt" or *habitus* are in themselves narratives of the gospel. In *The Church in a Postliberal Age* (Lindbeck, 2002), written to mark the centenary of *Lux Mundi*⁹⁶, Lindbeck again points out that the church is narrative shaped: that is, it is shaped by the story of Jesus Christ (Lindbeck, 2002: 149). The story is logically prior to doctrines or abstractions about the nature of church (Lindbeck, 2002: 149). At Pentecost, the Spirit is poured out on all flesh (Lindbeck 2002: 151) so that a new chapter in the same story could continue. Thus, the story now resides in the lives and actions of those cultural-linguistic groupings identified as Christian (Lindbeck 2002: 158). Consequently, he argues, "it is by the character of its communal life that it witnesses, that it proclaims the gospel and serves the world". (Lindbeck, 2002: 158).

Michael Northcott

In *Urban Theology 1960-1990* Northcott reviews the theological reflection inherent in the ebb and flow of urban ministry and mission from the 1960s through to the 1990s. He concludes that various reports, evaluations and endeavours during these decades failed "to stem the decline of religion in Britain, and may actually have hastened it" (Northcott, 1990: 164). He suggests for example that the enthusiastic pursuit of the industrial chaplaincy model of urban ministry in the 1960s "diverted resources and reflection on urban industrial mission" which would have been better utilised in the

⁹⁶*Lux Mundi* was a collection of essays by Anglicans published in 1889 'concerned to put the Catholic faith into its right relation to modern intellectual and moral problems'. *The Church in a Postliberal Age* essay was written to mark the centenary of that collection (James Buckley Ed.). Buckley notes that although Lindbeck considered his essay to be incomplete, "it is perhaps the best summary of his ecclesiology" (2002: 145).

“exploration of other forms of frontier mission in secular urban industrial society” (Northcott, 1990: Part 1, 162). Alongside this was the misguided attempt to “secularise the church” and the tendency of such theologies to “undervalue the role of the church *qua* church” (Northcott, 1990: 199; 165). In Northcott’s estimation, the 1970s saw a disillusionment with such models of ministry and a development of church-based community work as well as the rise of new movements such as the Afro-Caribbean churches and the Charismatic house-churches (Northcott, 1990:166 & 167) which engaged with their communities at grass-roots level. The 1980s and 1990s saw the influence of Latin American imports, models such as the ‘Base Communities’, which emphasised the role of communal worship-based centres and saw the publishing of the watershed report *Faith in the City*. Northcott (1991:18 &19) argues that the Latin American approach was admirable but unsuited to British urban culture which had become “trenchantly secular”. He also argues that *Faith in the City* failed because it “put forward the same bureaucratic reorganisation techniques and clergy specialisation approaches which have already been tried in two decades in the urban areas with no success in stemming the tide of secularism”. Nevertheless, he comments that throughout the 1980s and 1990s there were strong influences towards communal living, small groups and networks, with a bias towards the poor. The similar efforts of the Sheffield Urban Theology Unit, reflected in the writings of John J. Vincent in *Alternative Church* (1976) and *Into the City* (1982) could be added to this list of influences. Northcott applauds the strategies around “people networks” and “small groups and lay ministry” which bring together “spirituality, community and witness” and concludes that:

The urban church needs to search for forms of community, patterns of worship, spirituality, and lifestyles which encapsulate the gospel of love and the Kingdom of justice in the city (Northcott, 1991:22).

Such articles, written at the end of the 1990s, reflect Northcott’s critique of industrial mission. In *The Church and Secularisation* (1989) he concludes that “church renewal must be directed at creating gathered communities which demonstrate in their worship and lifestyle a Christian ethic of love, giving substance to that mission of God through the expression of that ethic amidst the groupings and the structures of the world” (Northcott, 1989: 195).

David Bosch

In *Transforming Mission* (1996), Bosch recognises the need for a paradigm shift in the theology of mission given the shift in post-enlightenment culture which on the one hand recognised the dignity of other cultures (1996: 291-312) and on the other has become “a time of deep uncertainty” (1996: 349). Bosch (1996:365,366) argues that the church-in-mission needs to repent of its arrogance and realise that it is facing “a world fundamentally different from anything it faced before”. Following Barth (1956), he argues that the church needs to recognise that it is essentially missional by its very nature (Bosch 1996:372):

It is impossible to talk about the church without at the same time talking about mission. One could even say with Schumacher, “the inverse of the thesis ‘the church is essentially missionary’ is ‘Mission is essentially ecclesial’”.

For Bosch (1996:378) the “church-in-mission is primarily the *local* church everywhere in the world” (Italics original). The “missionary dimension” of a local church he argues, does not consist of adding mission to the church (i.e. missionary projects) but manifests itself (Bosch 1996: 373):

When it is truly a worshipping community; it is able to welcome outsiders and make them feel at home; it is a church where the Pastor does not have the monopoly and the members are not mere objects of pastoral care; its members are equipped for their calling in society; it does not defend the privileges of a select group. However the missionary dimension involves *intention*; it actually moves beyond the walls of the church and engages “points of concentration”(Newbigin) such as evangelism and work for justice and peace.

For Bosch the missional intentionality of a local church does not consist of projects but as the vitality of its common life in worship, in affirming and dignifying relationships. Common life spills out in common action to welcome and affirm the stranger, and evangelism goes together with the task of bringing wholeness and peace to the community. In this understanding of church-as-mission, Bosch argues for a symbiotic continuum and relationship of worship and common life to be essential to its missionary nature and ethos.

Mission in Context: Bishopbriggs and Bridgeton

In this second section of the chapter, I bring the arguments of the aforementioned scholars to appraise the missional possibilities for the two congregations set in their wider communities. Insights from Newbigin, Hauerwas, Lindbeck, Northcott and Bosch would suggest that the common life of local church in worship and relationship relates significantly to its witness in its neighbourhood. In the light of this it is worth foregrounding an exploration of the possible missional impact of the two congregations with a brief résumé of what has been discovered of their essential *habitus*.

In Chapters Four and Six I note the deliberate intention to meet in a secular building (BCC), or to secularise the building (BCF) in order to collapse the sacred-secular divide. Chapter Six notes the way in which the secular becomes sacred in the Charismatic ritual field of the two congregations, through use of music in particular. Chapter Seven explores the embodied nature of the ritual field in their use of somatic gestures as a gateway to the Divine-human encounter. In Chapter Seven I also argue for the way in which spatial fragmentation is overcome and relationality is strengthened through the characteristically embodied ritual field. I argue that this ritual field creates a sacred self, grounded in embodiment that extends beyond the boundaries of the ritual events themselves to permeate everyday life. In Chapter Eight I explore the notion of an imaginal process that weaves its efficacy in the congregations’ use of *charismata*, or ‘spiritual gifts’. Chapter Nine investigates the way in which the ritual field of the two congregations acts to ritualise both corporate and individual narratives.

Chapter Ten argues from a further observation of activities beyond a Sunday morning, when this rich and multi-layered ritual field is carried into the missional praxis of the two congregations.

I now contextualise this missiological argument within the two communities and in so doing bring the ethnographic interpretation of the previous five chapters and the above missiological reflections together to bear on the two Scottish faith communities, with a view to appreciating the ways in which storied rituals and ritualized stories give rise to an identity-in-mission.

Bishopbriggs and Bridgeton

The two Glasgow communities in which the congregations in this study are situated present differing characteristics: residential commuter belt and post-industrial urban. They nevertheless share a history of industrialised Scotland and of subsequent attempts at regeneration. Bishopbriggs developed into a residential commuter town in the latter part of the twentieth century following two centuries of heavy industry and commerce centred on and around the Forth and Clyde canal; at the height of the industrialised nineteenth century the canal provided a route for sea going vessels from the Firth of Clyde to the Firth of Forth. Bridgeton is an inner-city district of urban poverty that boasts several attempts at regeneration: the town centre and tenement buildings have been renovated and young aspiring families have purchased properties. I use the initial categorisations to interpret ways in which our two congregations might have missional impact.

Bishopbriggs is a community of people who aspire to a better life. It is without the affluent appearance of Bearsden or Milngavie with their respective parades of large houses and prosperous looking shopping centre; GC commented to me regarding Bishopbriggs, “It’s the place that wants to be Milngavie, but it’s not!” Nevertheless, over eighty-seven percent of the population live in their own property, a ‘bought hoose’,⁹⁷ however small and compact, and the centre of the town bustles with life. Unlike Bridgeton, there are no boarded-up shops on the high street. This upward mobility is mirrored in the congregation. Many appear to be young middle-class and/or aspiring middle-class families with mortgages to pay and families to feed. Amongst the couples I interviewed both partners had professions, ranging from a cartographer and wife (who together work their own small business from home), to a teacher with an I.T. consultant husband. However, my interviewees also included a Ghanaian refugee who aspires to become a qualified nurse, and a single mum who lives with her invalid mother.

The missional activities of the BCC congregation are well organised and motivated, as might be expected from a well-educated and highly motivated group of people. Outreach enterprises come under the umbrella of *The Well at Bishopbriggs*. These include Youth Café, Park Pre-fives Playgroup (weekday mornings), Crèche, Mothers & Toddlers (twice weekly), Lunch Club (elderly), *Alpha* (three

⁹⁷ 87.32% of the population of Bishopbriggs (24,000) live in their own property (2001 Census Bulletin). The term ‘bought hoose’ is a common term used in the West of Scotland to distinguish those who live in local authority rented housing to those who can afford to buy their own property.

times a year and at Red Row flats), plus a link/support of local community groups - Community Council, Community Police, Public Partnership Forum (health matters), local Richmond Fellowship Scotland (mental health issues) -initiated by GC when he was Community Pastor. Several rites of the ritual field at BCC stand out as playing a strategic part in their missional continuum. Firstly, comfortable settees, good coffee and tea, and room in which congregants can meet with ease delineate the space for 'gathering and greeting'. Young families feel they can safely allow their children to mingle and play freely, whilst they catch up on news with their peers. As previously noted, it is also a place where strangers and lone mothers such as CB are embraced by the welcome of the fellowship.

