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The Wesleyan Theological Consortium exists to labour in the development of Wesleyan theological education, across the denominational spectrum. It is committed to bearing witness to that 'union between vital piety and sound learning' proposed by John Wesley.

Aldersgate Papers made its first appearance as the theological journal of the Christian Holiness Association (Australia) in October 1994. It contained two articles and did not proceed beyond a single issue in that format. In September 2000 it was resurrected, this time as the theological journal of Kingsley College, bearing a September 2000 date. The Wesleyan Theological Consortium first began meeting in 1999, following each Biennial Conference of the South Pacific Association of Bible Colleges (SPABC). These meetings arose out of a recognition that Kingsley College (www.kingsley.vic.edu.au) and Nazarene Theological College (www.ntc.qld.edu.au) have much in common as Wesleyan educational institutions, and out of a desire to work together, rather than duplicating efforts, wherever possible. These times have included formal delivery of academic papers, as well as fellowship and casual conversation around common areas of passionate interest.

When the Consortium met in Sydney on July 4th, 2003, immediately following the 20th Biennial Conference of the SPABC, it was decided that *Aldersgate Papers*, should become the journal of the consortium, costs being shared by member institutions (at that time, Kingsley College and the Nazarene Theological College). This 6th number of the journal is the third under the new arrangement.

Though originally intended to appear twice a year the production schedule has been a little slow and a single issue a year has appeared in September of most years since. Somewhere along the line production schedule has slipped behind and the last issue (volume 5) had a cover date of September 2004, though it was released in September 2005. The current issue is volume 6 and the cover date has been brought up to date, meaning that no issues with a September 2005 date will appear.

Subscriptions

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Aldersgate Papers is an international journal, moving towards becoming a fully refereed journal, which publishes articles and reviews in theology and all related disciplines. The journal follows the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. for all matters of style with the exception of spelling which follows the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Authors may also refer to Kate L. Turabian's short guide to the Chicago style, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 6th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

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9. Except for brief quotations of no more than a line, the body of all papers should be in English.

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Modern Book:
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8. M. A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 96-97.

Subsequent references to the same work should be reduced to:

9. Noll, 112.

Early Book:
(Publisher may be omitted)

10. William Baldwin, *A Treatise of morall philosophy Contaynynge the sayings of the wyse* (London, 1579) .

Government Publication:

11. U. K. *Parliamentary Debates*, Lords, 5th ser. , vol.13 (1893), cols.1273-74. *and subsequently* :

12. *Parl. Deb.* , Lords, 5th ser. , 13 (1893): 1273.

Archival Source:

13. Report of the Committee into Convict Discipline, 24 March 1842, CSO 22/50, Archives Office of Tasmania, Hobart.

Manuscript:

14. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 581, fols. 23-24v. and subsequently

15. Bodley 581, fol. 23.

Judeo-Christian Scriptures:

16. Heb. 13:8, 12-13.

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Classical and Medieval References:

17. Abelard *Epistle* 17 to *Heloise* (Migne PL 180.375c-378a).

18. Cicero *De officiis* 1.133, 140.

Abbreviations should follow the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

13. Subsequent citations to a work previously cited should provide only the author's last name and the page number(s) and, in the case of citations to more than one work by the same author, a short title of the work. Do not use *Ibid* or other Latin contractions.

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IMPROVISATORY MUSICAL PRACTICES IN THE WESLEYAN METHODIST TRADITION

Graeme Pender

There was a continuity of improvisatory musical practices in early Wesleyan Methodist churches in Victoria from 1835 to 1914. This article attempts to show a continuum of two watersheds of improvisatory practice, namely "lowbrow" and "highbrow" that drew upon a variety of less "orthodox" performance methods, as well as some of the more formal nineteenth century liturgical and performance contexts.

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The term *improvisatory* found in the title of this paper must be understood in broad terms if any attempt to trace the history of improvisation in Australian church music is to be undertaken. The word used in both colonial and contemporary Australia certainly reflects several meanings. One school of thought advocated the memorisation of predetermined rudimentary accompaniments, in order to present presumably spontaneous improvisatory performances. Another argued that the "spur-of-the-moment" creation and performance of music involving all the possibilities of sudden inspiration, surprise, experimentation and personal discovery was improvisation. Melbourne historian and academic, John Whiteoak, defined improvisation as a genre that:

> ...ranges from, say, liberties taken in the interpretation of a conventional score to the most spontaneous or indeterminate forms of music-making imaginable. It takes a very wide variety of improvisatory genres and musical practices within genres. At a less significant level, it embraces the action of "freezing" musical spontaneity into notation (e.g. the writing of fantasias, ragtime or jazz).[1]

This fluid definition provides the vehicle for the musician who spontaneously creates new forms of music independent of an existing framework, the spontaneous elaboration or variation of an existing framework; or a combination of predetermined musical elements (such as memorized accompaniment patterns). Whiteoak

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[1] J. Whiteoak, "The Improvisatory Process", *Sounds Australian* 14:48 (1996,): 2.

maintained that "all live performance of music is to some degree improvisatory" since musicians make personal choices that affect a musical performance, whilst still faithfully following a score.

I agree with Whiteoak and support the view that the term "improvisation" needs to be evaluated in a way that allows for a much broader and open-ended approach to musical performance. Rather than relying on a perceived set of criterion that focuses on the performance practice of a musician, improvisatory practice needs to include factors such as natural and learned abilities, as well as intuitiveness, experimentation and creative insight. Thus, for the purpose of this article, the term "improvisation" is used in a liberal context, regardless of whether the performance was a highly skilled, spontaneous invention or not. Improvisation includes a selection of a pastiche of musical "fills," the inspired rendition of a detailed musical score, or simply the embellishment of a melodic or harmonic line. The rudimentary or complex embellishment or ornamentation of the melody or harmonic structure likewise falls under the definition of improvisation.

Approaches to the performance of Wesleyan Methodist Church music in colonial Melbourne followed two streams of musical activity: "lowbrow" and "highbrow." "Highbrow" approaches to music making emerged from the systematic European conservatorium tradition associated with oratorios, organ concerts, and orchestral performances of sacred music as well as impressive choir recitals. Within the "highbrow" genre of music making came sacred oratorio and church organ accompaniment. Even though this genre embraced systematisation, tradition, conservatism and at times, a rigid orthodoxy, there was, nonetheless, the presence of improvisation seen particularly in embellishment and variation techniques.

The "lowbrow" context surfaced as an ostensibly more practical approach to musical practice during the formative years of colonial Melbourne and was performed by various "unorthodox" ensembles sometimes performing in fairly informal contexts. Both approaches to the performance of church music became unified in the sense that each stream applied common improvisatory and accompaniment techniques. Conventional musical training gave church musicians the opportunity to become skilled at fundamental improvisatory practice.

For the purposes of this article, the term "Wesleyan" is used in a global sense, that not only includes the Wesleyan tradition but also embraces the many groups that detached themselves from the

mother Wesleyan body. These include the Methodist New Connexion, Bible Christians, Protestant Methodists, Bakerites, Wesleyan Reformers and the Primitive Methodists. Whilst points of theology differed from tradition to tradition, some groups approached hymn-singing and public prayer with more gusto and enthusiasm than others.

Australia's "tyranny of distance" effected the periodic visitation of celebrated musicians from Europe for much of the first half of the 19th century. Even when musicians such as William Vincent Wallace (violin) and Isaac Nathan (organ) travelled to Australia and performed on the concert platform, their performances tended to feature improvisations based either on a single theme or on a potpourri of popular tunes of the time. Similarly, the more informal local town bands and street entertainers catered for colonial musical taste by improvising well-known melodies of the day, probably in a style that resembled, if not copied, the improvisatory Anglo-Celtic folk tradition of England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland. In a like manner, the performance of church music in Australia before the 1850s especially seemed to reflect these general colonial musical trends.

From the 1850s onwards, the musical life of Melbourne began to develop following the founding of the Philharmonic Society in 1853 and the visits of overseas musicians such as Sara Flower, Catherine Hayes, Anna Bishop, Miska Hauser, Jenny Claus, Arabella Goddard and Charles Horsley. Likewise, many skillful musicians came to Australia with the intention of becoming residents. These people contributed to the progress of music in Australia up to and beyond the 19th century and their performances of sacred music altered the status of church music in Melbourne. No longer was "traditional" Christian church music being performed at a "grassroots" level. Rather, sacred music was becoming elevated to a more "highbrow" position in Melbourne, linking it to a more orthodox musical convention, very much in line with
secular musical performances.

Even though the emergence of the Wesleyan tradition in colonial Melbourne maintained its own traditional musical identity, the Wesleyan Methodist model contained a greater sense of overlapping or "blurring" of the "lowbrow" and "highbrow" genres for much of the 19th century, compared to the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions which seemed more clear cut in their approaches to sacred music. The Wesleyan tradition was musically "lowbrow" for much of the 19th century, even though the emergence of sporadic

sacred concerts and organ recitals from as early as 1843 embraced aspects of "highbrow" improvisatory musical practices.

Congregational Hymn Singing

Edmund Finn wrote that the Rev. Joseph Orton celebrated the "first Wesleyan service in the [Melbourne] colony...in the tent of Dr. Thomson by the banks of the Yarra."[2] Whilst Orton led the liturgy, Thomson led the singing.[3] In the afternoon, Orton presided at another service. On this occasion, most of the congregation "consisted of natives – about fifty – who sat very quietly, and seemed particularly interested by the singing."[4] Even though there is no explicit mention of what was sung at these services, the hymn singing was probably unaccompanied and sung with great enthusiasm. Joan Mansfield quoted one writer in *The Methodist* from 1887 thus: "The strength of Methodism consists in a simple form of service, good and hearty congregational singing and in the power of the pulpit."[5] Even Sydney's Anglican Minister, Samuel Marsden, was pleased with the Wesleyan's reputation as a singing people, "envying the comparative freedom and variety of their music."[6]

Finn wrote that soon after Orton's service, "class-meetings were held by some religiously disposed laymen."[7] Among the names of those who attended these prayer meetings were William Witton and John Peers. Witton was a local preacher from Tasmania who conducted meetings on Sundays and during the week. Peers was described as "an ardent Wesleyan" and musician who worked as a "philharmonic contractor." Peers also secured land at the corner of Swanston and Little Flinders Streets and built "free *gratis*" a brick

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[2] E. Finn, ("Garryowen"), *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne, 1835-1852: Historical, Anecdotal and Personal* (Melbourne: Heritage Publications, undated (facsimile ed. Melbourne, Fergusson & Mitchell, 1888), 153.
[3] K. E. Eckersall, *Eltham Inhabitants: For Most the Serious Part* (Eltham-Montmorency Uniting Church, 2000), 24.
[4] Eckersall, 24.
[5] http://www.westgallerymusic.co.uk/articles/Mansfield/Mansfield4.html, accessed 20/6/2005.
[6] J. Mansfield, "Music – A Window on Australian Christian Life", *Re-Visioning Australian Colonial Christianity: New Essays in the Australian Christian Experience 1788-1900*, (ed.) E. Campion and M. Hutchinson (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1994), 134; also refer to A. T. Yarwood, *Samuel Marsden: The Great Survivor* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1977), 161.
[7] Finn, 153.

chapel that could hold 150 people.[8] Peers, also a "gifted singer", formed a choir of local people who were accompanied by a clarinet and flute that "gave a charm to the evening meetings which led to the rapid increase in attendance."[9]

Following the discovery of gold in Victoria during the 1850s, the Methodists were the first to erect a chapel for public worship on the goldfields with a resident minister.[10] Many Cornish and Irish miners proclaimed the Gospel all over the goldfields through song and prayer, worshipping in tents and "many a gully and on many a creek side."[11] It was common to hear Cornish Methodists singing Wesleyan hymns during the evening, either accompanied or unaccompanied. Albeit "tongue-in-cheek", Benson described their spirituality thus:

> [Cornish miners] were very zealous, and would not object to a minister killing himself with hard labour, but would rather praise him for it, and then, gathering devoutly about his corpse, they would lustily sing – "Rejoice for a brother deceased."[12]

Since there was either no accompaniment, or else the accompaniment was rudimentary, the miners' approach to hymn singing would have been largely improvisational in approach. If any spur-of-the-moment part singing occurred at these services, their harmonisations would have been fundamentally aurally orientated. In 1865, a group of Cornish miners began an ongoing tradition singing Christmas carols in Moonta, South Australia on Christmas Eve. These carols were associated with the great revival brought to Cornwall by John Wesley and were largely improvisational, characterised by the spontaneous singing of "florid airs, a rolling bass, and frequent points of imitation."[13] Earlier accounts of unaccompanied Wesleyan prayer services on the Victorian goldfields provide examples of "grassroots" improvisational musical practice:

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[8] C. I. Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism* (Melbourne: Spectator Publications, 1935), 34; see also Finn, 153.
[9] Benson, 34.
[10] Benson, 97.
[11] Benson, 99.
[12] Benson, 104.
[13] O. Pryor, *Australia's Little Cornwall* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1962); cited in J. Whiteoak, & A. Scott-Maxwell, (eds.), J. Whiteoak, "Christmas Music", *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia* (Sydney: Currency House Inc., 2003), 139.