More evident than at Bridgeton, the Bishopbriggs central ritual matrix of worship is accompanied by loud, accomplished music, embodied in enthusiastic dancing or flag-waving. At times, the dancing is formalised and choreographed, although it appears mostly spontaneous and courses with the mood music of the moment. Flag-waving is unique to this congregation; at times vigorous and ecstatic, at times reflective; when the tempo of the music is slow and evocative, large chiffon flags are 'waved over the congregation' sitting in the front rows.⁹⁸ All the while, depending on the music, the man in the wheelchair spins and twirls: disability is not a deterrent from enthusiastic and embodied praise in this congregation. This is the ritual field in which CL is welcomed, in which she feels free to express her prayers in non-verbal manner. Here too VM can 'dance with flags' and pray her personal story; where she claims she is "free to be me". Ritualised and embodied worship gives welcome to the outsider and affirmation to the disabled; it builds the faith of the congregation.

BCC: Building a House of Faith.

For Lindbeck the building up of "brothers and sister in the faith" is an axial component of witness. It is by so doing that the congregation become a "liberating force" (Lindbeck 2002: 159). Lindbeck writes from a wholly different ecclesiological experience to those of this investigation, yet his perspective allows for an account of ways in which the BCC community is "built up" through worship and an intermutual *habitus*. The missional ambitions of the Bishopbriggs congregation are entirely dependent on the capacity of their central ritual field to "build up the brothers and sisters in the faith". In keeping with my parabolic interpretation of this congregation, they are 'building a house of faith'. The ritual field also has a missional impact. In the stories of CL, VM and LH an understanding of faith in God is close to the reality of belief in oneself: the Divine narrative ritually embedded in the human narrative. Faith in God translates into belief in oneself.

The aspirational feature of Bishopbriggs district becomes wholesome aspiration, understood as 'faith in God' by the congregation. Witness the story of CB who left her homeland Sierra Leone to become a refugee in Scotland, and who through fellowship, caring support and ritual freedom (flag-waving) in her chosen congregation gained confidence to struggle against the odds, gained British citizenship,

⁹⁸ This ritual is a symbolic and dramatic enactment of the 'blowing of the Spirit' over the gathering.

and is working towards a nursing qualification. Or review the story of LH, who as a teenager was heavily involved in the drug culture, left school without qualifications at the age of sixteen, but who now says “I feel really good about myself” as she studies a degree course in Youth Work. With a healthy self-confidence, born of her life within the Bishopbriggs *habitus*, she is able to give expression to a gospel of love and affirmation amongst the young lives entrusted to her care for a few hours each week.

Bridgeton is an inner-city community with the well-rehearsed problems of ill health, poor housing and missed education ensue. Considering the fragile nature of the membership of the congregation as noted, the question of how the church functions in their calling to be a “church to serve the poor” is relevant.⁹⁹

The ritual field of the BCF reflects the composition and needs of its membership. The gathering-greeting rite of serving breakfast has prominence in this faith community. It serves a social function, prepares members for the central doxological matrix, and meets a genuine need by feeding those who are hungry. It also creates a relaxed atmosphere in which there is conversation, the sharing of confessionalities, prayer and the ‘laying on of hands’. Whereas at BCC much of the mutual prayer takes place after the central ritual, at BCF prayer generally happens beforehand and I surmise that it is considered appropriate for emotional, psychological and physical needs of the congregation to be met before the more intense Divine-human encounter to come.

The central ritual matrix at BCF is equally as intense as that of BCC, if not more so. The fragility described above however is evident throughout the worship. The praise is less exuberant than at BCC; the somatic movements less pronounced. Congregants ‘sway’ and ‘lift up hands’ and praise and thanksgiving are no less forthcoming and ‘thanksgiving’ may be more intense here. Somatic gestures imply an engagement with the Divine-human encounter. Supplication often follows the somatic acts of praise. The Divine-human encounter that begins in the gathering –greeting rites of the Café space continues in the central ritual-matrix and maintains the therapeutic effect.

BCF: Love in the Finding & Caring

For Michael Northcott, the essential role of the church in the context of urban mission is to be a sign of the Kingdom in bringing together “spirituality and community” in a way that “takes risks, which is marginal, and in forms to which the inner urban poor can relate” (Northcott, 1990: 21). In this way, he suggests the church needs to find “forms of community, patterns of worship, spirituality, and lifestyles which symbolise and encapsulate the gospel of *love...in the city*” (Northcott, 1991: Italics mine). In this model, the church becomes missional, not by its creeds or traditions, but by its *praxis* of inclusive and caring relationships informed by genuine patterns of worship.

⁹⁹ In Ch4 BQ explains that their calling as a church is to ‘serve the poor’ because many of them “had been there”.

The parabolic interpretation of the Bridgeton congregation is helpful in understanding their missional ethos. The leaders and committed members of the congregation are shepherds, who under the Good Shepherd care for the sheep who were lost but are ‘being found’: the overriding impression at Bridgeton is that the finding and restoration of the ‘lost sheep’ is a work in progress: a journey which is not yet completed. Participation at Bridgeton often takes the form of testimony of an answer to prayer that week – a job, a home, a husband or son restored to the family circle, and so on.

The image of the shepherd who places the ‘lost sheep’ across his shoulders is one of practical care and compassion: love in action. The patience of BCC members who daily care for the weak, vulnerable and poor – whether in the Café, the *Open Door* or the main service of worship - is a demonstration of love in action. The good shepherd of the parable does not remain embedded in a mythic narrative of the first century but it is unmistakably enacted in the individual attention CA and other members of BCC show to the women at their *Open Door* meetings and in all the gatherings of the church.

Concluding Remarks: Faith, Hope and Love

David Ford (1997: 198) links witness-in-performance of the church with “what happens between people living in the worshipping community...with a calling in the world that has its principal implications in a way of life that demonstrates faith, hope and love”.

The Pauline trinity of Christian aspirational qualities – faith, hope, and love (1Cor.13:13) are of the same ilk as Hauerwas and Willimon’s (1989:38) “big words”, which are awaiting content. They too can only be understood in the story of the life, death and resurrection of Christ; neither can the world understand these concepts apart from a body of people shaped by this story. In the church they become truths enacted by a “truthful community” (Hauerwas, 1981:10) in a world of mendacity, fear and violence. Although I have suggested that the propagation of faith is the hallmark of the BCC missionary enterprise, and that love is that of BCF, I suggest that faith and love is a characteristic of both communities, and that furthermore both Bishopbriggs and Bridgeton communities are, in different ways, in need of a good measure of hope.

I am not claiming a consistent faithfulness to such qualities by the two congregations. Neither am I claiming that *permeable boundaries* are exclusive to Charismatic house-churches. Such claims would be untruthful and pretentious. The purpose of this thesis has been to so interpret the *habitus* of two Charismatic house-church congregations as to elicit missional possibilities of ritual and common life which could be exercised in any Christian community, given the motivation to do so. In *Selling Worship: how what we sing has changed the Church*, Pete Ward (2005) gives a similar interpretation to mine of Charismatic worship or ritual field at the beginning of the 21st Century. Quoting from Graham Kendrick, a song writer noted in Chapter Six, Ward (2005: 173,174) writes that the contention of such as Kendrick is “worship is not just to be seen as an individual experience located

primarily in religious meetings; it should also have social, economic and political implications. Community should be expressed by a sense of togetherness". An ethnographic account of the shared lives of the two faith communities has shown instances in which worship catalyses the Divine-human encounter, ritualising and co-authoring the human story. This forms a sacred ritualization of life which in turn allows for permeable boundaries through which the *Missio Dei* can flow.

PART THREE argues that the Charismatic rituals of the non-aligned Protestant congregations are a turning to semiotics and orality, a new and surprising episode in the history of Protestantism.

PART THREE: *Beyond the Written Word*

For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life

2 Corinthians 3:6

Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters, like loud peal of thunder, shouting “Hallelujah, for the Lord God the Almighty reigns”

Revelation 19:6

PART THREE: *Beyond the Written Word*

CHAPTER TWELVE

Introduction

Part Three is, to some extent, abstract in its argument, for rather than presenting a fresh case study on the Charismatic rituals of particular congregations, it draws upon the fieldwork undertaken for the ethnography of the two congregations featured in Part Two, *Rituals That Live*. In Part Three I follow leads already heavily trailed in various chapters of Part Two, which pointed to the ways in which communion with the Divine broadened the scope of the religious hermeneutic to include embodied semiotics, orality, and relationality, giving scope for the human imagination and the intensely communal.

Karla Poewe (1994: 240-250), has attested to this interpretation of the Charismatic ritual field, as have Andre Droogers (1994: 39-42), Gerard Roelofs (1994: 224, 225), Thomas Csordas (1997: 74-108), Simon Coleman (2000; esp. 125,126) and Daniel Albrecht (1999: esp.237-251). Other observers of The Charismatic Movement from an international perspective have also commented on the adoption of an experiential epistemology: David Martin (2002: 76), Amos Yong (2000: 162,163), and Harvey Cox (1995: 87, 88) who views it as a “primal form of religious expression”. In *The Spiritual Revolution, Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality* Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead (2005: 31) suggest that many contemporary movements occupy a “holistic milieu” in which there is a “subjective turn in modern culture” from the “congregational domain” to an environment typified by a “holistic relationship to the spirit-of-life”. Although Heelas/Woodhead place Charismatic churches in the “congregational domain”, I have argued in Chapter Eight that the house-church congregations occupy a more central ground, a move to subjectivity without letting go of their reverence for and obedience to “a higher authority”.

What is significant for this study is the surprising way in which this phenomenon is now being adopted in Scottish non-conformist Protestant situations, which Doug Gay (2011:15) in *Remixing the Church* terms “Low Church Protestants” (LCPs). Hermeneutics that have been cerebral and individualistic are giving way to those that are embodied and relational. Their rituals suggest a radical shift in Protestant hermeneutics which brings them into conflict with their more orthodox cousins. A comparison to similar Protestant groups in America (Albrecht, 1999) and Sweden (Coleman, 2000) indicates that this apparent shift in hermeneutics is assuming global proportions.

I have given prominence to a comparison of the Scottish house-church *habitus* to mainstream Protestantism throughout Part Two. I now explore the philosophical implications of this shift in

hermeneutics, and ask what contribution it might make to the place of doxological ritual, specifically within the broader conversation on epistemology/ontology.

I propose an approach that may be unexpected, but one that I believe will add a fresh perspective to understanding the house-church *habitus* and its orientation in the world. The appraisal will be based mainly on the complex arguments of the school of theology calling itself Radical Orthodoxy¹⁰⁰, in particular the arguments of Catherine Pickstock. Although Radical Orthodoxy scholars are of a High Anglican or Roman Catholic persuasion, I contend their theological movement provides a useful paradigm by which to evaluate the contribution made by contemporary Protestant Charismatic ritual matrices, such as in this study. I will also add the voices of Walter J. Ong and of James K.A. Smith, the latter writing from a Pentecostal/Charismatic perspective. In *Orality and Literacy*, Walter J. Ong (1989) argues - as does Pickstock -that the appearance in modernity of mechanical mass printing profoundly changed human consciousness: cultures that were primarily oral in character became written cultures.

In *After Writing*, Pickstock (1998) offers a reworking of Platonic philosophy in which she contends that the presence of the Divine cannot be intellectually apprehended, only ritually experienced. Although Pickstock employs the Mediaeval Latin Mass as her preferred paradigm of ritual, I will argue that the Charismatic ritual matrix, as demonstrated by the house-church congregations, measures up well to her criteria of embodied participation for the “liturgical consummation of philosophy” (Pickstock, 1998: From the sub-title to her book). Since the Cambridge School of Radical Orthodoxy has developed its postmodern theology within the theological turn of French phenomenology, I will broaden the scope of this essay to include the French philosopher Alain Badiou, whose writings mark a contemporary return to Plato and offer a helpful if surprising use of the writings of St. Paul. They are helpful because Badiou places St. Paul in the midst of current philosophical debates over the search for a ‘universal’ or ‘universals’; surprising because of Badiou’s avowed atheism. James K. A. Smith (2009, 2010) adds further dimensions to this perspective when he contends that human beings (and hence Christians) are primarily *lovers* and *worshippers* before becoming thinkers. A Christian world-view, he argues, should essentially be framed in vocabularies of desire, imagination and in the context of doxology, rather than in abstract propositions.

I will argue that the Protestant Reformation and its Evangelical aftermath, to which our current reformers in the house-church movement owe their heritage, was a product of the same Enlightenment

¹⁰⁰*Radical Orthodoxy* is a school of theology which originates amongst Cambridge scholars all of Anglican High Church or Roman Catholic persuasion. “Radical Orthodoxy reclaims the world by situating its concerns within a theological framework”. Milbank - from the Introduction *Radical Orthodoxy, A new theology* London: Routledge 1999.

movement to rationality and the written word. This chapter takes the form of a dialogue which becomes a wider conversation, in which I will suggest that Charismatic doxological rituals function as a form of Pickstockan participatory ritual, a ‘secondary orality’ (Ong: 1989) and a reframing of the Scottish Protestant hermeneutic away from cognitivist propositions to a visceral religious discourse.

PART 1 Pickstock, Badiou, and Ong: *The Doxological Resolution*

The founding father of Radical Orthodoxy is John Milbank. In *Theology and Social Theory: beyond Secular Reason* published in 1990, Milbank provides an account of modernity which lays the foundations for what follows. He argues that theology must no longer allow itself to be placed ‘outside’ by philosophy and secular thought. In *Radical Orthodoxy: a new Theology* published 1999, Catherine Pickstock and Graham Ward join Milbank in co-editing a series of essays co-authored with other scholars, in which they claim the “logic of secularism is imploding” (Milbank, 1999: 1). They argue that the “cyberspaces and theme-parks” of secularism promote “a materialism which is soulless, aggressive, nonchalant and nihilistic” (Milbank, 1999: 1). Radical Orthodoxy they argue, attempts to “reclaim the world by situating its concerns and activities within a theological framework” (Milbank, 1999:1)

Milbank’s (1999: 3) assertion that “the central theological framework of radical orthodoxy is *participation*, as developed by Plato and reworked by Christianity” – a framework that as shall be seen, is fully developed in Pickstock – is essential to my argument. This deceptively simple statement which prefigures Pickstock’s turn to doxological ritual is then set within its *raison d’être* (Milbank, 1993: 3):

...any alternative configuration perforce reserves a territory independent of God. The latter can only lead to nihilism (though in different guises). *Participation*, however, refuses any reserve of created territory, while allowing finite things their own integrity. Underpinning the present essay, therefore, is the idea that every discipline must be framed by a theological perspective; otherwise these disciplines will define a zone apart from God, grounded literally in nothing. (Italics mine)

Milbank (1990) claims that modern secularity is severely problematic in itself because it is ultimately a self-destroying nihilism, an inherently unstable and impossible standpoint that has given rise to a culture in postmodernity which in itself is a celebration of being as nothing or pure flux. For both Milbank (1990) and Pickstock (1998), contemporary secularity is also problematic in its relationship to Christian theology in that theologians have sought to accommodate its world-view in forming their own Christian ontology. For Milbank and Pickstock, any allowance for postmodern secularity compromises the integrity and primacy of theology and/or of doxological purity.

Catherine Pickstock: *A Return to Plato*

In *After Writing*, Pickstock (1998 :48) argues that modernity, by enabling and promoting through its technology the significance of *writing*, has promoted epistemology over ontology; so that in postmodernity “space has become a pseudo-eternity”. Following Milbank (1990, 1999) Pickstock’s

solution is to return to an orthodox Christian ontology in which a reworking of Platonic dialectic becomes useful, and also in which the early medieval Roman liturgy becomes an instrumental paradigm for human beings to reconnect with the Divine. Again, following Milbank and against Derrida, when setting out a doxological ontology whose “theological framework is ‘participation’”, the essence of Pickstock’s contention lies in favouring *presence* over the disembodied and disengaged epistemology of *writing* (Milbank 1999: 3 & Pickstock 1998: 20).

I now follow this argument more closely. Pickstock is one of several scholars, including Levinas and Badiou, who from theistic and secular perspectives have recently returned for inspiration to Plato. Pickstock recounts how, in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates and Phaedrus take a walk outside the city walls. In the ensuing dialogue Phaedrus advocates “social contracts” to avoid the difficulties experienced in the transience of “erotic partnerships” (Pickstock, 1998: 5). Socrates however contends that the “philosophic life is rooted in the ‘divine’ madness of *ēros*, as opposed to the purely ‘mortal’ and parsimonious modes of self-control” (Pickstock, 1998:5). Against Derrida, Pickstock (1998: 11, 12) interprets the Socratic notion of the *good* as having a “transcendent” nature, as in the *Republic*’s icon of the sun, which “gives things to be seen”. For Pickstock (1998:12), Plato’s “sun” represents a necessary transcendent “supplementation” of the good that bestows “gifts of insight, truth, and beauty”. In the Socratic vision, the “philosopher-lover”, is “steadfastly guided by his vision of the good”, and thus “his journey through life is simultaneously *erotic & hermeneutical*”¹⁰¹ (Pickstock, 1998: 20 *Italics original*).

Central to Pickstock’s interpretation of Plato and her argument in general, is the understanding that this journey is a “participation in the divine” which “approaches a mutually constitutive supplementation facilitated by the relational overflowing of *ēros*” (Pickstock, 1998:21). It is central because Pickstock’s later argument is that in the Christian epistemological framework she is proposing, knowledge begins and ends in a participation in the Divine through a relational overflowing of *ēros* in the doxological approach of the human being to the Divine. Against Derrida, Pickstock (1998:23) proposes that far from there being a rejection of “myth” within the Socratic dialogues, there is a “positive involvement of myth in the *Phaedrus*” with its concomitant championing of orality over writing. “The implication”, she says, is that “doxology as a mode of life constitutes the supreme ethic” (Pickstock, 1998: 40). Can doxology she asks, be considered the “supreme gift to humanity itself, ordered through song and dance” (Pickstock, 1998: 40)? The

¹⁰¹ Our understanding of *erotic* in this context must be informed by Plato’s concept of *ēros* as ‘divine madness’ (Pickstock, 1998: 5)- a yearning for the transcendent ‘good’- and not as that which is sexually arousing. Since for Pickstock her ontology is commensurate with her epistemology of ritual doxology which is also *erotic* in the Platonic sense, there follows the possibility that for the philosopher-lover, life can be “simultaneously *erotic & hermeneutical*” – that is, knowledge conveyed in (doxological) passion.

consideration of ethical behaviour may be a serious business, yet it can and should be sourced in praise of the Divine and “expressed through celebration and dancing” (Pickstock, 1998: 41). The dismantling of the distinction between what is serious and what is “playful” further subverts the boundaries between the ‘serious’ and ‘everyday life’, and according to Pickstock(1998 : 46), is a “kind of ethical goal, characterised by music and sacrifice”. The radicalization of boundaries through doxological festival is the key to Pickstock’s arguments, as it is to mine. Before reaching her vision of the “doxological city”, Pickstock unravels the damage done by the elevation of *writing* to epistemological status that has exchanged meaningful ontology for a restricted and collapsing view of spatial reality.

Spatialization: The Journey to Nihilism

Pickstock (1998: 48,49) contends that Derrida, far from liberating modernity from its rationalistic straightjacket, has in upholding “knowledge as writing”, remained “ *within* a post-Cartesian set of assumptions whose ancestry lies in sophistry and not in Platonic dialectics” (Italics original). Derrida does not escape from a humanist rationalism for which nihilism is but the “most extreme expression” (Pickstock, 1998:48), but rather compounds his position at the end of a long line of influential thinkers from Peter Ramus (1515-1572) through René Descartes (1596 – 1650) to the modern/postmodern period. Thus Pickstock (1998: 48) argues, the “modern/postmodern debate is empty shadow-boxing” as Derrida et al remain firmly within the set of Cartesian assumptions. Pickstock (1998: 57), contends throughout her work that the facilitation of writing, in particular the invention of the printing press and mass-production of written text, in conjunction with a Cartesian “fulfilment in epistemology”, has inaugurated an “immanentist construal of reality as the ‘given’ ” (Pickstock, 1998: 57). It is obviously not writing *per se* that was the culprit. It was rather the new ability to reproduce in mass volume the written word, bolstered by a rising sense of discovery in experimental empirical science (e.g. Robert Boyle 1627-1691), which gave writing its epistemological significance (Pickstock 1998: 74). Whereas epistemology had been subservient to an ontology of transcendence in pre-modern times, epistemology as writing now gained pre-eminence and fostered an “immanentist ontology” and the reduction of “being to the ‘object’ whose existence does not exceed the extent to which it is known by the subject” (Pickstock, 1998 :70). Pickstock (1998:70) contends the Cartesian subject’s doubt of its own existence gives rise to an aporia in which the subject finds itself in a contradictory situation. For while maintaining a position of doubt the Cartesian subject would also “offer a gesture against the void”. It does this, according to Pickstock (1998, 70) by substituting *method* (writing) for *memory*. Thus writing becomes the new ‘interiority’. Thus also, the private ego “empties itself” into the objectivity of writing, and in so doing initiates a “radical solipsism” (Pickstock 1998:72). According to Pickstock (1998: 71), the sun which in Plato’s allegory of The Cave represents “the transcendent bestowal of life and knowledge” becomes for Descartes “the light of human reason itself”. This position becomes solipsistic, since in his radical doubt, there can be

no 'outside', and The Cave has only windows into itself. As Pickstock (1998: 73) explains, "This underground subject is surrounded by an exteriority which merely affirms its interiority". In other words the Cartesian subject, who prefigures the modern/postmodern subject, finds itself entombed in a cellar in which it can only find evidence for its existence in its own reflection. As certainty is confined to the private ego there can be nothing which can be stated as universally true, and the journey to nihilism is complete.