> It is pleasing to see public worship conducted by an open-air congregation, among the wild trees and stoney [sic] ranges of the forest...and hear the melodious strain pour forth the gratitude of their hearts to Him who made and redeemed man.[14]

When reflecting on the miners' approach to sacred song, two important questions to consider are: 1) what hymns did they sing and, 2) how were they sung? In an attempt to answer the first question, one should consider perhaps the earliest Australian hymnbook printed in Port Jackson in 1821. This book entitled, *An abridgment of the Wesleyan hymns, selected from the larger hymn book, published in England, for the use of the people called Methodists*, was compiled by Rev. John Wesley. It contained 560 hymns and one anthem and emerged in Australia because of "the great scarcity of hymn books in this colony, particularly in the interior towns and districts."[15] Although the text contained 130 pages of Wesleyan Methodist hymns, a publication that attested to the primary place of hymn singing in their tradition, this hymnal contained no musical notation.

It was not until 1843 that a hymnal containing both words and music was first published in Australia.[16] Since many people who migrated to Australia during the first half of the 19th century were often illiterate, there would have been a greater reliance on one's memory for recalling the melody of these hymns. Accordingly, if the originally intended melodic, rhythmic or harmonic line or structure became modified or adjusted slightly or significantly, the performance would enter the context of improvisation. Many of these early choirs would have entered the realm of "problem-solving experimentation": congregations who were not formally trained musicians, who relied on fostering an aural tradition.

The second question is more difficult to answer since the technology of sound recordings did not exist during this early period. In attempting to determine the "sound" of colonial hymn singing, improvisational practice within the Australian Wesleyan Methodist tradition was active, experimental and dynamic. At a

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[14] *Argus*, 4 March 1853, 4.
[15] John Wesley, "Preface", *An Abridgment of the Wesleyan Hymns, Selected from the Larger Hymn Book, Published in England, for the Use of the People called Methodists* (Sydney: George Howe, Port Jackson, 1821).
[16] *A Collection of Psalms and Tunes for the Morning and Evening Service of Each Sunday in the Year and Each Day in the Month, Arranged for the Use of St. George's Church, Hobart Town*, (c.1843), cited in D. Gome, "Australian Hymnody, 1821-1901: An Annotated Checklist of Sources in Australian Libraries", *Continuo* 24 (1995): 20.

public tea meeting in Eltham, Victoria, the Rev. Henry Baker described the disadvantages to the "success of gospel ministrations, arising from defective architecture [and] lack of taste in church choirs."[17] This "lack of taste" was probably suggesting either the experimental approach to singing by church choirs, or else their poor musicianship. Likewise, the following reference points to the improvisational character of an unorthodox ensemble gathered at a Wesleyan service on the goldfields, suggestive of a band of questionable musicianship:

> I remember a service in a small goldfields' chapel where the musical instruments consisted of flute and cornet, violin and bass viol and ophoclyde [sic]. How the ophoclyde player blew and blew and made more noise than melody![18]

Perhaps some approaches to hymn singing in local Victorian parishes took the form of grandiose speech. If this were the case, then clearly the original melodic and harmonic structures of the hymn would have been altered substantially. Whether choristers supplied harmonic lines spontaneously or ornamented the melody either considerably or slightly, or whether they delivered hymns with grandiose speech or were plainly poor musicians, Wesleyan Methodist hymn singing was to a large degree improvisatory.

Ecstatic Worship

For the purpose of this discussion, the etymological root of the word "ecstasy" comes from the Greek word *ekstasis* meaning "being outside of one's self".[19] Worship within the Wesleyan Methodist tradition emphasised simplicity. This became apparent by their unadorned churches and services. Prayer was always personal, impulsive and unconstrained rather than following any set form.[20]

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[17] Eckersall, 54-55.
[18] "An Old Man's Thoughts IV: Methodist Psalmody," *Methodist* (22 October 1910): 2.
[19] The Christianised religious ecstasy of the New Testament, commonly referred to as "ecstatic utterances," or "speaking in tongues" referred to in 1 Corinthians 12-14, had a pronounced effect on the internal and external religious Christian ceremony. Much of this form of "prayer" evolved into a style of expressive prayer and worship known as "jubilation" or "jubilus" which means, "loud shouting, or whooping." Jubilation, or "ecstatic" worship was a form of improvised song-prayer practiced during the Patristic period when the Roman churches had a considerable degree of spontaneity in their worship, including the collective improvisation of psalm singing and hymns.
[20] T. Van Sommers, *Religion in Australia* (Adelaide: Rigby Court, 1966), 133.

Personal worship in particular was reflected in one's approach to congregational singing. Their singing was "typically from the heart, fervent, loud and very slow, as was the custom of the time."[21] This description highlighted the passion, devotion and enthusiasm expected amongst worshippers. Possibly Mansfield's previous reference was hinting at some kind of ecstatic experience that caused one to feel literally "beside oneself" by reason of some intense spiritual encounter.

The presence of ecstatic worship became a familiar characteristic in many early Wesleyan prayer meetings. During many of these meetings congregations moved by the power of the Holy Spirit generally supported their preachers by spontaneously shouting "Amen" or "Glory be," although by 1888 the Rev. J. H. Fletcher lamented "the silence which has crept into our worship, instead of the soul-stirring responses of earlier days."[22] Early colonial Methodist prayer meetings usually witnessed accounts of ecstasy, described as "lively meetings" that produced "passionate expressions of feelings and aspirations in song as well as prayer." The following description attested to the ecstatic atmosphere that could be generated during Wesleyan prayer meetings:

> [Samuel Hewitt] set a whole houseful of people in commotion. I fancy I can hear him giving out that glorious old hymn "O God Our Help in Ages Past." With his eyes lit by the light of God's Holy Spirit, he would suddenly shout out, before the singing started, "Yes, friends, our God HAS been our help in the past, and is here to help us tonight. He is our only Hope, our shelter from the storms of sin and persecution around us, but the best of all is, He is our eternal home. At this stage, many would cry out, "Glory to God, Hallelujah!" By the time the hymn and first prayer were through, members could be heard weeping or shouting Glory![23]

From a musical perspective, the result of ecstasy, generated in this case by enthusiastic and spirited prayer, can have a profound effect on one's approach to improvisational practice either vocally or instrumentally. The ecstatic nature of "praising the Lord" in song becomes apparent in this following extract, an occasion that allowed

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[21] Mansfield, 134-135.
[22] Don Wright and Eric Clancy, *The Methodists: A History of Methodism in NSW* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1993), 73.
[23] H. Barker and R. Hawkins, *Early Wesleyans of Pennant Hills* (Hornsby: 1983), 37; also cited in Mansfield, 135.

for spontaneous intuitive group interaction even during the obvious reactions caused by the singing:

> One night in 1841, as a band of Wesleyan missionaries marched along George Street singing hymns and praising the Lord, a Romanist mob pushed an empty dray at them, one man hurled a dead cat into the midst and others threw crackers.[24]

Jazz musicians who perform gospel music can experience "ecstasy" during their attempts at improvisation. Gospel songs, spirituals sung or performed in gospel style, or sacred works inspired by church music often include ecstatic experiences that affect the rhythmic, physical, inclusive and improvisatory aspects of the style and induce a feeling of spiritual freedom. American jazz saxophonist John Coltrane wrote a composition called "A Love Supreme" which acknowledged his belief in God. Coltrane said that 90 percent of his playing was prayer and the prayers he attempted to play were closer to the uninterpreted tongues of angels than the *Book of Common Prayer*. His improvisations also attempted to transfigure the lives of those who heard him play, whilst his own goal was "to live the truly religious life and express it" through his music. Moreover, Coltrane said that his music "is the spiritual expression of what I am – my faith, my knowledge, my being."[25] Perhaps the famous saying: *Qui cantat, bis orat* [he who sings prays twice] is appropriate regarding Coltrane's intimate relationship with God.

Improvisation can become a "prayer," especially if one focuses on praise and thanksgiving during this time of self-expression. For myself, improvisation is prayer because it heightens my own personal relationship with God through the symbolic activity of performing music, either in a religious or jazz context. Within both musical worlds, I can experience moments of deep ecstasy, which heightens my own prayer experience and allows a more penetrating improvisation to emerge.

These personal recollections seem to mirror, to a point, similar ecstatic responses by some vocalists and instrumentalists during their own improvisational practices within the Wesleyan Methodist tradition. It is quite likely that these informal settings enabled

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[24] A. M. Grocott, *Convicts, Clergymen and Churches* (Sydney: University Press, 1980), 96.

[25] A .M. Gallegos, "Spiritual Improvisation", *Sojourners* 28 (July-August, 1999), 57-58.

musicians the chance to explore, embellish and interact with congregations in a much freer and experimental way than perhaps some of the more orthodox (or even unorthodox) contexts of Anglicanism or Roman Catholicism allowed.

Because congregational participation in the music was fundamental to Wesleyan Methodist worship, the spontaneity of ecstatic worship was usual and to be expected. Not only were colonial prayer meetings noisy and wild, preachers moved by the Holy Spirit were usually uninhibited in their sharing of the Gospel message, whilst congregational prayer was usually fervent and enthusiastic.[26] There is no reason to suggest that musicians were not as extroverted as the preacher or congregations were during prayer services. In fact, these situations would have promoted a context for much more informal and unrestrained music making and musical experimentation.

Episodes of spontaneous ecstatic responses during Wesleyan prayer services occurred in America during the mid-19th century, possibly because, like Australians, Americans were also encouraged to express their faith with fervent emotion and bold testimony.[27] Not only would these ecstatic responses occur in spoken prayer, they would have emerged within the context of congregational singing. Likewise, during British prayer meetings, some preachers encouraged uncensored testimonials by the congregation. These included a public sharing of private ecstasies with an overt physical display, as well as loud spontaneous responses to the preaching.[28] Accounts of worshippers shouting, groaning, falling and so forth were descriptions of people praising and glorifying God. The *Methodist*, reported that a woman "given up entirely to prayer" was found in her room "groaning and struggling...and upon her face was a heavenly glow."[29] Similarly, on another occasion, a man who prayed "nearly all the time, day and night" would "lie prostrate on the floor, and groan and pray."[30]

It is quite likely that these "spontaneous responses" uttered during the spoken or sung words were unconstrained examples of "speaking in tongues" or *glossolalia* brought on by the power of the

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[26] Mansfield, 135.
[27] D. T. Konig, *Devising Liberty: Preserving and Creating Freedom in the New American Republic* (California: Stanford University Press, 1995), 262-263.
[28] Konig, 262.
[29] *Methodist*, 17 November 1893, 2.
[30] *Methodist*, 9 February 1894, 2.