Journey to the Sacred Polis

In contrast to the journey to death initiated by Descartes, Pickstock proposes a liturgical city which in a revisitation of the Platonic vision allows for a transcendent ontology which gives light and life to the city. Over against the "immanentist manipulation of signs" (Pickstock, 1998 :169) in which linguistic philosophy is a dominant framework to subdue the subject's interaction with the "real", Pickstock offers a model for a genuine subject-object interaction in the "consummation of language and subjectivity in and through a radical transformation of space and time"(Pickstock, 1998 :169). Such an approach, she claims, is "avowedly semiotic" in that the distinguishing features of this sacred polis are "articulated through the signs of speech, gesture, art, music, figures, vestment, colour, fire, smoke, bread, wine and relationality"(Pickstock, 1998 :169).

In a return to signs, Pickstock proposes an *experiential*¹⁰² approach that values orality, music, art, touch, sound and taste as epistemological vehicles for an ontology in which the Divine plays an overarching part. As noted later in this chapter, this approach centres on *gift* as given and received through the relationality of the subject in the *event* of the liturgy (Pickstock, 1998: 170).

Pickstock argues that Plato has a non-dualistic intention in his philosophy in an attempt to show how the universal and particular, spiritual and material, Divine and human are inseparable and interconnected. She claims that Plato assumes "the mainly *doxological* character of language" (Pickstock, 1998: xiii and 177. Italics original). She explains that "all language exists primarily, and in the end only has meaning as, the praise of the divine" (Pickstock, 1998: xiii). In this she attempts to show that for Plato everything is contained within the Divine or "the good". For Plato the world of 'becoming' exists in the world of 'being'.¹⁰³ In this "Plato favours orality" she argues, "because of its temporality, open-endedness, and link with physical embodiment" (Pickstock, 1998: xiii). Similarly, Pickstock contends that the medieval Roman Mass was dominantly *oral* in its lineaments up to the time of Vatican II (Pickstock, 1998: 173 &177). In contrast to the "immanentist perspective", for whom language is written, permanent and concrete, the medieval liturgy demonstrates a wholly oral cast by restoring an "apophatic liturgical 'stammer'" in its constant repetition and "re-beginnings" (Pickstock, 1998:176&215). Furthermore, as the oral character of the medieval liturgy reflected

¹⁰² Eli Diamond (2005:6) suggests that the "liturgical mediation appeals to Pickstock" in the first instance because the "liturgical union is *felt* rather than *thought*" (Italics mine).

¹⁰³ See Eli Diamond 2005: 6

everyday life, so it folded back in to daily living by implying (for example) that every meal should be a liturgical feast, drawing everyday life into a doxological celebration (Pickstock, 1998:174).

Gift, Event, & Being

Pickstock argues that a genuine doxological way of life offers the possibility of a “redemptive restoration of genuine subjectivity in God” (Pickstock, 1998: 220). This possibility centres on a radical resolution of time and space, inside and outside, and subject and object within a doxological framework. The doxological resolution is predicated upon the centrality of *gift* as received and given, in the ontological category of God-as-giver (Pickstock 1998: 176). As opposed to the immanentist resolution of time and space, in which the subject is disempowered and reduced to the *nihil*, Pickstock proposes a doxological/liturgical framework which is decidedly semiotic and in which space is relational to God as Trinity and not geographical (Pickstock, 1998:229). In this, the doxological journey becomes an inward journey to self and an outward journey into God.

Furthermore, the journey situates within a communal *event* whose doxological function is the exchange of peace. For Pickstock (1998: 238), “peace is the true character of a genuine flow and exchange of *gift*” (Italics mine). In contrast to the received Cartesian legacy in which a reductionist and “immanentist” epistemology has replaced ontology, Pickstock (1998: 234 &240) proposes an ontology which is above all relational in the receiving and giving of the *gift* of Christ within his body.

Alain Badiou: *St. Paul and Universalism*

By way of comparison, I now consider briefly the approach of the French philosopher and secular Platonist Alain Badiou. In particular I examine his adoption of the same categories of *event*, *gift* and *being* as presented by Pickstock and summarised above.

In his essay on Levinas and Badiou, Milbank (2006) comments:

one could argue that the two thinkers (Levinas & Badiou) present rival versions of a shared philosophical move that in both cases breaks with most of 20th C philosophy in either its phenomenological or analytic idioms. For each abandons the anti-metaphysical restriction of philosophical knowledge to finitude, following Descartes rather than Kant in asserting the primacy and knowability of the infinite. Each thinker also appeals to something that can be validly known beyond appearances and which grounds them.
...both thinkers believe that a return to metaphysical seriousness requires a re-reading of Plato.
(Brackets mine)

In *Saint Paul: the Foundation of Universalism* Badiou (2003) advocates a reappraisal of Paul, not as an apostle or as a saint but as a “poet-thinker of the event” (Ray Brazzier, translator’s Prologue). For Badiou the event that motivated Paul to construct universal truth was the resurrection of Christ. Badiou’s general goal can be described as the effort to make sense of the potential for profound, transformative innovation in any situation. Every such innovation can only begin with some sort of exceptional break with the status quo; i.e. an *event*. Badiou is not interested in the historicity or otherwise of the Christ-event. His concern lies in the fact that for Paul this event overturned his

Pharisaic tradition, his adherence to law. Thus the divisions laid out by racial identity became obsolete as they become superseded by a universal (Badiou 2003, 40). He writes: (Badiou 2003, 57)

To declare the non-difference between Jew and Greek establishes Christianity's potential universality.

As indicated, Alain Badiou is not interested in an *apologia* for Christianity: his concern is rather to circumvent the Cartesian aporia by a "universal" outside of human reason. In so doing, he argues for the significance of *event*, of which Paul's universal gospel, centred on the resurrection of Christ is a prime paradigm. Furthermore, this *event* comes to us as *gift*. It comes as *gift* which terminates "the predictive peculiarity of cultural subjects" (Badiou, 2003: 57) and presents its transformative lineaments in terms of grace. He writes (Badiou, 2003: 63):

The pure event is reducible to this: Jesus died on the cross and resurrected. This event is "grace" (*kharis*). Thus it is neither a bequest, nor a tradition, nor a teaching. It is supernumerary to all this and presents itself as pure givenness. As subject to the ordeal of the real, we are henceforth constituted by evental grace.

In particular we observe in Badiou another attempt at reconstituting the subject; in this case as constituted by evental grace, and redefining the subject-object relationship. It is very surprising then that the question of *gift* and grace press themselves so hard on Badiou without a developed category of God-as-giver, except to observe that Badiou does not interpret these as particularly Christian categories but as models (albeit within a Pauline theological context) for the espousal of universal truth. Badiou argues (2003: 66):

If Paul helps us to seize the link between evental grace and universality of the True, it is so that we can tear the lexicon of grace and encounter away from its religious confinement.

From our perspective we may find Badiou's use of the Pauline metanarrative surprising and somewhat baffling, in that whilst denying the historicity of the narrative itself, he nevertheless appears to accept the quantum leap caused by St. Paul's theological arguments. For St. Paul, as for Christians, the case for a universal Gospel rests on the conviction of its historicity, as he believed that the risen Christ had appeared to him. For St. Paul the *event* actually happened, thus the possibility of a universal.

Nevertheless, Badiou provides helpful insight from a contemporary philosopher, who in a return to "metaphysical seriousness" (see Milbank, 2006) presses for the same categories of *gift* and *grace* as appear in Christian Neo-Platonists such as Milbank and Pickstock. His offer of a new metaphysics - an attempt to break with modernity's solipsism and with contemporary philosophy's fixation upon language - is a propitious reminder that such an offer is a felt need amongst contemporary thinkers, political philosophers, artists & social scientists. However, as Milbank points out, his substitution of genuine transcendence by "mathematical categories" may mean that the quest for an alternative

metaphysical approach ends up as “utterly empty mathematical possibility” (Milbank, 2006). Badiou’s adherence to “mathematical categories” may in fact suffer from the same collapse of meaningful space, as does Descartes’ attempt at metaphysics, against which Pickstock raises her fiercest criticisms (Pickstock, 1998: 57-74).

Walter J. Ong: *Orality and Literacy*

In *Orality and Literacy* Walter J. Ong (1989) argues that although civilised cultures have invented and used writing for millennia, a primary *orality* underlay their cultures until the invention of mass printing. In a similar vein to Pickstock (1998), Ong (1989) contends that this shift gradually but surely had a profound effect on human consciousness in causing a significant shift from orality to literacy, which in turn, affected all areas of human life including religion. The invention of the telephone, radio, television and electronic technology, he contends, has “brought us into the age of secondary orality” (Ong, 1989: 136). I now give a brief overview of his arguments.

Ong (1989) argues that there exists a critical difference between cultures which are primarily oral and those which now have become essentially literate. This might seem obvious until he points out that much contemporary scholarship assumes that oral verbalization is “essentially the same as written verbalization” (Ong, 1989: 10) and that “oral art forms were to all intents and purposes simply texts, except for the fact they were not written down” (Ong, 1989: 10). Early linguists such as Saussure took the view that writing “simply represents spoken language in visible form” (Ong, 1989: 17)¹⁰⁴. He argues that contemporary cultures have really no way of understanding primary orality because of the dominant enculturation of the written word. Oral cultures, he says, “produce powerful and beautiful verbal performances of high artistic and human worth, which are no longer even possible once writing has taken hold of the human psyche” (Ong, 1989: 14).

In the first place human cultures were predominantly oral even with the invention of writing. A primary orality underlay early written manuscripts including Biblical writings (Ong, 1989: 16, 99) and the ancient Homeric writings of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which had roots in Greek poetry (Ong, 1989: 17 -20). Oral formulaic thought and expression ride deep in the unconscious and do not vanish as soon as one takes pen in hand (Ong, 1989: 26). Ong (1989: 26) explains that even as late as in Tudor England, “old classical rhetoric still marked prose style of almost every sort”.

Ong argues that the increasing use of writing, and in particular its mass production had a role in the popular psyche of depersonalising and distancing the spoken word. In this Ong echoes Pickstock in similar yet slightly different ways. Whereas for Pickstock (1998:57), writing established an epistemology as an “immanentist construal of reality”, for Ong (1989: 81) writing technologizes the word and in so doing functions to objectify reality. Whereas in oral speech sound must have one

¹⁰⁴ See Ong, 1989: 17 where he argues that Saussure was followed in his misapprehension by Edward Sapir, C. Hockett, Leonard Bloomfield and also the ‘Prague Linguistic Circle’.

intonation or another, written discourse develops a “kind of precision” (Ong, 1989: 103) and lacks the existential warmth of much oral utterance (Ong, 1989: 104). Eventually print (rather than writing) replaced the “lingering hearing-dominance of the world of thought and expression” (Ong, 1989: 121). Print situates and locks words in space (Ong, 1989: 121), whether this happens through the composing of type by hand or via the computer. Whereas in orality words change their meaning depending on social environment and intonation of the speaker, print controls the space that words occupy and thereby controls their meaning in exact context and time. Whereas orality can be open-ended, print brings closure.¹⁰⁵

The modern age of print has been superseded by the arrival of electronic communication which has had the effect of both deepening our “commitment of the word to space” whilst also introducing “a new age of secondary orality” (Ong, 1989: 135,136). As with primary orality, Ong (1989: 136) suggests that secondary orality has generated a strong group sense, for “listening to spoken words forms the hearers into a group” just as reading turns individuals in on themselves. Nevertheless, the ‘electronic group’ is immeasurably larger – a global village - and Ong (1989) contends it neither aspires to, nor attains the same human intimacy as people do in primal orality.

Ong’s perception of orality and its comparison to the written/printed word brings invaluable insight to my argument in two ways. Firstly, following his analysis of the advent of mass printing, Ong highlights the marked influence this had on Protestantism, which enabled an individual and private inwardness fostered through access to the Bible (Ong, 1989: 153). Secondly, by pointing to a “secondary orality” Ong opens the possibility that the house-church congregations are pressing for orality beyond the written/printed word. The two congregations find themselves in the curious position of acquiring and maintaining the trappings of the electronic age, whilst giving place to the written word, and reaching for the “inter-personal warmth and existential life-world” (Ong, 1989: 43) which belong to the primary oral age.

PART 2 Charismatic Doxology: *Pursuing the Presence of God*

Introduction

In Chapters Six to Ten I argued that Charismatic doxological rituals as observed in the two congregations, form a *habitus* (Bourdieu, Csordas) or a *cultural-linguistic* milieu (Lindbeck), in which boundaries become permeable and ritualistic, and in everyday life fold into one another to give a

¹⁰⁵The advent of print brought a wealth of possibilities upon which Western culture and civilization has been built, as Ong admits. These include the vast array of literature in the English language including the popular novel, the detective genre (Ong, 1989:147, 148) and the wider dissemination and accessibility of the Bible.

sense of orientation and self-process which I term, following Csordas (1997), the ‘sacred self’. As I point out, particularly in Chapter Ten, this sense of orientation however does not exist in a cultural vacuum. The Charismatic sacred self is also shaped by psychocultural themes prevalent in the wider Scottish post-industrial cultural and economic landscape. These psychocultural themes have challenged the congregations to behave and speak in such a way as to maintain their Christian witness.

In the next part of this chapter I will highlight the paradigmatic resemblance between the Charismatic ritual field of the house-churches and arguments drawn from Pickstock and Ong, with reference to Badiou and later to Smith. As demonstrated and identified in the ethnography of Part Two, *Rituals that Live*, the goal of the Charismatic ritual matrix, through its different stages of progression, is the Divine-human encounter –the pursuit of the *presence* of God – catalysed by music and somatic participation. This observation is underscored by a small booklet published in 2009 by the London based *Ichthus Christian Fellowship*, which as noted in Chapters One and Four, has been influential in the Glasgow congregations. Written by leading Ichthus musicians, Chris and Jenny Orange (2009), *Pursuing the Presence of God: Journey of a Worshipper* makes clear that worship is an intentional journey whose goal is “to break through to the presence of God” (Orange, 2009: 37).

I suggest the Charismatic *habitus* offers a genuine (contemporary) doxological way of life that mirrors the paradigmatic lineaments of Pickstock’s *sacred polis* which promotes a “reciprocal link between life and liturgy” (Pickstock, 1998:171). Following Pickstock (1999), I contend that the Charismatic ritual field in its free-church context may itself provide a useful paradigm in resolving the collapse of meaningful space. In *Rituals that Live* I have demonstrated that the rituals of the two congregations are participatory and avowedly semiotic in their characteristic features of speech, music, song, dance, gesture, poetry, and relationality, and all are intrinsically embodied. As the central theological framework of Radical Orthodoxy is *participation* as argued by Milbank (1999: 3) and detailed by Pickstock (1998), this single observation serves as an overall theme to cover further analysis of the ritual *habitus* of the house-church congregations.

Ritual Space & Ritual Time

Pickstock’s (1998: 47) contention is that from Descartes to Derrida, immanentist rationalism, “indifferent to the specificities of human place, time and desire” has emptied space of holistic epistemological content and replaced *presence* with “knowledge as writing”. Over against this immanentist epistemology, Pickstock proposes a doxological revaluation of the subject-object relationship that offers the possibility of a genuine eternity. This allows a reappraisal of *space* as doxological space as a means of “restoring genuine subjectivity” (Pickstock, 1998: 220).

In Part Two, *Rituals that Live*, much of the argument revolves around the congregations’ use of *space*. I point out in Chapters Four and Six that the two congregations have chosen either to worship in

secular space (BCF) or have secularised their ritual space (BCC). Subsequently the ritual matrices of the congregations sacralise their space(s) from the beginning to the end of their particular ritual fields. The ritual field is enacted the moment the congregations enter the doors of their chosen meeting places, from the ‘gathering –greeting’ rites, and continues through the central ‘praise’ and ‘worship’ stages, to the ‘farewell-dispersing’ proceedings. The characteristics of these rites may appear different and have different nuances depending on their psychocultural context: nevertheless they provide the same function of sacralising space and bringing the Divine into the mundane human arena.

The sacralising of space also takes place in *ritual time*, as argued in Chapter Six: the transformation of ritual time being coterminous with the sacral transformation of space. The Sunday morning ritual matrix in the two congregations can last three hours. Soon after the Sunday morning, in each congregation the space reverts to its weekday use as general community hall.

I suggest that we can discern a milieu in which *space* becomes relational not geographical or sacred in a traditional sense: that is, its sacredness does not depend on location or religious artefacts, as it does for Dowie’s Edinburgh congregation (Dowie, 2002: 139 – 144). For the two congregations, space becomes sacred through the nature of the doxological drama which unfolds in it: the affirmation of human relationships which are a preparation for intense relationship to the Divine and a subsequent folding back into relationships with others. In contrast to the “immanentist” resolution of space and time in which the subject is disempowered (Pickstock , 1998: 220), I have argued from the ethnography of Chapter Seven in particular, that the embodied rituals of the house-church *habitus* collapses the subject-object duality without negating either the subject (the worshipper) or the object (the Divine presence). Following Pickstock (1998: 230, 231) I identify the act of ‘pursuing the presence of God’ in the Charismatic ritual process as a journey. For the congregants, space becomes a journey both inwardly and outwardly: to one another and to God. This notion proposes the possibility of a “redemptive restoration of genuine subjectivity” (Pickstock 1998: 220) and a genuine restoration of space.

Pentecostals/Charismatics are shaped by sacred and ritual time in the same way that space is modified to encounter and contain the Divine (see Albrecht, 1999: 124). In Chapter Six I identified five phases of the ritual field of the two congregations which I interpret as the frame in which God’s presence is perceived and experienced in ritual time. Furthermore, these phases have a progression as “the existential dimension of the ritual holds the progressive dimension in tension” (Albrecht, 1999: 126). As interpreted in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, the progressive nature of these rites demonstrate a rhythm and a natural rise and fall where the existential nature of the ritual reaches its full potential either in the ‘praise/worship’ or in the ‘preaching’ and becomes resolved in the ‘rites of response’ and the rites of ‘farewell- dispersing’. The latter two rites ensure the existential encounters of the ritual are ‘sealed’ – to use a Charismatic metonym - in prayer, meditation, or other appropriate responses, and that the encounters in a particular space prolong into the everyday time of the week to come.

For Pickstock (1999: 171) the reciprocal link between life and liturgy is an essential criterion of the redemption of space and time. As the continuum of the sacred with the everyday is also an integral part of the house-church *habitus*, I suggest that yet another significant link to the Pickstockian paradigm is established.

For Ong the printed word controls space (Ong, 1969: 128). Print determines where words will be placed and their spatial relationship to one another. Print locks words in space and both Pickstock (1998: 101-110) and Ong associate the printed word with death. Whereas the printed word can bring death, the oral word can bring life: “The letter kills, but the spirit brings life” (2 Cor.3:6) is a favoured Pauline quote Ong repeats (Ong, 1969: 75, 81). Orality indicates life as *presence*. It does not exist outside the presence of the speaker or the singer; a spoken, shouted, or sung word implies the presence of a person. In contrast to the disembodied and distancing epistemology of writing, orality necessitates a human or Divine presence (Pickstock 1998: 20, 115).

The elements of the house-church ritual field are decidedly *oral* in character. The congregations spend time speaking to one another before, during and after their central rituals. Singing plays a major part in the ritual field. Singing is loud and exclamatory; singing is quiet and reflective; singing is sometimes ‘in tongues’ as observed at BCC and BCF. The use of ‘tongues’ or *glossolalia*, whether spoken or sung confesses that the English language is sometimes inadequate to express the deepest prayers and praise.¹⁰⁶ For Csordas (2001: 55) the use of ‘tongues’ emphasises “the detachment of language from its semantic moorings”, at the same time emphasising the bodily act of “giving voice”; the use of ‘tongues’ abandons the strictures of language altogether.