Holy Spirit.[31] A person speaking in tongues was typically in a state of religious ecstasy and was often unable to understand the words that he or she was saying. It seemed that most Christians who spoke in tongues believed they were speaking in an existing language. Some people considered it was a heavenly dialect, perhaps a language spoken by angels or by God. Whatever the theory, it becomes clear that accounts of uncontrollable weeping or laughing, or even barking like a dog and shouting, were quite spontaneous and unpremeditated and found their way into Wesleyan worship.[32] These experiences encouraged one to regard the actions of worshippers as a communal experience rather than the action of individual people. There was clearly an interconnectedness emerging in these prayer groups that focused on collective improvisation found in ecstatic shouts, groans and singing.

The Origin of the Gospel Hymn

In this part of the article, I will briefly trace the development of gospel hymns in America prior to their emergence in the Wesleyan tradition. This background information will attempt to provide both a necessary link to understanding the impact of this music in the Australian context, especially from an improvisational perspective.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Methodist church reconsidered its attitudes towards the question of converting slaves to Christianity. Even though Methodism began to address itself directly to the slaves, it "ended up not converting the Africans to a Christian ritual but...convert[ed] itself into an African ritual."[33] From 1790 to 1883, the bulk of white spirituals such as ring shouts, revival chants, camp-meeting songs and funeral marches emerged in America. Aspects of African ritual music became integrated into the Christian liturgy. The ring shout, for instance, was a spontaneously improvised dance that was completely African in origin, yet managed to procure a Christian justification within the Anglo-

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[31] The etymological root of "glossolalia" comes from the Greek *glossa*, "tongue" or "language" and *lalein*, "to speak".

[32] For more information on the topic of "glossolalia" please refer to P. K. Conkin, *American Originals: Homemade Varieties of Christianity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), and , T. A. Campbell, *Christian Confessions: A Historical Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996).

[33] E. Borneman, "The Roots of Jazz," in *Jazz: New Perspectives on the History of Jazz by Twelve of the World's Foremost Jazz Critics and Scholars*, N. Hentoff and A. J. McCarthy, eds. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1959), 14.

American community because it resembled biblical descriptions of angels "shouting" in heaven. An 1867 newspaper review described it thus:

> The true "shout" takes place on Sundays or on "praise nights" through the week...The foot is hardly taken from the floor, and the progression is mainly due to a jerking, hitching motion which agitates the entire shoulder and soon brings out streams of perspiration. Sometimes they dance silently, sometimes, as they shuffle, they sing the chorus of the spiritual, and sometimes the song itself is also sung by the dancers...Song and dance alike are extremely energetic and often, when the shout lasts into the middle of the night, the monotonous thud of the feet prevents sleep itself within half a mile of the praise house.[34]

At these church meetings, ecstatic and unconstrained shouts from the congregation and the preacher produced new words and melodies. Timothy Beougher wrote that there were many examples of unusual physical manifestations such as "fainting, rolling, laughing, running, singing, dancing and jerking – a spasmodic twitching of the entire body, where they hopped with head, limbs, and trunk shaking 'as if they must...fly asunder' at these early camp meetings."[35]

At the Cane Ridge (Kentucky) revival camp meeting in 1801, for example, it was reported that up to 20,000 people "swirled about the grounds – watching, praying, preaching, weeping, groaning, falling...most left marveling at the wondrous hand of God."[36] Furthermore, within the African-American community, variations on European ecclesiastical music began to emerge as the slaves of America turned to Christianity. Ernest Borneman wrote that "as the Negroes infused their masters' religion with meanings of their own, so they infused their masters' religious music with African structural alterations."[37]

These "structural alterations" consisted of unconstrained improvisatory practices that covered the use of rhythmic devices and voice inflection. These effects included the use of call-and-response, syncopation, polyrhythms, shifted accents and multiple bar

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[34] *Nation*, 30 May 1867; cited in Hentoff and McCarthy, 15.
[35] T. K. Beougher, "Did you Know? Little-known and Remarkable Facts about Camp Meetings and Circuit Riders," *Christian History: Camp Meetings & Circuit Riders,* Issue 45 14:1 (1993), 2.
[36] M. Galli, "Revival at Cane Ridge," *Christian History: Camp Meetings & Circuit Riders*, Issue 45 (1993), 10.
[37] Borneman, in Hentoff and McCarthy, 17.

divisions, as well as constantly changing vibrato, tremolo and overtone effects. According to Borneman, Wesleyan hymns became a significant model for the African-American to improvise upon:

> The accent was shifted from the strong to the weak beat; only one or two lines out of the total length of the tune were accepted and these were varied in repetition by shifted beats, glissando and vibrato effects, and finally by the introduction of mobile thirds and sevenths.[38]

It becomes clear that early African-American congregations did not simply sing hymns, slavishly adhering to the written note or harmonic structure. Rather, under the effects of ecstatic religious fervour, church gatherings tended to improvise spontaneously the musical elements of an entire religious ceremony. Because many of the early hymnbooks printed only the words, the use of improvisation in the performance of song was encouraged. According to G. G. Johnson, "Camp meeting leaders abandoned the usual church hymns and composed, sometimes extemporaneously, songs which more nearly suited the spirit of the meeting."[39]

Again, examples of intense ecstatic religious fervour relating to the singing of hymns were reported at the Cane Ridge camp meeting of 1801. It seems that much of the music was unstructured, impulsive, unconstrained and highly improvisatory, sung under the influence of the Holy Spirit:

> Hymn singing, which affected people most deeply, became even louder. Unrestrained exercises resumed. Preachers could hardly be heard. Confusion reigned...Some singing, some shouting, clapping their hands, hugging and even kissing, laughing; others talking to the distressed, to one another, or to opposers of the work, and all this at once.[40]

The purpose of Gospel music was to evangelise and convey the Gospel message to the dispossessed and outcast of society with an emphasis on singing about peace. The emergence of Gospel music during the 19th century had a profound effect on the Wesleyan tradition. The emergence of this style of worship began to appear in Australia from the 1870s onwards and appeared in evangelistic work

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[38] Borneman, in Hentoff and McCarthy, 18.
[39] G. G. Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 395.
[40] Galli, 14.

and rural churches as choral and solo items. Gospel songs gave singers the opportunity to feature as soloists during church services, something previously frowned on by Wesleyan traditionalists since they seemed to draw unwanted attention to the soloist, as well as not fulfilling the requirements of corporate worship. Consequently, a degree of polarity emerged between those who advocated the "high culture" and those who fostered aesthetic and utilitarian values.[41]

Following the visit by Mr. Philip Phillips in 1875, it appears the full impact of gospel hymns began to be felt in the Australian Wesleyan Methodist church.[42] His 1875 *Colonial Singer by Philip Phillips* contained 430 hymns scored for SATB and was designed for assorted religious contexts, including prayer and revival meetings.[43] Likewise, *Some of Messrs. Moody & Sankey's New Revival Hymns and Spiritual Songs* was published as a "words only" edition in 1875 and contained 24 hymns and two doxologies.[44] Other publications such as *Sixty-seven Revival Hymns and Forty-six Temperance Melodies* (1871) was a "words only" edition containing 113 hymns by various English hymn writers including Wesley,[45] whilst the *Revival and Sabbath school tune book* (1870) contained a close harmonised score of 146 hymns.[46]

Two significant people who became closely associated with gospel hymns were Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey who drew on a long tradition of American revivalism.[47] When they toured England during 1872-75 they developed their style of sacred music by attempting to make gospel hymns comparable to popular tunes of

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[41] K. J. Hastie, "Music-Making in the Wesleyan Churches of New South Wales, 1855-1902: Origins, Attitudes and Practices," unpublished M.Mus. thesis, University of Sydney, June 1991, 231.
[42] Hastie, 213-214.
[43] P. Phillips, ed. *Colonial Singer by Philip Phillips*, (Melbourne, 1875); refer to D. Gome, "Australian Hymnody, 1821-1901", 21.
[44] P. Campbell, ed. *Some of Messrs. Moody & Sankey's New Revival Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (Sydney: Edward Turner, 1875); refer to Gome, "Australian Hymnody, 1821-1901," 15.
[45] M. Burnett, ed. *Sixty-seven Revival Hymns and Forty-six Temperance Melodies* (Melbourne: Mason, Firth & McCutcheon, 1871); refer to Gome, "Australian Hymnody, 1821-1901", 13.
[46] *Revival and Sabbath School Tune Book* (Melbourne: Clarson, Massina & Co. 1870-90); refer to Gome, 21.
[47] S. S. Sizer, *Gospel Hymns and Social Religion: The Rhetoric of Nineteenth-Century Revivalism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), 3-4.

the day.[48] One 1876 American newspaper depicted the gospel hymn in terms of a potpourri of contemporary song styles. It reported thus:

> Determine the pleasure that you get from a circus quick-step, a Negro-minstrel sentimental ballad, a college chorus, and a hymn all in one, and you have some gauge of the variety and contrast that may be perceived in one of these songs.[49]

The gospel hymn-tune was described in terms of being "jaunty in rhythm and rudimentary in harmony...because that kind of music was "simple" for the people to whom the revivalist ministered."[50] Harmonically, gospel hymns relied on the tonic (I) sub-dominant (IV) and dominant (V) chords, whilst the form tended to use the common verse-chorus structure. A plain melodic line above a repetitious bass line that moved homophonically and by step frequently enhanced the simplicity of these hymns and allowed room for vocal elaboration and instrumental experimentation. Because many bass lines of the gospel hymn model could be rhythmically monotonous, accompanists had the opportunity to vary substantially the original written line. Furthermore, many of these gospel tunes contained melodies that were easy to sing and spontaneously harmonise either vocally or instrumentally. Generally, Moody/Sankey hymns relied mainly on tonic – dominant harmony, with the occasional II, VI or secondary dominant chord being added for harmonic interest. Moody believed that singing played a fundamental role in evangelism, saying that:

> If you have singing that reaches the heart, it will fill the church every time...Music and song have not only accompanied all scriptural revivals, but are essential in deepening the spiritual life. Singing does at least as much as preaching to impress the Word of God upon people's minds. Ever since God first called me, the importance of praise expressed in song has grown upon me.[51]

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[48] E. Routley, *The Church and Music: An Enquiry into the History, the Nature, and the Scope of Christian Judgement on Music* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1967), 188.
[49] *Nation* 22 (9 March 1876); quoted in J. F. Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837-1899* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 211.
[50] Routley, 188-189.
[51] S. Miller, *The Contemporary Christian Music Debate* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993), 130.

Improvisatory Practices in Colonial Gospel Hymns

The gospel hymn became especially important in the Australian Wesleyan Methodist tradition during the latter part of the 19th century becoming fixed in contemporary language and focusing on human experience. The gospel song had "a direct message set to simple melodies" and became a staple for missionary churches and small or isolated choirs.[52] Because of their spontaneity in performance and their simplicity in rhythmic, melodic and harmonic elements, gospel hymns provided much scope for spontaneous inventiveness vocally or instrumentally. They gave mission churches and small or isolated choirs a staple repertoire that could be freely embellished over repeated chords from an already existing accompaniment. Kelvin Hastie wrote of an accompanist's freedom to improvise during the singing of a Gospel song thus: "One can imagine a typical harmonium or American organ puffing out the repeated chords, while a pianist uses the basic chordal material to scatter notes into more distant parts of the piano compass."[53]

The gospel hymn appealed to local Wesleyans as a tool for outdoor preaching, especially in contexts where hymns were firmly entrenched within the more formal church settings of the time. The performance of gospel hymns emerged as a contemporary way of showing degrees of spontaneity both musically and prayerfully. One Methodist minister described a presumably impromptu service lead by the Rev. Alexander Somerville in a shearing shed with the Moody and Sankey hymnbook in 1906. He wrote: "I had hymnbooks to hand around and we sang. I say 'we' for I have never found yet a gathering that could not sing some of the best known of Sankey's hymns. The concertina very ably led."[54]

Likewise, the lack of constraint present in gospel singing was again emphasised during a 1909 Australian prayer meeting led by Charles Alexander. When he appeared on stage, members of the congregation greeted him with ecstatic shouts of "The Glory Song" or "Pray Through." During the prayer meeting Alexander taught new

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[52] K. Cole, *Robert Harkness: The Bendigo Hymnwriter* (Bendigo: Keith Cole Publications, 1988), 45; K. Hastie, "Church Music," in J. Whiteoak and A. Scott-Maxwell, eds. *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia*, (Sydney: Currency House, 2003), 142.