For Pickstock (1998:176&215) the Medieval Roman Mass contains a primitive “liturgical stammer” with a quality of “pleading or negotiating”, “constant repetition” and “re-beginnings”. I contend that the Charismatic use of repetition in song, use of (sometimes) obtuse imagery, loud and/or quiet supplicatory praise, and the use of ‘tongues’ in individual prayer or communal chant holds the same qualities of reticence and negotiation in pursuing the presence of God.

Sound, Music & Imagery

Chapter Six contains observation and interpretation which places music, in particular its Charismatic form, at the heart of the house-church *habitus* in their aspiration to pursue the presence of God. For Walter Ong (1969: 160,161) *sound* resists objectification. In its traditional sense, the icon is an object, distant and flat; there is distance between the artist and the viewer. In the two Glasgow

¹⁰⁶St. Paul’s dictum that the “Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express”(Romans 8:26 NIV) is an often quoted reason for the use of ‘tongues’ in public or private usage. See Smail 1993:19 who confesses that his use of ‘tongues’ is more in “times of perplexity that in moments of exultation. See also Albrecht: 191, 192 and Csordas 2001: 55 where he suggests that ‘tongues’ is problematic because it is a phenomenon which may be “more profoundly meaningful than natural language”.

congregations sound becomes an auditory icon, not distant, not flat. In Chapter Six I suggest that ritual sounds surround the worshippers. Music from a variety of instruments, loud exclamatory singing or quiet supplicatory tones, favoured lyrics, congregational *glossolalia*, clapping and swishing of flags, all become the means whereby the congregants ‘see’, ‘feel’ and encounter the Divine.

In Chapter Eight I argued for a concept of *image-as-feeling* which is biased towards existential and embodied immediacy. The relationship of this to music and sound is illustrated by an observation in Chapter Six, in the singing of the opening lines of Psalms 103 and 104. In its original context, the phrase “Bless the Lord, O my Soul” is a precursor to the reverence of “His holy name” (Psalm 103 NIV) and in exultation of his greatness, which is “clothed with splendour and majesty” (Psalm 104 NIV). In traditional hymnology the same sentiments of reverence and distant majesty are maintained, such as in the hymn by Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847), “Praise my Soul, The King of Heaven”. In sharp contrast, the rendition of these words in the observed piece at BCC express a desire for an intimate experience of God in reciprocal blessing. The imagery of the lyrics and the music combine; the worshippers experience *image-as-feeling* and enter the presence of the Divine. Furthermore, experiential expectation is heightened not only by music, but by gestures of raised hands, flags waved and dancing movements.

Imagery in the two congregations comes from the participation of the congregants, who tell their stories, speak out a poem, or voice a ‘revelation’ described as image. These forms of speech-imagery and their concomitant embodied actions cultivate a deeply personal and collective communication with the Divine. Moreover, it is to be noted that the imagery in the two congregations is drawn from the experiences and images of general life such as building, roads, scenery, hill-walking, fun-fairs, water and wind. Images of angels, demons, heaven, hell, super-natural lights and such appear to be more frequent in the Charismatic gatherings of other nationalities.¹⁰⁷ Images in Scottish congregations appear to be less ethereal and more down-to-earth. The extended use of imagery, as exemplified in Chapter Eight, has immediate existential impact as “imaginal self process”, “cultivating a mode of orientation in the world” (Csordas 1994:24). The use of the imagination within the ritual matrix provides for a continuum of the sacred and the mundane, re-emphasising the reciprocal link of doxology to life within the *habitus*.

Movement, Dance & Other uses of the Body

For Pickstock (1998: 169, 170) since the different elements of the sacred polis are “avowedly semiotic”, she proposes an experiential return to signs in speech, gesture, art, music, colour, fire, smoke, vestments, bread, wine and relationality. She argues against the Cartesian city that is *written*, wholly immanent (Pickstock, 1998: 57, 58), and an abstraction from embodiment (Pickstock, 1998: 47) and for Plato’s lineaments of the ideal city, painted by artists using a heavenly model (Pickstock,

¹⁰⁷ See for example Csordas (1997: 171) on “demonic manifestations” among American Catholic Charismatics.

1998: 57). A doxology which restores “genuine subjectivity” is decidedly embodied, since orality requires the physical *presence* of the worshipper (Pickstock, 1998: 155). Her choice of the Medieval Roman Rite centres on the fact that it is so physical in its participatory requirements.

True to the religious heritage of their radical Reformation/ Puritan/Brethren ancestry, the two house-church congregations have stripped themselves of the religious symbolism of vestments: the ritual leaders wear jeans and sweaters, and they meet in plain, secular or secularised spaces. They nevertheless deliberately weave a rich semiotic tapestry in the power of imagination, poetry, music, song, and in somatic gestures: dance, ‘lifting up of hands’, swaying, spinning round, standing, kneeling or lying prostrate. The BCC congregation also use banners and flags of different colours and sizes. The banners are plain, without adornment or symbolic picture; their use in epiphanic rituals remains symbolically flexible and varied.

Interpersonal tactile gestures -hugs, kisses, arms around shoulders, handshakes, and ‘laying on of hands’ for prayer - mark the Charismatic house-church ritual field from beginning to end. As interpreted in Chapter Seven, human and Divine encounters are symbiotically part of a whole in the ritual field, human and Divine *presence* combine as a key function in the overall experience. For Ong (1969: 67), “The oral word never exists in a simple verbal context, as a written word does. Spoken words are always modifications of a total existential situation, which always engages the body”. As with Pickstock (1998: 115), for Ong (1969) the orality of the word, whether spoken, sung, shouted or whispered is always in its very essence an ontological part of human presence. Over against the epistemological dominance of writing or “mapping all knowledge on a manipulable grid”, Pickstock (1998: xiii) suggests, an ontological epistemology of “presence of self” which “favours orality...because of its link to physical embodiment”.

Pickstock’s account of physicality relates closely to the notion of *ēros* as linked to desire, in her interpretation of Plato: yearning for the good that is “nonetheless beyond being” (Pickstock 1998:20). I suggest that Pickstock intends to divert our attention from reductionist epistemology in modernism to a more holistic epistemology which uses all the human senses of embodiment and passion as a means of knowledge. The choice ideal citizen for Pickstock’s sacred *polis* is the philosopher-lover, for whom the “journey through life is simultaneously *erotic* and *hermeneutical*” (1998:20 Italics original). It is erotic because it lies “in the power of *ēros* to interpret and transport ‘human things to the gods and divine things to men’ ” (Pickstock 1998:20),and hermeneutical because “it involves the perpetual discernment of divine mediation through physicality” (Pickstock 1998:20). Against Derrida who, says Pickstock (1998: 21) “subtly denies the fact that language of any kind requires bodily presence”, she seeks to establish an ontology that equates orality with an epistemology of *presence*, in which she equates language with bodily presence (Pickstock, 1998: 22).

I have argued in Chapter Eight, contra Percy (1999), that unlike the behaviour of his Canadian Charismatics, the Scottish congregations do not display signs of overt sexual eroticism in their tactile and embodied rituals. If, however, the erotic is understood in its Platonic sense as “divine madness” (Pickstock 1998: 5), which nevertheless entails human passion and physical involvement, I suggest that the Glasgow congregations display a considerable degree of “divine madness’ in their ritual matrix. The Charismatic central ritual matrix expresses a desire or yearning that is both erotic and hermeneutical. It is erotic because it expresses and evokes a deep human passion for the Divine and for the power that transports human beings into the *presence* of God. It is hermeneutical because it similarly involves the “perpetual discernment of divine mediation through physicality” (Pickstock, 1998: 20).

The erotic and hermeneutic significance of physicality in the house-church congregations is both individual and communal: what seems existentially individualist in the rites folds back into communal expression. The dancing, swaying, clapping, flag waving, ‘lifting of hands’, singing, poetry reading, and such take place as individual and what appear to be spontaneous gestures. These nevertheless become part of an overall ritual matrix in which individual somatisations combine with the more overtly communal occurrences such as ‘laying on of hands’ or ‘hugging’, to reinforce the overall success of the community’s solidarity in worship. Furthermore, the hermeneutical significance is affirmed by the claim that for members of the congregations the ritual matrix has a lasting effect on their orientation in the world.

For the Charismatic house-churches the pursuit of the presence of God is a communal journey in which relationships are affirmed, and which, following Pickstock (1998: 238) is the exchange of peace: “peace is the true character of a genuine flow and exchange of *gift*” (Italics mine). In contrast to the received Cartesian legacy in which a reductionist and immanentist epistemology has replaced ontology, Pickstock’s (1998 : 234 &240) proposal is for an ontology which above all is relational, in the receiving and giving of the gift of Christ within his body.

Event, Gift and Grace

For Milbank, Pickstock and Ong the category of *event* is significant. For Milbank (2000) event is “one self-defining singular instance of reality” which “arises on the surface of a world of appearances normally obeying a closed logic” (Milbank 2006). Pickstock’s (1998:21) concept of supplementation is that which is beyond the event, which nevertheless is mediated by the event. For Ong (1989: 75), “the spoken word is always an event, a movement in time”; he explains that the Hebrew *dabar* meaning ‘word’, also means event.

As noted above, Badiou also adopts the categories of event, gift and grace. For Badiou (2003: 63), Paul’s thinking is paradigmatic, since he centres his theology on an event, namely the death and

resurrection of Christ. For Badiou (2003: 63, 77), the event of Christ's death and resurrection bestows a 'gift' which is beyond law and human tradition. The *event* that becomes 'gift' is pure "grace (*kharis*)" (Badiou 2003: 63, 77. Brackets and italics original): the gift is given "without being due" (Badiou, 2003:77). The granting of gift is essentially a *kharisma*, given in grace without obligation and not as reward or wage (Badiou, 2003: 77). The generous giving of 'gift' marks it as a universal possibility (Badiou, 2003:77, 78).

Despite protestations that his concept of gift is not contextualised in the ontology of God-as-giver, Badiou excels in developing a significantly helpful Christian understanding of grace as recognised by Protestant/Charismatic theologians and as delineated by Pickstock. For Pickstock (1998: 220) the concept of gift is central to the Medieval Roman Catholic Rite and because of the "non-violent resolution of space and time", is a means of restoring "genuine subjectivity in God".