[53] Hastie, 219.

[54] J. Mansfield, "Evangelists and Music," located at: http://www.westgallerymusic.co.uk/articles/Mansfield/Mansfield5.html, accessed 20 June 2005.

hymns and inspired everybody to sing as a congregation with interpolated vocal solos. Indeed gospel songs were used to attract large numbers to church and according to the ecstatic nature of his prayer meetings, it appears they were successful.

> [Alexander] is like a living musical box, rendered vocal at will. With mind aglow, brain alert, eyes that hold command and appeal, a thorough knowledge of his audience, Charles Alexander, like a trained expert, sways the people till the right note is struck and men and women are sung into the Kingdom.[55]

Both the "vigorous rendering" and spontaneous character of gospel hymns upon large congregations was again demonstrated in an article from the *Methodist*. "The singing of well known gospel hymns by over 2000 people, the vigorous rendering of one or two masterpieces by the choir, the thorough going enthusiasm of the whole service was something not to be forgotten."[56]

Robert Harkness (1880-1961)

In this part of the discussion, I will examine the playing style of the "Bendigo hymnist", Robert Harkness, who created his own improvisatory gospel style of piano playing by improvising his accompaniments. By the turn of the century Robert Harkness had written over 2500 gospel songs. According to his biographer, the Rev. Keith Cole, his hymns were "simple in structure, popular in form and easy to sing [and] designed for greatest effect when sung at large meetings with an enthusiastic song-leader."[57] His accompaniment style was improvisatory, enabling him the freedom to include harmonic backing underneath the melodic line, as well as cadenzas within the overall composition. According to Cole, Harkness developed a "new method" of accompaniment that was later used by other pianists in evangelistic gatherings. Cole wrote that "Robert excelled as an accompanist on the piano, especially at large meetings. He played entirely from memory. As soon as a hymn was announced, he would strike the opening chords, adding harmonies and cadenzas to the simple melody."[58]

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[55] J. Mansfield, "Evangelists and Music."
[56] *Methodist* (25 June 1898), 9.
[57] Cole, 44.
[58] Cole, 45.

Harkness took the Moody and Sankey gospel hymns and developed a "revolutionary new style of accompaniment" for large prayer meetings.[59] This "new style" was probably based upon similar accompaniment methods published in Melbourne during the latter part of the 19th century. Methods such as *Harmony Simplified for Popular Use: An Original Method of Applying the First Principles of Harmony to the Object of Accompanying the Voice on the Pianoforte*,[60] or *W. M. Perrier's Harmonizer or, Instructions in the Art of Vamping, or Extemporizing on the Piano or Organ* focused on the internalisation of exercises and accompaniment patterns in various keys.[61] Harkness wrote his own series of method books called the *Beginner's Hymn Playing Course, Evangelistic Hymn Playing* and *The Art of Sacred Accompaniment*. These books were similar to Patton's and Perrier's in the sense that they included practical discussion and exercises on rhythm, preludes, interludes, improvisation, practical harmony and memory work.[62]

Harkness was the accompanist at the Gold Square Methodist Church, Bendigo from 1901 to 1902. During the 1902 visit of the touring evangelists, Dr. Rueben A. Torry and Charles Alexander, Harkness described in some detail his approach to gospel accompaniment, which included a spontaneous "elaborate improvisation" with "a full octave accompaniment quite distinct from the melody."[63] Because much of his improvisational style relied on memorisation, he was able to incorporate spontaneous melodic and harmonic embellishment based on his ability to analyse and extend the harmonic structure of each tune, thus providing a fresh and inventive sound.[64] Because he was "unacquainted with the melody" and due to the "simplicity" of the song *Old Time Religion*, Harkness felt "the need for an improvised accompaniment." In the same way the popular song, *The Glory Song* allowed scope for complex improvisations, most likely because of its simple harmonic and melodic composition.[65]

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[59] Cole, 45.
[60] E. Patton, *Harmony Simplified for Popular Use: An Original Method of Applying the First Principles of Harmony to the Object of Accompanying the Voice on the Pianoforte* (London: Novello, Ewer & Co. and Melbourne: Allan & Co. 1880).
[61] W. M. Perrier, *W. M. Perrier's Harmonizer or, Instructions in the Art of Vamping, or Extemporizing on the Piano or Organ* (Melbourne: Spectator Publishing, c. 1890).
[62] Cited in J. Whiteoak, *Playing Ad Lib* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1999), and it appears these books have a copyright date of 1930.
[63] Cole, 18.
[64] Cole, 52-3.
[65] Cole, 18.

Harkness' accompaniments represented a crossover of two streams of improvisatory genres, namely "lowbrow" and "highbrow" approaches to music making. He was able to elaborate his knowledge of harmony and keyboard technique and apply it to his hymn accompaniments. Likewise, his method books provided a practical source for amateur musicians attempting to learn systems of improvisation. Whilst his early piano gospel-style technique was tied in part to orthodox musical convention, his accompaniments represented a more "grassroots" performance context.

In the next part of this discussion I will explore aspects of "unorthodox accompaniment," which could be described as being perhaps the most common form of choral accompaniment to emerge during these early services. Clearly, the extent of improvised musical practice was largely experimental and performed in a comparatively informal context of the kind that was most favourable to musical interaction, embellishment and extroversion. Moreover, this particular approach to improvisation falls into the genre of "lowbrow" performance practices. Again, there will be limited discussion about Wesleyan Methodist approaches to improvisation in Sydney regarding this "lowbrow" genre. Although it is outside the limitations of this discussion, it becomes necessary to show a comparison of musical styles.

Unorthodox Accompaniment

The use of unorthodox ensembles to accompany hymns featured prominently in early colonial Wesleyan prayer services. These early ensembles were made up of whatever instruments were available at the time and highlighted the diverse variety of accompaniment practice in each parish. As organ accompaniment in churches moved to the forefront of Wesleyan services from the mid-19th century, instrumental accompaniment tended to decline except in some rural locations. During the late 1880s, however, there was a re-emergence of instrumental music performed in the early Wesleyan tradition. This renaissance of multi-instrumental ensembles seemed to parallel the emergence of similar unorthodox instrumental groups in the Australian Salvation Army around the same time.

The singing and accompaniments provided by many of the Wesleyan emigrants from England varied considerably in early Australian churches. Musicians' approaches to hymn accompaniment, for example, were tailored to suit the broad diversity of local musicianship and worshippers. Sometimes special

services at the Eltham Sunday school in 1892 included the Alphington-Fairfield church-preaching band, comprising six men and four boys. The instrumentation contained a mix of cornets, wind instruments and a drum – clearly an "unorthodox" ensemble. Contemporaneous memoirs indicated that this ensemble "took services at the country churches of the circuit – Greensborough, Templestowe, Research, Eltham. They used to drive a horse and wagon."[66] The instrumentation suggests it was either a band comprising ear-playing musicians attempting to sound like a reading band, or it was an ensemble that relied on specially written arrangements, suitable only for their group. Because of the wide range of ages and its frequent performance circuit, the band probably relied on a combination of intuitive musical interaction and a reliance on the memorisation of parts. Since the group's repertoire was probably repeated each week, there would have been further opportunities for instrumentalists to embellish and vary already memorised or written out parts. Spontaneous variation of constantly repeated hymn-tunes would have made the musicians' ministry more exciting as performers, as well as introducing new and imaginative obbligato or harmonic lines to simple hymns.

In cases where churches relied on their own local musician or musicians, the singing and accompaniment of hymns would have been diverse within each parish, more so because early Wesleyan music was played with limited reference to notation. In order to suit the vocal range of congregations, for instance, it would have been necessary for musicians to transpose and modulate accordingly. To a large extent, accompaniments would have been relatively simple, being based on either notated or previously memorised melodies. Furthermore, depending on the experience of the accompanying musician or musicians, a wide range of improvisatory techniques would have been employed.

At an early Wesleyan service in Sydney in 1828, local musician John Onions used a violin or bass viol and a bassoon "for the purpose of raising the tunes."[67] It seems that Onions played a dual role when accompanying the congregation. As a violin player, he probably played his version of the melody to lead the congregation. If the melodic line were well known by the congregation, it would not have been unusual for Onions to embellish the melody, thereby

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[66] Memoirs of Elsie W. Poppins [monograph], cited in Eckersall.
[67] G. D. Rushworth, *Historic Organs of New South Wales: The Instruments, Their Makers and Players, 1791-1940*, (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1988).

giving the hymn a more flexible sounding style. As a bass viol or bassoon player, Onions would have either performed an already written bass line or played a spontaneously improvised accompaniment above a figured bass. In England, for example, the bass viol usually doubled the bass voices or else read and improvised a bass line from a figured bass part, a practice adopted by other denominations in congregational hymnody for many years.[68] If a figured bass line was not available, it is likely that the player worked out a rudimentary bass accompaniment from the melody.[69]

Earlier in this discussion I mentioned the formation of a choir by Mr. John Peers, accompanied by either a clarinet or flute at a newly erected "brick-built" Wesleyan chapel in Melbourne during the late 1830s. Similar examples from country Victoria during the late 19th century include "Mr. Hallum", who led the singing with his flute at the Mooroopna North Methodist Church.[70] Again, in 1894, the Kyabram Methodist church relied on an organ and two violins to accompany the hymn singing. At the same church in 1901, another unconventional ensemble was used to accompany the hymn singing. The *Kyabram Free Press* wrote that "an instrumental selection 'Diadem' was given by Messrs Ising and Humphris (cornets), T. Edis (flute), J. McLean (euphonium), and J. Edis (organ)."[71]

Since many of these church ensembles comprised a range of instrumentalists of varying musical skill, it is likely that a considerable proportion of musical accompaniment was played without reference to published notation. If notation were used, such as piano music, it would have been adapted to suit the ensemble. "Ear playing" was common but would have varied from parish to parish, thus providing a range of informal contexts allowing for musicians to freely embellish accompaniment material. Within performance contexts, varying degrees of unrestrained and impromptu improvisatory practice would have transpired focusing on shifts in tempo, syncopation, ornamentation and melodic variation, as well as rhythmic inflection. In 1888, for example, it was reported that a Sydney Wesleyan church used "fiddles, flute and cornet" to augment the choir and organ at weeknight meetings.[72]

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[68] Hastie, 98.
[69] I. Nathan, *Theory and Practice of Music* (Sydney: Isaac Nathan), 7, 12, 13, 24, 33, 41 and 45.
[70] W. H. Bossence, *Kyabram* (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press, 1963), 196; __. *Kyabram Methodism* (Melbourne, The Hawthorn Press, 1974), 29.
[71] *Kyabram Free Press*, 23 August 1901, cited in Bossence, *Kyabram Methodism*, 56.
[72] *News of the Churches* (2 June 1888): 107, cited in Hastie, 331.