Event, Gift, Grace and the Charismatic Ritual Field

Chapter Eight argues that the imaginal process allows the congregants in this study to participate in a drama in which they can sense the power of the image and 'be there'. I have argued that the imaginal and embodied process of the Charismatic ritual matrix has a revelatory consequence that is often nuanced with an existential experience of the overwhelming and affirming love of God.

I now argue that the central embodied Charismatic ritual fields of the two congregations may be interpreted as *event* in which the congregants expect to receive, experientially, the love of God as 'gift' given by grace (*kharis*). The ethnography of Chapters Six and Eight illustrates an imaginal process in the use of language, imagery and *charismata* in a ritual field which sacralises space and time. Generally avoiding strictures of time as dictated by the Christian calendar, the two congregations nevertheless emphasize 'giving time to God', and their central ritual matrix takes on the nature of a weekly event that may take three hours to complete. As illustrated in Chapters Six and Seven, 'pursuing the presence of God' takes time in vocal, imaginal and somatic effort. There are steps to be followed in the ascent to and the subsequent descent from the presence of God, although ironically the congregants would not concede 'steps' to follow. For the congregants the eventual Divine-human encounter is not only worth the time given to it, but as "one self-defining singular instance of reality" (Milbank 2006) it shapes their orientation in the world.

Central to the ritual field of the congregations is the belief that the whole of their doxological enterprise is *charismatic*, that is 'gift' that is offered and accepted "without being due" (Badiou, 2003:77). This would be true not only of what is considered peculiarly Charismatic (i.e. gifted by the Spirit, such as 'tongues'), but of all ritualistic behaviour such as use of imagination, use of song, and bodily movements in dance and other gestures. Revelation is also considered as 'gift', whatever the theological milieu or language. In the Charismatic doxological field it assumes personalised and

existential relevance. In particular it often carries an experiential disclosure of God's love. For the congregants, God's love comes as gift, as an occurrence of grace.

As argued and illustrated in Chapter Eight, in Charismatic discourse 'love of God' often carries with it a message of 'Fatherhood of God'. Within this discourse the theological concept takes on a peculiarly personalised nuance with therapeutic effect, as seen in the story of J.McK in Chapter Eight. Thus 'Fatherhood of God' - the instance in which he reveals himself as Father to the congregants - also comes as gift.

PART 3 Presence: *Distance and Absence*

I argue in the previous section that the Charismatic goal of the two congregations is to attain to the *presence* of God. I now argue that the pursuit of *presence* (Divine and human) is a reaction against the distancing of the Christian God, and a parallel distancing of human relationships through an emphasis on written revelation, rooted in the same historical/cultural forces identified by Pickstock and Ong. I foreground my argument with a brief résumé of the theological ancestry of the current Charismatic house-churches or 'New Churches'.

Edward Irving, Catholic Apostolics and the Christian Brethren

In *Restoring the Kingdom* Andrew Walker (1988: 226 - 264) identifies two church history movements as predecessors to the current house-church or Charismatic New Church Movement. These are the Irvingites (or Catholic Apostolics, as they became known) and the Christian Brethren: historically unconnected, although initially their paths crossed (Walker, 1988: 226).

Following the outbreak of Charismatic phenomena at Rosneath in the West of Scotland in 1830, Irving and Derby (founder of the Christian Brethren) sent teams to Scotland to investigate. Irving had already presented a powerful theological argument in favour of the gifts of the Holy Spirit based on his incarnational Christology, and saw this outbreak as practical confirmation of his understanding of the humanity of Christ (Walker 1988: 231, Dorries 2002: 43, 44). However Irving's Christology of the peccability of Christ's humanity was regarded as heresy by the Church of Scotland and he was excommunicated in 1833 (Walker, 1988: 232. Dorries, 2002: 55). Irving continued to minister in his Newman St. Church, London, and in other parts of the city until his premature death in 1834 (Dorries, 2002: 56-59). Since Irving's supposed heresy was linked to the "outbreak of miracles", the latent Pentecostalism amongst the Christian Brethren ended (Walker 1988:231-23).

Irving, his followers, and Christian Brethren leaders at the end of the nineteenth century wanted to return to a New Testament church. Both sets of believers were decidedly Protestant. Callum Brown (2001: 163) argues that the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed a high level of church

attendance in Britain. Following two World Wars, Brown (2001:170 - 173) argues for a “return to piety”, which climaxed in the late 1950s with Billy Graham crusades in London and Scotland.

Evangelicalism and the Written Word

The Evangelicalism of the mid-twentieth century gave prominence to the doctrine that revelation came from the *written* Word of God. In 1958 James Packer, Warden of Latimer House Oxford published a small book entitled *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*. In this work, Packer (1958: 47) states that his position on the Bible is a reflection of the Reformation, and that “it is in fact the original Christian position”. He writes: (Packer, 1958:47)

“To learn the mind of God, one must consult His written word. What Scripture says, God says. The Bible is inspired in the sense of being word-for-word God-given.”

Published by Inter-Varsity Fellowship, an Evangelical body set up in opposition to the perceived liberal stance of the Student Christian Movement, this small volume had a profound effect on the Evangelical world, influencing many leaders and members of the nascent house-church movement of the late 1950s and 1960s. In Packer’s influential argument for the authority of the “written word”, I suggest that he was (inadvertently) sowing the seed of an immanentist epistemology as identified by Pickstock (1998: 47) in which knowledge is equated with *writing*.

In 1973 Packer published his most influential and accessible work *Knowing God* in which he moves away from a strictly textual understanding of the knowledge of God, in admitting an epistemology in which includes the “warming of the Christian heart” (1973: 31) and a person to person relational experience of the Divine (1973: 31). In 1984, Packer published *Keep in Step With The Spirit*, seemingly in response to the growing influence of the nascent Charismatic Movement. In this volume, Packer recognises that knowledge of the Divine is more than textual, he emphasises the Spirit’s place in interpreting the Bible, and he acknowledges the place of emotions and experience “in the makeup of each human individual” (Packer 1984: 186). I do not purpose a critique of Packer’s hermeneutics, but simply sketch the general and evolving Evangelical conversation in the early years of the U.K.’s Charismatic Movement. This discourse accepted the need for a holistic and visceral expression in the Christian *habitus* whilst continuing to foster a written epistemology to which the overall Evangelical *gestalt* was subject. Thus within Evangelicalism, salvation was considered as individualised conversion (as witnessed in the Billy Graham crusades, prominent in the U.K. in the 1950s), and a robust cognitivist approach to the reading of the Bible was espoused as the quintessence of revelation. With knowledge of this, the turn to orality, semiotics, relationality and embodied imagery by Scottish Charismatic non-aligned churches at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century is even more surprising.

The Charismatic *Habitus*: Orality, Presence, Semiotics, and Relationality

On a Sunday morning in my local Parish Church of Scotland, the entrance of the Church Officer precedes that of the Minister. The Officer carries a large Bible to the pulpit set high above the congregation, places it on the lectern and opens it, then returns to his pew in the body of the Kirk. The act symbolises the pre-eminence of the written Word in the Reformed tradition in Scotland. Packer's (1958) statement on the *verbal* infallibility of the Bible reflects an Evangelical continuation and refinement of this position and it was I suggest the general view of Evangelicals in the mid-twentieth century, including the non-conformist congregations from which the house-churches emerged. Influential leaders such as Arthur Wallis, John Noble, Gerald Coates (Walker, 1988: 58) and Bryn Jones (Walker, 1988: 104), with Open Brethren, Baptist, classic Pentecostal or other free-church Evangelical backgrounds, would have been familiar with and would have given tacit consent to a religious discourse dominated by a written epistemology. Purves (2004:12) notes that throughout the early years of the house-church development in Scotland the "lines of dependency" in theological understanding stretched predominantly to England and the U.S.A. As noted in Chapter One, early Scottish house-church leaders emerged from similar Evangelical groupings to those in England, including the Rev. David Black, the founder of BCC. Thus, a *habitus* that tacitly acquiesced to the supremacy of a written mathesis was the stable from which the house-church leaders came, in Scotland as well as in England, and is the position against which they reacted.

I argue that the Charismatics' return to semiotics and orality is a quest for *presence* over the distancing effect of writing: the "breath of orality" requires the "presence of the speaker" (Pickstock 2001: 115). In contrast, the written word locks the author and his/her voice into the printed page, and has the ability to survive the author in time and space. The written word obviates the need for voice; orality requires a relationality that is the presence of speaker and listener. The written word does not require a speaker, and therefore distances author from the reader in time and space. The printed word promotes absence and so promotes isolation and individuality: the aftermath of the Reformation in Evangelicalism promoted individuality, and isolation was the legacy of Cartesian *mathesis* in the Enlightenment. For Descartes the perfect city is primarily written and wholly immanent (Pickstock, 2001: 57, 58) and devised by a man shut up alone in a "stove-heated room" with only himself to converse with (Pickstock, 2001: 58).

The ritual *habitus* of the Charismatic house-churches is highly semiotic and relational. In Chapter Eight, following Karla Poewe (1994:224), I explored the idea that the religious language of the Charismatic house-churches is essentially metonymical: a tripartite structure consisting of *Sign, Index, and Trigger*. I pressed this line of reasoning further when, in the notion of *image-as-feeling*, I suggest an embodied placement of semiotics that has communal application and shapes the Charismatic house-church *habitus*. I contend in this chapter that the prime motivational aspiration that bears on the

Charismatics is a desire for *presence*. This doxological event, I suggest, is a form of Pickstockan supplementation (following Plato): an overflow of *ēros*, which is “divine madness”, a yearning and pursuit of the good (Pickstock 1998: 20, 21). Plato’s prisoners in The Cave have their chains removed, and having been deluded into believing the authenticity of the shadows, they are dragged up a steep ascent to gaze on the sun, the essence of reality. The light of the sun does not depend on the struggle from the cave. It has always existed. The brightness of it comes as ‘gift’: supplementation to enable the former captives to gaze upon reality. In the same way, the pursuit of *presence* in Charismatic rituals comes as ‘gift’ (*kharis*), as supplementation to orientate the whole of life. Following Pickstock, reality is not to be rationally apprehended, but is to be appreciated in genuine fullness, in ritual experience of the Divine.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: *Truth as Encounter*

In his notion of ‘Truth as Encounter’, Emil Brunner (1964: 18) asserts with Kierkegaard that the Divine truth has come in the form of a man, but also “from outside of man, and from outside of the world, in a unique event in time”. With an intention similar to that of Radical Orthodoxy, his goal was to oppose a rationalistic view that sees truth solely “as immanent, even if only latent, in man” (Brunner, 1964: 18). Brunner however, as a Protestant theologian, is hampered by a strictly cognitivist approach to epistemology in which “encounter” is brought about by faith (*pistis*), as “obedience-in-trust” (Brunner, 1964: 104). His attempts to reach beyond a purely written mathesis remain within an enlightenment cognitivism which does not consider imagination and embodiment as vehicles of knowledge.