Once again, a reliance on "ear playing" as well as musical intuitiveness would have been the focus of these makeshift ensembles.

In his examination of Methodism in the Kyabram circuit, William Bossence wrote that hymn singing as a medium of praise appealed to congregations' "natural instincts." Furthermore, he emphasised that "hymn-singing around the piano at home was as indispensable a part of their lives as singing in the church choir on Sundays."[73] Plainly, Bossence was emphasising the importance of social informality within this religious tradition. This lack of formality allowed for contexts that encouraged musicians to explore and interact musically with each other. In situations that saw the same hymns being regularly repeated, intuitive group interplay within an ensemble would have allowed for a variance in musical forms to emerge, varying from parish to parish.

Organs and Oratorio

Earlier in the article I indicated that a "blurring" of improvisatory models occurred in Victoria's Wesleyan Methodist tradition. Whilst obvious "lowbrow" approaches to improvisatory practices continued within this tradition for much of the 19th century, a more "highbrow" approach to music making, which focused on organ accompaniment and the sacred oratorio began to emerge from 1843 onwards. The following section provides discussion about early Wesleyan activities that embraced some of these more "highbrow" musical activities, providing churchgoers with some kind of cultural bonus. I will provide some limited discussion from British musicologist John Spencer Curwen in relation to general observations of contemporary approaches to pipe and reed organ performance in English Wesleyan Methodist churches and supports a transplanted Australian musical language.

Kelvin Hastie's comprehensive study on music making in the Wesleyan Churches of colonial New South Wales provides almost no information about organ performance practice during Methodist services. Although Hastie stated that "virtually nothing has been found to describe performance practices...in respect of hymn accompaniments and organ voluntaries...the great majority of players...were generally amateurs with little or no training."[74]

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[73] Bossence, *Kyabram Methodism*, 111.
[74] Hastie, 307.

Similarly, I have been unable to locate much information in relation to a consistently "highbrow" approach to music making in the Wesleyan Methodist tradition in colonial Australia. It seems that during much of the 19th century, performances were "lowbrow" and drew on whatever musical resources were available at the time. Most congregations from Melbourne and country Victorian Methodist churches worshipped for many years without organ accompaniment. Similarly, like in other traditions, many Methodist churches did not use organs (either reed or pipe) for accompaniment purposes in the first few years of opening, possibly due to the initial lack of funds.[75]

Given that accompanists were generally "amateurs with little or no training", I suggest that the presence of improvisatory practice within the context of church services became widespread, within the "lowbrow" and "highbrow" genres. Because the standard of musicianship varied from parish to parish, there was no consistency in playing style. In many cases, musicians were self-taught and relied on approaches to accompaniment outlined in some of the contemporaneous method books described earlier.

Hastie cited British musicologist John Spencer Curwen's *Studies in Worship Music* of 1880 and provided general observations of contemporary approaches to pipe and reed organ performance.[76] It is important to note that although these observations related to British musicians in the Wesleyan-Methodist tradition, Hastie asserted that many of Curwen's comments were appropriate and relevant to a transplanted Australian musical language. According to Curwen, only a minority of Methodist organists received any formal training, whilst the majority was either unwilling or unable to seek "improvement" with their musical technique. In relation to extemporised performances, Curwen wrote that many accompanists provided rambling harmonies, drawn-out cadences and an over-manipulation of the swell pedal to produce expression. The latter technique combined with altering stops and modifying timbrel colours during accompaniments was considered by Curwen to be "vulgar" in sound.[77] The use of ornaments had largely died out by the latter half of the 19th century, although the "suspending of the fourth in the closing tonic chord" and "simultaneously putting down the left foot on the tonic and the semitone below it in a *fortissimo*

[75] The Melbourne congregations of Box Hill, Brighton and Brunswick, for example, waited an average of 44 years before an organ was installed in their churches.
[76] Not only was John Curwen a musicologist, he was primarily a music educator and publisher.
[77] Hastie, 308.

close" was still practiced. More importantly, the varying of harmonic progressions, as well as the insertion of melodic passing notes was common amongst organists.[78] In relation to the playing of the harmonium, Curwen noted that many accompanists were particularly bad.

> He jerks irregularly at the beginning, the middle or the end of each note of a hymn-tune, varying these musical spasms with staccato, which always comes so as to break a musical or verbal phrase...The effect reminds one of a child playing with a squeaking doll, or of an infant trying to play a concertina, and unable to control it.[79]

Although Hastie acknowledged a majority of amateur organists performing in the Wesleyan Methodist tradition throughout colonial Australia, there were some musicians of a high musical standard who acted as accompanists. These musicians also acted as accompanists in other religious traditions of the same period in Melbourne. My research has shown there to be a considerable cross-fertilization of musicians performing as accompanists in the different Christian traditions. Likewise, solo singers moved regularly between the different denominations as featured artists. In addition to teaching and secular concerts, church performances would have helped to supplement these musicians' income, as well as providing them with an added public exposure. William Clarke, for example, presided at the organ in the Wesleyan Chapel in Collins Street, Melbourne during the performance of a "Grand Oratorio" of sacred music.[80] The same advertisement described Clarke as the "Professor of Music, Swanston Street". He also led the choir of St. Francis' Roman Catholic Church on the seraphine[81] and the organ at the Congregationalist Church, Prahran.[82] Clarke's organ performance of the Pastoral Symphony from *Messiah* at the Wesleyan Chapel "was admirably played" and "delighted the whole audience."[83] Combined with Clarke's accompaniment of this Oratorio as well his accompanying of the unorthodox ensemble at St. Francis', Clarke

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[78] Hastie, 307-310.
[79] J. S. Curwen, *Studies in Worship Music*, 110; cited in Hastie, 309.
[80] *The Port Phillip Gazette*, 24/12/1842, 3.
[81] Finn, E. ("Garryowen"), *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne, 1835-1852*, 140.
[82] Matthews, E. N. *Colonial Organs and Organ Builders*, (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1969), 144.
[83] *The Port Phillip Gazette*, 11/1/1843, 2.

had the skill and experience to indulge in both legitimate and improvisational practice on the organ.

Improvisatory practices in the performance of vocal works from the Baroque, Classical and Romantic periods were virtually mandatory. There was an expectation that singers (especially soloists), elaborate songs during colonial performances, including sacred hymns sung in the church context. John Whiteoak reminds the reader that "Australian opera retained a degree of improvisational freedom throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century...but it should be noted that it was one of the least decontextualised of all nineteenth-century Australian musical activities."

Not only was he an expert improviser who accompanied choirs in the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions, Charles E. Horsley also presided at the organ in the Wesleyan tradition. At a special concert celebrating the inauguration of the new organ, Horsley performed "five solos well calculated to test [the organ's] powers" at the Wesleyan Church in South Yarra.[84] The organist and musical director from St. Francis' Roman Catholic Church, G. R. G. Pringle performed a series of organ solos at a special concert of sacred music held in the Wesleyan Church at Emerald-Hill, Melbourne. Like Horsley, Pringle also presided as the organist in the Anglican tradition and was a complete musician. The following reference alludes to Pringle's organ technique – probably his use of the console - to provide a multitude of timbral sounds for personal expression. "In Batiste's Andante in G, and in the Grand Offertoire in D Major by the same master, Mr. Pringle was very successful in developing the fine qualities of the instrument over which he presided."[85]

All three organists were able to adapt to the wide range of musical abilities and instrumental ensembles that existed in colonial Melbourne, especially within the Wesleyan tradition, which was predominantly "lowbrow". Apart from accompanying choirs and congregational singing, they performed diverse organ solos independent of the choirs at these sacred concerts. It was in this context that they excelled in displaying their technique, one that would have included various levels of improvisatory practice.

Generally speaking, apart from these periodic performances by Clarke, Horsley and Pringle, it seems the Wesleyan Methodists

[84] *The Argus*, 3/12/1870, 5.
[85] *The Argus*, 21/7/1869, 5

focused largely on more "grassroots" performances of sacred music played by musicians strictly from the tradition. Because most musicians from this tradition were generally self-taught and lacked formalised training during most of the 19th century, music was usually mediocre in comparison to the more "highbrow" sounds that could be heard in major Roman Catholic and Anglican churches in Melbourne during the same period.

Conclusion

In this article I have attempted to show that although the Wesleyan Methodist tradition favoured both the "lowbrow" and the "highbrow" approach to improvised musical practices, for much of the 19th century, however, the Wesleyan tradition was musically "lowbrow." It focused on a more "grassroots" musical approach to sacred song. This model concentrated on congregational hymn singing, ecstatic worship, gospel singing and "unorthodox" ensembles. It was in this model that varying degrees of improvisational practice emerged. Many of the unorthodox ensembles, which sometimes comprised trios or duos, for example, relied on group interaction as well as individual experimentation. Because prayer services were relatively informal, especially in comparison to other Christian traditions of the same time, musicians had more of a chance to explore other methods of musical performance. In the context of congregational singing, accompanying musicians were in a position to modify harmonic and melodic material, especially when these hymns were being repeated week after week.

I also attempted to show that some aspects of a "highbrow" musical culture existed in the Wesleyan tradition, although it appears these large-scale sacred concerts and organ recitals were sporadic. In effect, the Wesleyan Methodist tradition experienced an overlapping of performance genres. There were occasions when musicians who accompanied other Christian faiths also directed and performed at some of these Wesleyan sacred concerts; however, this appears to be in the minority of cases. As a rule, musicians from the Wesleyan faith accompanied their own prayer services. It was in these contexts, that visiting musicians were able to display their musical technique both as soloists and as accompanists. As accompanists, they would have adjusted their technique in order to "fit in" with the musical standard of the amateur choir. As soloists, however, they were in a position to demonstrate their skills of

extemporisation either overtly, or perhaps in a more surreptitious way.

OVERTURES OF GRACE: PREVENIENT GRACE AND THE SACRAMENTALITY OF MUSIC

Stephen Wright

Wishing theologically to reflect on music without abstracting from its inherent relations and worth, this article enlists the language of sacramentality. Not purporting to be exhaustive, its primary concern is to examine how God's prevenient grace is manifest in the interaction of music with persons and other media. It is contended that by exploring music through the dialect of sacramentality one is able meaningfully to describe music and its effects.

> *Music, as your parents understand and practise it, will help to dissolve your perplexities and purify your character and sensibility, and in times of care and sorrow will keep a ground-bass of joy alive in you.*
>
> -Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Thoughts on the Day of the Baptism of Dietrich Wilhelm Rüdiger Bethge," May 1944[1]

Music tickles the ears. It fills otherwise awkward pauses in film and television. Jingles seem innocent enough, but they stick with us and tell us what we ought to buy. Yet Bonhoeffer's comments at the baptism of young Dietrich serve to remind us that music has depths and meanings greater than its commercial use. Bonhoeffer avers that it can purify; I contend that it can also serve God's purposes. To clarify, I do not mean merely in the use of music by the church, but I speak of music in its broadest sense; not the lyrics of church songs, but of music itself.

Within this paper I am seeking to find a manner in which to describe God's action in music. To do this I will enlist the language of "sacrament," or more specifically "sacramentality." I make use of a distinction between these two terms. The former term

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[1] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Thoughts on the Day of the Baptism of Dietrich Wilhelm Rüdiger Bethge," *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Letters & Papers from Prison*, ed. Eberhard Bethge, trans. Reginald Fuller (London: SCM Press, 1971. Reprint, New York: Macmillan, 1971), 295.

encompasses those specific actions of the church which tradition and the biblical testimony have handed down to us as instituted by Christ and conveying grace. The latter term is derived from the former. Its use in recent theology has often pointed to the reality conveyed in sacraments but as manifest in other objects or actions. It signifies "sacramental" characteristics in, if you will, "non-sacraments" which, ultimately, are subordinate to sacraments. This line of thought has a long tradition. Luther considered Christ alone to be deserving of the moniker, "Sacrament," referring to the actions of the Church as "sacramental signs."[2] Thus, for Luther, a distinction is drawn between "sacrament" and "sacramental", the latter pointing to the former but not quite having the same fullness of participation that the former enjoys.

Much discussion on the sacraments begins with a discussion on their role as a "means of grace." In this paper my contention is that music is capable of being a vehicle for prevenient grace.[3] This is not to suggest that music is a sacrament, but that we may consider it to possess certain *sacramental* qualities. First, however, I will outline some of the features of prevenient grace which I consider to be pertinent to this discussion.

God's Overture

Through the incarnation we have been shown God's willingness to tie himself to creation in order to redeem it. The cross is unmistakably wood and symbol. In this sense we have already observed how Jesus may be considered sacrament, in its most fundamental form.[4] Then, suggests Wesleyan theologian Michael Lodahl, "in some important way[s] the entire created order – all of God's world! – is capable of being transparent to God's creative and redemptive presence, of being at least occasionally a "means of grace" to us if we are open and perceptive."[5] Lodahl's argument here is that the created order has sacramental *capacity*. This capacity is dependent on response. Grace is made available to us, but it is not coercive. Lodahl states that we must be "open and perceptive" to make use of this "means of grace."

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[2] Eberhard Jüngel, "The Church as Sacrament?," *Theological Essays I* trans. and ed. J.B. Webster (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 193.
[3] In some sections I will also allude to a possible "sanctifying" motion in music.
[4] See Eberhard Jüngel, "The Church as Sacrament?," 192ff.
[5] Michael Lodahl, *The Story of God: Wesleyan Theology & Biblical Narrative* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1994), 178.

Throughout his life John Wesley maintained that no person is without grace, but that prevenient grace is given to all. Yet he held that "prevenient grace is not coercive or irresistible."[6] H. Ray Dunning writes "[prevenient grace] extends to all human persons, restoring to them the capacity to respond to, as well as resist, the calling of God."[7] In Wesleyan theology, the encounter with preventing grace is not a single isolated event which takes place at the beginning of one's life. Rather prevenient grace is associated with every advance of God towards us. Randy L. Maddox gives more detail.

> Wesley did not limit the activity of Prevenient Grace to upholding our partially restored faculties. He also attributed to it God's initial *overtures* to individuals. As he once put it, Prevenient Grace includes "all the drawings of the Father... [and] all the convictions which his Spirit from time to time works in every [person]."[8]

The duality in meaning of the word "overture" is apt here. In music an overture can take place at the beginning of a larger work, such as an opera or a suite. It can also be a stand-alone work, an independent orchestral piece. To make an analogy of this, the former understanding of the word (closest to its general meaning with its suggestiveness of the beginning of a relationship) could be employed to signify those advances of God which are met with response and form the basis of a relationship, while the latter could signify those advances which are followed by silence. Such an advance is left without response. This does not diminish the power or significance of the advance (to regard an overture as inferior because it is not an introduction to a larger work would be ludicrous), but means that the advance will not result in a relationship.[9] In this way the non-coercive nature of prevenient grace is contained within the designation, "overture."

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[6] H. Ray Dunning, *Reflecting the Divine Image: Christian Ethics in Wesleyan Perspective* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1998), 57.
[7] Dunning, 57.
[8] Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley"s Practical Theology* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 88. Emphasis original.
[9] This is because these two different uses of the word "overture" signify distinct musical forms, the relationship between which is not as close as this analogy suggests. This is the failing of this analogy. Whereas the advances of God are not different whether or not they are met with response, an "overture" which forms the introduction to a larger work is a unique form and is distinct from the form of an

Prevenient grace is not only that grace which "goes before," but it also performs a preventative function. Wesley asserted that he was a "hair's breadth from Calvinism."[10] Dunning elaborates, "in light of his insistence on the total depravity of human nature, the "hair" that distinguishes Wesleyan soteriology from Reformed is prevenient grace."[11] Without God's overtures of prevenient grace the "natural" person, the graceless human, would be a menacing creature. "Humane" would be synonymous with "demonic." But it is prevenient grace that allowed Jesus to assert that even the wicked know not to give their starving children rocks. In this system of thinking prevenient grace keeps us from realising our own depravity.

The key to appreciating Wesley's understanding of prevenient grace, in the eyes of Randy L. Maddox, is the notion of *uncreated grace*.[12] Rather than a condition or possession, grace is God's own motion and intent towards us. Grace is the uncreated nature of God's own being. Tracing the idea back to the Reformation, Wolfhart Pannenberg points to the approaches of the Reformers, Melanchthon in particular, as they identified the gift of saving grace with the gift of the Holy Spirit.[13] Extrapolating Wesley's sacramental theology Maddox describes Wesley as sympathetic to the Eastern Church's conception of grace *as* the Holy Spirit.[14] Thus the invocation of the Holy Spirit through the *epiclesis* is "constitutive of the eucharist's effective power."[15] Despite his varied usage of the term *real presence* it appears as though Wesley's own stance was more in line with the Anglican articles which in his day utilised the Calvinist notion of Christ's *spiritual* presence in the Eucharist.[16] For the purposes of this discussion I am content to remain with the language of spiritual presence, as I am not arguing for music to hold equal status with the Eucharist but for a *sacramental* understanding of music. As such, emphasising the role of the Spirit leaves room for more extreme interpretations of the degree to which music is sacramental, whilst

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overture which is its own orchestral work (although this form was derived from the popularity of the former).

[10] John Wesley, in Dunning, 57.

[11] Dunning, 57.

[12] Maddox, 89-90.

[13] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology: Volume 3*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 197-200.

[14] Maddox, 198.

[15] Maddox, 198.

[16] Maddox., 204.

remaining amenable to the notion that music's sacramentality is of a lower order.[17]

Wesley, according to Maddox, understood the means of grace as performing a nurturing role for the believer – a role in the process of sanctification.[18] In this understanding a sacrament is a means of "sanctifying grace." Stanley Grenz emphasises the role of the Spirit in this process, but also keeps in mind that "our personal cooperation" is needed.[19] We are thus to appropriate that which is made available to us which would allow us to proceed in becoming more Christlike. Participation in the Eucharist is one such thing:

> The Eucharist may be understood as that means of grace, instituted by Jesus Christ, to which we are invited for repentance, for self-examination, for renewal, for spiritual sustenance, for thanksgiving, for fellowship, for anticipation of the heavenly kingdom, and for celebration in our pilgrimage toward perfection in the image of Christ. All these are involved in our sanctification, and all these are benefits available to us at the Lord's table.[20]

Sacramental grace can be understood as both prevenient and sanctifying. The latter is, however, more difficult to pin down in a sacramental discussion of music. Thus the focus here is on the former. I proffer that prevenient grace is sacramentally available through music, specifically in the fostering of relationships.

That music can "soothe the savage beast" is often considered axiomatic. One frequently cited biblical example of such soothing is David's lyre in Saul's chambers. When Saul was in spells of depression he called on David to play his kinnor (an instrument which was probably more like a lyre than a harp) to bring him peace. The biblical record states that when David played Saul's disposition was restored and any evil spirits would leave him.[21] Here we see music's ability to affect for the better. In these early music therapy sessions Saul was calmed and eased by David's playing. Music performed a preventative function for Saul (though, in the end, it didn't always stop him from hurling spears at David –

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[17] Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology: Volume 2, The Works of God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 226-27.
[18] Maddox, 192.
[19] Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), 444.
[20] Rob L. Staples, *Outward Sign and Inward Grace: The Place of Sacraments in Wesleyan Spirituality* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1991), 202-203.
[21] 1 Samuel 16:23.

such grace is resistible). I now turn to consider in more detail how music participates in God's work to bring about the restoration of healthy relationships.

Reconciling Through Song

In contemporary evangelism the primary motif seems to be that of reconciliation with God the Father. When it is not this, the evangelical emphasis has been on "getting people in a right relationship with Jesus."[22] In either situation the priority is on righting one's relationship with God, or rather, through the cross, God taking on our lost cause and reconciling us to himself.[23] This is seen as the heart (or at least the point) of the Gospel.

Justification describes the righting of a dysfunctional relationship, namely our relationship with God. Lutheran theologian Gerhard Förde writes, "the fact is that we simply cannot get on with God. We cannot reconcile ourselves to God. Why? Just because God is God. We cannot bear that."[24] That in himself God is worthy of our attention – more worthy than we are – irks us.[25] Most frequently our attention is primarily on ourselves – ruthlessly on ourselves. This is our sin. Eberhard Jüngel suggests that, as a bearer of God's image, the other person also is interesting for his or her own sake.[26] Yet we fail to realise this. Contemplating Luther's "discovery" that God's righteousness is found in the gospel, not the law, Jüngel claims "now for the first time I realize clearly what it means to be a sinner. A sinner is one who is closest to him- or herself, in such a way that wholesome closeness to God or others is wrecked or instrumentalized and thereby destroyed."[27]

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[22] Jim Peterson's popular book on evangelism, *Living Proof*, utilises both of these motifs. Jim Peterson, *Living Proof: Sharing the Gospel Naturally* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1989).
[23] This action, as God's free act of faithfulness to his creation, is the heart of the Christian message posits Barth. Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation: Church Dogmatics* trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, eds. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance (London: T&T Clark, 1956. Reprint, London: Continuum, 2004), 3.
[24] Gerhard Förde, "Reconciliation With God," *Christian Dogmatics*, Volume 2, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 65.
[25] Eberhard Jüngel reminds us that "God is interesting for his own sake. And when God is that no longer, then begins idol-worship, which is only an instrument of ruthless human self-realization." Eberhard Jüngel, "On the Doctrine of Justification," trans. John Webster, *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 1:1 (March 1999) 32.
[26] Jungel, 32.
[27] Jungel., 34.

This ineptness in relating with others is a failing spanning all humankind. It is an inward focus which subordinates all other claims for attention. It is only by God's prevenient grace that we are kept from destroying each other out of our own lust for violence and love of self.

That God gives such grace to the elect is an item of most traditions, however, certain people who would not count themselves as Christians – who have not made full use of God's grace – seem to demonstrate an ability to relate well which would put many Christians to shame. It would seem that humankind possesses a certain measure of care and concern for each other. Part of Wesley's understanding of prevenient grace was that it "effects a partial restoring of our sin-corrupted human faculties."[28] This entails a certain apprehension of how we ought to deal with one another. Universally accessible, this grace prevents us from living out our depravity. Within the Church we recognise God's movement in "portioning out" this grace through the sacraments.