In contrast, the shift in hermeneutics within Protestantism outlined in this chapter is now making its contribution to the broader conversation on epistemology/ontology. In a radical departure from Protestant heritage, the Reformed Pentecostal scholar James K.A. Smith stretches the boundaries of religious epistemology by suggesting that knowledge in all its forms has greater visceral scope than that considered within the Cartesian framework. In *Desiring the Kingdom* Smith (2009), argues for a holistic view of the human being-in-the-world, more “tethered to our embodiment and animality” in which humans are to be understood primarily as “agents of desire or love” (Smith, 2009:47). For Smith (2009: 39-73) human beings are *homo liturgicus*. Informed and motivated by passion and imagination, they worship at the altar of love or desire: they are essentially *worshippers*. Human beings are therefore also *lovers*, argues Smith (2009: 46ff); and in similar vein to Pickstock’s argument in which the sacred *polis* is characterised by a doxological approach through a relational

overflowing of *ēros*, he contends that the worship of God is the highest good, intentionally and passionately offered in love for God.¹⁰⁸

In an assessment of the embodied nature of the Pentecostal ritual matrix, Smith (2010), in *Thinking in Tongues* makes the case for considering imagination as an epistemic vehicle. Smith (2010: 81) contends that Pentecostal epistemology is already a kind of aesthetic in that it privileges *aesthesis* (experience) before *noesis* (intellection). Embedded in the concept of “narrative knowledge”, which Smith (2010:64, 82) suggests is peculiar to Pentecostal epistemology, Smith (2010:81) argues that Pentecostal sacramentality is a “holistic affirmation of embodiment” in which the prevalent use of imagination plays a significant part. Smith (2010:82) argues for the use of imagination as epistemic grammar by suggesting that human beings make their way in the world “more by metaphor than by mathematics”. He suggests that for human beings, “the way we ‘know’ is more like a dance than deduction” (2010: 82).

The ethnographic interpretation of the two house-church congregations in Chapters Six to Nine establishes their bias to semiotics and orality whilst allowing for their allegiance to the written authority of the Bible; an echo of their Protestant/Evangelical heritage. This position is problematic in that it highlights a possible non-sustainable dualism, which, as noted in Chapter Eight, has also been an issue for Charismatic/Pentecostal theologians. A helpful resolution might be to begin, as James K.A. Smith (2010: 62-64) does, to view the Charismatic embodied and experiential *habitus* as essentially contained within the framework of “narrative knowledge”, in which use of Scripture plays a significant part. Thus written narrative knowledge is transposed through semiotic ritual, and the Word of God is encountered – beyond the written word - in the presence of God and of other congregants. The ethnography of the two Charismatic congregations in this study would lead us to believe this is a true interpretation of their ritual field.

¹⁰⁸ This is a summary of Smith (2009), who contends for a humanising of human knowing to include heart and gut (2009: 46, 47). From this premise, he characterises human behaviour as intentional acts of love (2009:47-53) which for Christians finds its highest expression in “worship as a practice of desire” (2009: 136ff).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1
Interview questions at a later stage of the fieldwork

This is NOT a test: there are no RIGHT/WRONG answers. Please feel free to tell your own story. Your identity will remain anonymous.

Your story

1. How did you come to be part of BCC/BCF?
2. What do you like most about this?
3. What do you like least?

Practices

1. What are you hoping for or expecting from worship at BCC/BCF?
2. Do you raise your hands when worshipping, and if so why do you do this?
3. What does 'praying for each other' mean to you; what do you think it means for others in the church?
4. What is the significance for you in the laying on of hands when praying for each other?

Revelation

1. Do you believe God speaks to you?
2. How does he do this?
3. What part does the Bible play in God speaking to you?

APPENDIX 2
Questionnaire to leaders of Youth Club at BCC

Your answers to these questions will remain confidential and anonymous.

How long have you been involved in the leadership of the youth club?

What do you think the main purpose of the youth club is?

What is your involvement with the youth club?

Do you attend any of the main worship services at the Church?

Do you attend any of the other Church activities?

In what ways do you consider that the worship services connect to:

1. Your life?
2. Your service to the young people?

APPENDIX 3
Profile of anonymised participants at BCC

Initials	Profile	Sex	Age Range
CB	Refugee from Sierra Leone/ 3 children/ Nurse	Female	45-50
DF	Architect of BCC buildings complex	Male	65-70
DH	Volunteer/supervisor catering Youth Café	Female	30-35
FC	IT Consultant married to HC	Male	40-45
GC	Community Pastor and subsequently overall Pastor	Male	40-45
HC	Elder at BCC/married to FC / teacher	Female	30-35
IB	A founding member of BCC and current Elder	Female	65-70
JA	Business partner and married to MA/ cartography business	Female	50-55
JD	Youth Pastor	Male	30-35
KK	Member of BCC/ married 3 children/housewife	Female	45-50
KS	Pastor BCC – moved to another church during the fieldwork	Male	55-60
LH	Leader of Youth Café at BCC	Female	25-30
MA	Married to JA/ self-employed cartographer	Male	50-55
PH	Works at Glasgow City Mission/ co-leads Youth Café	Male	30-35
RB	Librarian/volunteers in the BCC Playgroup	Female	45-50
RM	Professor of Physics/ Elder at BCC	Male	45-50
VM	Nurse/Lives with invalid mother /dances with flags	Female	35-40

APPENDIX 4
Profile of anonymised participants at BCF

Initials	Profile	Sex	Age Range
AMcG	Outreach worker and leader with BCF	Female	40-45
BQ	Founding leader of BCF. Partner in a tool-making engineering company	Male	50-55
CA	Single mother /leader of women's outreach Shared employment: BCF & local education authority to work with disadvantaged children	Female	40-45
J	Newly appointed manager of Education Centre	Female	30-35
JMcK	Housing association engineer	Male	60-65
I & G	Man and wife/members of BCF/very musical family. G suffers from clinical depression	Male & Female	45-50
RMcK	Married to JMcK/ active member of BCF	Female	60-65
SD	Member of BCF	Female	40-45

APPENDIX 5

Demographic Comparisons of Bishopbriggs and Bridgeton

Making precise comparisons between Bishopbriggs and Bridgeton is complex because data specific to Bridgeton is not available, but is embedded within Glasgow City Council's 'Ward Factsheet' for the wider area of Carlton - Ward 9, which comprises Carlton, Camlachie, Dalmarnock and Bridgeton, Bridgeton by geographical area appearing to be approximately one-quarter of the total residential district.

2010 DEMOGRAPHIC	BISHOPBRIGGS*	CARLTON** (includes Bridgeton) - Ward 9 Glasgow Percentage figures rounded-up
Total resident population	23,118	22,714
% male	48%	50%
% female	52%	50%
Aged 5-30 years	30%	30%
Aged 65+	22%	11%
Non-white/non-European	3%	5%
% Claimants of unemployment related benefits	<i>Income support</i> 1.72% <i>Jobseeker allowance</i> 1.81% (2011)*** (Bishopbriggs South – Ward 6 East Dunbartonshire)	8.3% (2011 actual figures)

*<http://www.scrol.gov.uk/scrol/browser/profile.jsp?profile=Population&mainArea=Bishopbriggs&mainLevel=Locality>

**<http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=3710&p=0>

***<http://www.scrutiny.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/pdf/CROD-CPP%20-%20Ward%206%20Bishopbriggs%20South%202012.pdf>

Note the higher percentage of those claiming unemployment benefits in the Carlton Ward than Bishopbriggs. Also of noteworthy interest is the considerably lower number of those aged 65+ in the Carlton Ward compared to Bishopbriggs, an area with similar overall population figures and the same number of residents between the ages of 5 to 30. This would appear to support the contention that life expectancy in the East End of Glasgow is lower than other parts of the city.

APPENDIX 6

Questionnaire responses from 5 volunteer leaders of the Youth Café at BCC: 3 male & 2 female aged 18 -24 (numbering corresponds to the same individual throughout)

Q. How long have you been involved in the leadership of the youth club?

1. 3 years
2. 1 year
3. 3 years
4. 8 months
5. 8 months

Q. What do you think the main purpose of the youth club is?

1. I think it has two strands – we meet a need in the community for a safe place for young people to meet. It is also an opportunity to be an example of Jesus to the young people in our area
2. To give young people a safe, fun and enjoyable place to hang out and meet friends.
3. It is a place where young people can come and relax and have fun in a safe, loving environment.
4. To give young people a safe and comfortable environment to spend their time rather than being out in the streets. Also it is a place where they can seek advice and refuge.
5. A place for young people to hang out. It's a safe place to hang out.

Q. What is your involvement with the youth club?

1. I am adult volunteer
2. I was part of the group who set it up, and now volunteer, working in the café, on the till and supervising activities.
3. I helped start and open it and now a youth leader here.
4. Supervision of young people
5. I work on the till, help clean up, and make sure everyone is OK

Q. Do you attend any of the main worship services at the Church?

1. I am a member of the church.
2. Yes, church services and youth group etc.
3. Yes
4. Not Yet
5. Nope

Q. Do you attend any of the main worship services at the Church?

1. I am a member of the church.
2. Yes, church services and youth group etc.
3. Yes
4. Not Yet
5. Nope

Q. In what ways do you consider that the worship services connect, if at all, to:

(A) Your life?

1. Worship has been a huge part of my faith. I enjoy serving at the café and on the worship team on Sundays.
2. Helps me grow closer to God and builds my faith. Meet new people.
3. It's a time when I can worship with the rest of my church family and have fellowship.
4. N/A
5. N/A

(B) Your service to the young people?

1. I feel the Sunday service is an opportunity for corporate worship and teaching and helps equip me for service in my job and for the youth café.
2. Gives space to chat, engage and befriend other young people.
3. Because the young people know I attend church they feel comfortable to ask me about this and about my faith
4. N/A
5. N/A

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