Relating in Baptism and the Eucharist

In both Baptism and the Eucharist – those two actions which we have already established hold a privileged position among that which is deemed to be sacramental – a proper way of relating is evident. Robert L. Browning and Roy A. Reed describe baptism as acceptance "into the community of reconciliation."[29] To be in such a community is to realise reconciliation as it is meant to be – between myself, God and others. "Baptism is belonging; it is the sign of the Christian reality and our inclusion in it."[30] It is a sacrament of welcome into the Christian story.[31] This is peculiar to the Church. Within a broader context the universality of prevenient grace allows for acceptance of persons apart from their

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[28] Maddox, 87.
[29] Robert L. Browning and Roy A. Reed, *The Sacraments in Religious Education and Liturgy*, (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1985), 164.
[30] Browning and Reed, 159.
[31] Browning and Reed argue that if this welcome is to be genuine it should be comprehensive. That is, that baptism completes itself and that there should be no need for confirmation, nor is there any reason why the baptised but unconfirmed should be refused communion. They look to the eastern tradition where "infants are baptized by immersion, confirmed with the laying on of hands and anointing with oil as symbols of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and given first communion" as an example of the Church fully accepting a new person into the body of Christ. Browning and Reed, 138-39.

encounter with the risen Christ, but as bearers of God's image and as the objects of his love by the work of the Spirit they also become the objects of our love.[32]

Writing from within the Orthodox tradition, Alexander Schmemann maintains that in the Eucharist it is the Church who serves, not the clergy, or the laity, or any combination of the two.[33] In this we see the unity present that is found in Christ. It is small wonder that the most popular designation for the sacrament within Protestantism is that of *communion*. Robert Jenson offers the following, "that churchly and eucharistic communion are one, in that both are communion in the body of Christ, has become a standard item of ecumenical consensus."[34] That is to say, the body of Christ is both the Church and the "loaf and the cup."[35] The Church is the body of Christ to the world as the Eucharist is to the Church. Jenson then proceeds with a citation from the *Anglican-Orthodox dialogue*, "the church celebrating the Eucharist becomes fully itself; that is, *koinonia,* fellowship – communion."[36]

Up to this point I have avoided specific discussion on music. To avoid confusion I must qualify the above observations. The differences between music as *sacramental* and baptism and the Eucharist as *sacraments* become clearer as the discussion becomes more specific. Within the Church the sacraments are accompanied by the declaration of the Gospel, but music can be considered *sacramental* apart from such declaration. From the perspective of Christian theology, however, this is to be considered a lack which may hinder music's effectiveness. Indeed, music's sacramentality is "heightened" (if such a thing is possible) when it is accompanied by such declaration. Apart from discursive attachment music relies on other externalities – such as social context and customs, dance, film, or personal context – for "meaning" or for advocating.[37] This reliance on externalities is consolation from the potential of sheer ambiguity, but does not protect us from the intent of these other externalities. This will be considered shortly. Here I am again

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[32] Jüngel, 32.
[33] Alexander Schmemann, *The Eucharist* (Crestwood: St Vladmir"s Seminary Press, 1988), 88.
[34] Jenson, *Systematic Theology, Volume 2 – The Works of God,* 212.
[35] Jenson, 211.
[36] *Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue: The Moscow Statement* (1976), cited by Jenson, 212.
[37] Nicholas Cook would have it that music not only derives meaning from these externalities, but that it also injects back into them its own meaning. Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 20-22.

wishing to emphasise the subordinate status of music as sacramental – i.e. possessing a part of the character of the sacraments but not enjoying full participation in their reality. Nonetheless this discussion is being carried out within the context of sacramentality, thus observations of the sacraments remain appropriate.

Hearing the Other

That listening to, or taking part in the performance of, music demonstrates to us a better way of relating to each other is not necessarily evident at first glance (or hearing). Listening to music is strangely insular. Music seems to spatially and temporally envelop you in such a way that you are experiencing your own individual reality. This is the experience of the classical concert hall, or of the stillness one experiences when listening in the peace of one's own home.

The music of the Romantic era has come to be characterised (in the musicology of the 19th and early 20th centuries at least) with individual expression.[38] The aesthetic of this belief lies in the stillness of listening as one is communicated with directly by the composer. Beethoven is the champion of this view. Musicologist Nicholas Cook comments critically on Eugene Louis Lami's drawing, "Upon hearing a Beethoven Symphony."

> The listeners may be physically in a single room, but each of them is wrapped up in a different, private world. Music has taken them out of the public world of people and things... indeed, for all practical purposes, the people in Lami's drawing might as well be listening on headphones.[39]

Contrary to the assumptions of many, music is irreducibly an embodied activity. No matter how rapturous the experience, the listener remains en-fleshed. Any soul-lifting which occurs in music is accompanied by foot-tapping. Music is both a means of ingress and of egress; we sway, we dance, we sing. It draws us out of ourselves, away from a damaging inward focus. To what it points us is the question.

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[38] Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 19-20.
[39] Cook, 21.

Outwardly Oriented

These experiences of egress can be corporate. In these situations the drawing-out motion of music may lead us to bond with others. Music is capable of enveloping a group of individuals and uniting them. Each individual is made aware of and united with the adjacent person and both are introduced into this new reality. In the ultimate situation, this union is one of love and respect for the other; it is a sharing of something sacred. In both of these examples, the movement is a drawing-out from the self.

Literary critic and aesthetician George Steiner writes that "music often puts me "beside myself" or, more exactly, in company far better than my own."[40] Music beckons you to recognise and value that which is outside of yourself. Much is often made of music's social dimension. It is generally recognised that music either is formed by society, or forms society. Cook suggests that music is social "even when only a single individual is involved."[41] Even music which on the surface appears only to be self-interested draws us out of ourselves. One might consider this to be the outworking of the music's own megalomania. This is the music which consists solely of internal reference – its primary interest is itself. Nonetheless its cries for attention are heeded and our attention is turned away from ourselves. However, as I have already stated, such encounters with purely self-interested music are rare.[42] The relationship is more often one of dialogue and consideration.

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[40] He is, of course, alluding to a divine "otherness." George Steiner, *Errata: An Examined Life* (N.P.: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1997. Reprint, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 85.

[41] That is to say that music cannot be understood apart from its performance and performance is always an activity of an individual or group of individuals which takes place within a particular social context. Cook writes, "the contemporary performance studies paradigm that has developed primarily in the context of theatre studies and ethnomusicology stresses the extent to which signification is constructed through the very act of performance, and generally through acts of negotiation between performers, or between them and the audience." Nicholas Cook, "Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance," *Music Theory Online: The Online Journal of the Society for Music Theory* (April 2001) 7:2. Online at http://www.societymusictheory.org/mto/issues/mto.01.7.2/mto.01.7.2.cook.html

[42] More often than not this self-interest is that of the composer, not the music. A piece which would seem prone to this kind of selfishness is Bach's famous working out of the potential of equal temperament in *Das wohltemperierte Klavier*. Yet few would suggest that this piece is just the selfish musical rantings of Bach. Not only

Enlivened By the Spirit

There is a wooing which takes place in music. It is small wonder that many cultures have associated music with the spirit world or spiritual rites. Moving beyond the personification of music, we can see that the wooing taking place in musical encounter is one of prevenience. The dysfunctional character of our relationships lies in our "ruthless human self-realization."[43] Being drawn out of ourselves in a way that allows closeness to others is remedial. Where this results in the affirmation of life and godly values I would posit the work of the Holy Spirit (I will discuss shortly instances where this action is void of the Spirit or where the Spirit is grieved). Michael Welker writes "The Spirit is present in that which is *held together* and *enlivened* by God."[44] This is no stretch of the imagination; the realm of God's activity is this plane of reality. The assertion that God is actively present in this world means the possibility that we can witness such action. Welker writes, "The Spirit does not act on abstract 'eternal' entities, but on living things. Fleshliness and the action of the Spirit are not to be separated from each other."[45]

If the Spirit is present in that which is enlivened by God and music can bring us a certain degree of personal improvement such as that which might be expected of prevenient grace then it follows that we may be able to see the Spirit at work in the effects of music. Luther enthusiastically stated that "The Holy Ghost himself honours [music] as an instrument for his proper work."[46] With Luther I assert that we find God's Spirit at work in music, specifically here in this drawing out motion. Music therapy has documented well the manner in which music can help to heal the

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did Bach explore the sonic possibilities and inner workings of this new tuning system, but he turned it into a dialogue by demonstrating to his listeners how pleasant-sounding this tuning system could be. In a way Bach was giving a taste of that which was yet to be apprehended – the future of music – and thus was composing music which was pregnant with possibilities. This work should stand as an example of how rare completely self-interested music is.

[43] Jüngel, "On the Doctrine of Justification,"32.

[44] Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 161. Emphasis original.

[45] Welker, 163.

[46] Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, vol. 53, Liturgy and Hymns*, trans. and ed. Ulrich S. Leupold (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965), Cited by Gesa E. Thiessen ed., *Theological Aesthetics: A Reader* (London: SCM Press, 2004), 145.

broken mind. Music is used in children's wards and retirement homes to help those who are suffering from depression or mental anguish to come out of themselves.[47] Therapists have also observed that music serves to facilitate a condition of amenability to prayer; it serves the "enhancement of a person's relationship with the Divine."[48] In these situations we see that the drawing out motion in music creates a situation of openness to God.

To what or to whom we turn our attention as a result of this motion is partly our response to the music and partly the context in which this occurs. To say that the Spirit is thus involved in music is not to say that he is always active in this way. Here I argue music's sacramental *potential*. Welker asserts that while the Spirit is present in that which is held together he is "not, for example, in that which is decaying to dust."[49] The action of the Spirit in music may also be denied and grieved. The prevenient grace made available in music is non-coercive, as I will discuss shortly. Presently, one more point of clarification may be offered, that any improving which is effected by music may last only for the duration of the song or for a short time thereafter. Brian Wren asserts that music may "momentarily perfect the emotional life of its singers."[50] Admittedly, the discourse of the Church and the biblical narrative have a better history of shaping people according to God's will than does music. I have already stated that apart from the informing narrative of the Gospel music's ambiguity may end up leading in all sorts of directions. However, it needs to be remembered that music is constantly involved in interaction with that which is outside of itself. Wren's assertion is understood best when we consider 1) that he is writing about the music of the Church, thus music accompanied by the word of the Gospel; and 2) that he is describing a communal action that draws us out of ourselves, the benefits of which may last only as long as the action itself. The transience of such effecting is in keeping with music's own disputed ontology.

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[47] See "Depression Research: Music and Massage Therapy," *Internet Health Library*, online at http://www.internethealthlibrary.com/Health-problems/Depression-research_massage_music.htm

[48] R. Nikles, "Integration of Music Therapy and Theology: A Preliminary Approach," *Australian Journal of Music Therapy* 3 (1992), 54.

[49] Welker, *God the Spirit*, 161.

[50] Brian Wren, *Praying Twice: The Music and Words of Congregational Song* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 68.

The Performance Paradigm

Many contemporary musicologists assert that music studies should not focus on the written score so much as the performance of music. The notion of the score as music is being challenged. Cook writes, "Western staff notation shows music 'moving' up and down and from left to right on the page. But what is it that actually does the moving? Literally, nothing... when we say the music moves, we are treating it as an imaginary object."[51] Talk of music often revolves around metaphor. Steiner observes this when he writes "almost everything said about musical compositions by critics, by poets or writers of fiction, by the ordinary listener and music-lover is verbiage... It is talk which enlists metaphor, simile, analogy in a more or less impressionistic, wholly subjective magma."[52] For Steiner this use of metaphor relates music's unintelligibility and indicates transcendence. We use metaphor because music's being is elusive. By speaking in this way we are able to treat music as though it were something we could reach out and touch.

We tend to speak of music as though it still exists after its performance has ceased. Yet this fall back into metaphor demonstrates the failing in conceiving music as a tangible "thing" completely independent of its performance. In light of this it seems preferential to recognise music as a *process* which occurs between individuals rather than a "practice centered on the silent contemplation of the written text, with performance... acting as a kind of supplement."[53] This process is played out by people through a group of actions; it is an interaction. Cook suggests that it is more helpful to think of the score as a script rather than a text. "To think of it as a 'script' is to see it as choreographing a series of real-time, social interactions between players: a series of mutual acts of listening and communal gestures that enact a particular vision of human society."[54] These interactions are not limited to those which occur between performers, Cook asserts that negotiations can take place between the performers and the audience also.[55] The performance of music is then impossible

[51] Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, 70.
[52] Steiner, *Errata*, 71.
[53] Nicholas Cook, "Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance."
[54] Cook, "Between Process and Product."
[55] "Between Process and Product."

without interactions taking place between persons or apart from a social context.

Singing a Vision

It is important to note Cook's assertion that these communal gestures "enact a particular vision of human society." Cook believes that there is value in applying the theory that language determines how different cultures perceive the world, to aesthetics.[56] Thus for Cook music plays a formative role in culture and society. This is almost an inversion of the popular idea that music derives its meaning from its "mediation of society" – a point which is often associated with the discussion of the context of music's creation, performance, and reception.[57] Cook considers these contextual considerations to be important, but he believes that music's role in society is more than the mere mediation of existing societal values. Music is a social action, and as such, informs and forms society, just as much as it depicts it. Rather than allowing music's meaning to lie in abstractions, Cook wishes to learn something of its meaning by observing it workings.

> The point is simply that... [music] is *part* of society, and as such is as likely to be in the vanguard or to lag behind as any other part of society. And we are on much firmer ground when we try to understand the social transactions that are taking place within the practice of music – what is being *done*, in other words – than when we construct unverifiable hypotheses about what might be being represented.[58]

Viewed this way there is value in considering the way that the score (or whatever form the *script* for the performance takes) shapes the interactions which take place within a performance. That music enacts a vision of society is a radical thought. In an orchestral composition the interplay of the violins and violas may have something to say to us. Antiphonal pieces demonstrate a healthy dialogue between two parties. When understood this way music is not trying to ambiguously connect us with externalities, rather, it is embodying externalities.

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[56] Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, 76-77.
[57] Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia*, 3.
[58] Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, 78. Emphasis original.

I hope that the sacramental relevance of this point is not being lost here. In sacramental theology the use of symbolism is of the essence. Rob L. Staples writes that the symbol is not "merely an accidental and *dispensable* '*pointer*' to a reality" rather it is "actually an *indispensable participant* in the reality to which it points."[59] We claim that in the Eucharist we are declaring Christ's death and resurrection. This is not just through the words of the sacramental liturgy, but it is embodied primarily in the bread and the wine which are for us the body and blood of Christ, and also in the sacramental actions. The elements themselves take part in the liturgy. When we assert that music makes us sympathetic to others we simultaneously posit the work of the Spirit. The social interactions which take place in music are the embodied symbol. In a very unambiguous way music draws us out of ourselves. When this results in healthy social relations we taste something of God's will for us. In identifying this work as that of the Holy Spirit, my evangelical tradition requires that the proviso be given that where the message conveyed in music is not true to the biblical story the Spirit is not the speaker. Stanley Grenz writes,

> we must realize that God's Spirit – who is the Creator Spirit – is present everywhere in the world, and consequently the Holy Spirit can speak through many media. To this I must quickly add... Wherever the Spirit speaks, he speaks only and always in accordance with, and never contrary to, Biblical truth.[60]

For the case of music, I would add that the Spirit may be speaking, but we may be ignoring him. That is to say, in situations where the use and performance of music would seem to be amenable to godly causes, yet the result is that of depravity or violence, the non-coercive prevenient grace has been disregarded or abused. But when Godly virtues do eventuate through song, even if only for the duration of the song, we witness the efficacy of God's prevenient grace.

Wesley asserted that in the Eucharist those "who know and feel that they want the grace of God, either to restrain them from sin,

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[59] Staples, 58. emphasis in original.

[60] Stanley Grenz, "What does Hollywood have to do with Wheaton? The place of (pop) culture in theological reflection," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43:2 (June 2000), online at http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=55539150&sid=2&Fmt=3&clientId=66725&RQT=309&Vname=PQD

or to show their sins forgiven, or to renew their souls in the image of God" may find that for which they are searching.[61] Taking Jüngel"s understanding of sin given earlier, those who wish to restrain themselves from sin (by making use of prevenient grace) may find help in song. If what we need is to be saved from a love of self which disallows us to be close to others then it seems that singing may demonstrate to us a way of living which allows us to recognise and value each other. Cook likens the choral performance of hymn singing to that of the football match in that "it involves communal participation and interaction. Everybody has to listen to everyone else and move forward together."[62] For Cook communal singing "doesn't just symbolize unity, it *enacts* it."[63]

It is interesting that in writing on music's capacity to unite people both Cook and musician and theologian, Jeremy Begbie, comment on the singing of the South African national anthem, "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica." Begbie recalls his experiences singing it while visiting South Africa, "wherever I sang it, it evoked in me an extraordinary sense of togetherness, even though I hardly knew the hymn and often hardly knew the people with whom I was singing."[64] He attributes this sense of togetherness not only to the song's history as an anthem that "had bound thousands together" during the reign of apartheid, but also to the structure of its four-part harmony.[65]

Begbie and Cook both note how in the harmony of this song no part overpowers another. The music causes people to relate in a healthy way, without pushing others aside for one's own self-aggrandisement. For Begbie, this as an expression of authentic human freedom. Contemporary conceptions of human freedom entail the consequence-less actions of self-determining individuals who fear that getting close to others may impede personal freedom. Contrary to this, music demonstrates how we can occupy the same "space" without infringing on each other.[66] Music challenges the way we conceive space by offering an alternative to

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[61] John Wesley, cited by Staples, 259.
[62] Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction,* 80.
[63] Cook, 80. Emphasis in original.
[64] Jeremy Begbie, "Through Music: Sound Mix," *Beholding the Glory: Incarnation Through the Arts*, ed. Jeremy Begbie (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 151.
[65] Begbie, "Through Music: Sound Mix," 151.
[66] Begbie, "Through Music: Sound Mix," 151.

visual models.[67] A musical conception of space demonstrates how being courteous and generous to each other is an authentic expression of human freedom. A kind of freedom which is experienced in the song "Nkosi Sikelel iAfrica" as "a sense of stability and mutual dependence."[68] Being a song which draws from both European and African musical traditions, Cook asserts that it has

> an inclusive quality entirely appropriate to the aspirations of South Africa... [it] goes far beyond merely representing the new South Africa. Enlisting music's ability to shape personal identity, "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica" contributes to the construction of the community that is the new South Africa.[69]

What we are seeing here is that music's ability to shape persons takes place within a cultural context; it shapes them within a particular community. By what means are people able to overcome their lust for self and be shaped and encouraged into healthy relationship? Begbie suggests that in singing a song like this "people are experiencing a kind of concord which embodies the kind of freedom in relation to others – even our enemies – which the Trinitarian gospel makes possible."[70] There is, then, in this kind of singing some apprehension of the gospel, of God's desire for us. Such an apprehension asserts itself as the result of God's gracious overtures. Steiner would remind us that "to 'live music,' therefore, as mankind has done since its inception, is to inhabit a realm which is, in its very essence, foreign to us."[71] The powers which we experience within this foreign realm – those which are strangely private and communal – Steiner suggests are "'in'-human."[72] Many theologies would suggest that we not presume that human effort alone makes such formation of community

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[67] This is the point of Begbie's article on the incarnation and music. Music offers us a model for space in which two distinct entities can occupy the same "space" without diminishing, or covering over, one another. Two notes sounding at the same time maintain their individuality as distinct notes while at the same time complement each other in such a way as to hint at the creation of a new entity.
[68] Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction,* 80.
[69] Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction,* 80.
[70] Begbie, "Through Music: Sound Mix," 152.
[71] Steiner, *Errata,* 80-81.
[72] Steiner would take issue, however, with our putting a name to this "in-human" force. To speak of God would be acceptable, to name and identify this God is where Steiner would draw the line. To be clear, however, Steiner also makes room for the recognition of these powers as demonic in character. Steiner, *Errata*, 85.

possible. It is more suitable, rather, to conceive this formative freedom experienced through music to be a gift of prevenience. It is a means by which God chooses to reach out to us and show us something of his character and his intentions for us. In this he makes available the grace necessary to be able to apprehend these things, if only in part. It is small wonder that the response time in so many evangelistic services is accompanied by music, most often in the form of congregational singing.

Gambling in Dialogue

This is not to presume that such experiences are limited to the act of communal singing. The majority of music encountered by people in the West is that which has been recorded. As I have already mentioned numerous times, listening to music evokes a drawing-out motion. By presenting us with itself it pulls our attention away from ourselves. Even the introspection brought about by listening in the stillness of one's home (whether it be on the couch with a stereo or on the beanbag with headphones) is from the perspective of another. It is the interaction with music that brings us to see ourselves in a different light. This is not self-interest in the egotistical sense of the word, rather it is a self-interest brought about by the confrontation of the music. We are not alone on this journey into ourselves; the voice of another is with us through it. That the music is still present with us as we engage in this introspection keeps us in touch with something outside of ourselves. Cook has argued that music is ultimately a part of the culture in which it was composed or performed.[73] In this way it keeps us in touch with culture. The dialogue is not only with culture, but as familiarity with a piece or genre grows we come to find ourselves conversing with the musicians, the composers, and the producers. By drawing our attention away from ourselves like this listening to music, even recorded music, forces us to relate to others.

The link can be stronger when a moment of listening is shared. It is peculiar that this experience can be contemporaneously individual and corporate. Steiner describes music as empowering the "oxymoron of love" when he writes, "to listen to music with the loved one is to be in a condition simultaneously private, almost

[73] Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, 78.

autistic, yet strangely welded to another."[74] One aspect of the strangeness in this situation is the nervousness with which one may share a valued piece of music with another. There is a sense of ownership of the music: when sharing a piece of music I am vulnerable because what is being offered is a part of me and I am a part of it. It is "mine." What is desired in the sharing is that it should become "ours." But there is a chance that the music will not be welcomed and the rejection of the music can be felt personally; a part of me has been rejected. Steiner writes that there is a certain type of etiquette to aesthetic encounters in which we are sought out by "the living significations of the aesthetic."[75] In such a situation we have the capacity either to accept or refuse the encounter, there is a "gamble on welcome" on the part of the artwork.[76] Yet when I share a piece of music with another it is as though I am the one taking the gamble on welcome. Steiner would point out that there is less at stake in this gamble as mine is dependent upon that of the music; mine is secondary. Yet the feeling that a part of me is being put forward in the music is very real. In the act of acceptance and welcome of this gesture I am affirmed, it is a courteous act of love.

Again the theme of non-coercion is present. The rules of courtesy apply in aesthetics in a way reminiscent of the manner in which grace is resistible. I now turn to consider occurrences of discourtesy.

Ignoring the Other – Unworthy Participation

In 2001 the Israeli parliament, along with holocaust survivors, opposed the scheduled performance of Wagner's *Die Walkuere* at a festival in Jerusalem resulting in the removal of the piece from the programme.[77] On the night of the performance, however, conductor Daniel Barenboim chose to perform Wagner in an encore and subsequently found that an Israeli parliamentary committee was urging cultural institutions to shun him.[78] Hitler's love and use of Wagner's music is still too fresh in the collective

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[74] Steiner, *Errata*, 85.
[75] George Steiner, *Real Presences* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989), 147.
[76] Steiner, 156.
[77] "Protests stop Wagner concert," BBC News, 30 May 2001, online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/arts/1360654.stm
[78] "Israel calls for Barenboim boycott," BBC News, 24 July 2001, online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainments/arts/1455466.stm

Jewish consciousness for many to appreciate his work. Public opinion of Wagner is not aided by his own anti-Semitic writings.[79] Steiner likes to remind us that Lukács considered Wagner to be "implicated, to the end of time, in the uses to which Nazism put his music," a use to which – according to Lukács – "not one note in Mozart" could be put.[80]

This example, as well as the use of national anthems in wartime, reminds us that music is also capable of uniting people *against* others. In such uses of music the grace made available is rejected and abused. It is not a closeness to God which is realised. Paul accused the church in Corinth of failing to eat the Lord's Supper because of the manner with which they conducted themselves during the meal.[81] The Corinthians did not show consideration for each other; one person would be drunk from taking more than enough wine, while another would go hungry. Where the action of one diminishes another, God's grace is not utilised – it is not the *Lord's* supper. Similarly, where music does not foster an environment of consideration for others, its sacramentality points to something other than God.

> [Music] can be "the food of love," it can also trigger the feasts of hatred... Massed voices – the Welsh at rugby – bring on an unrivalled unison of communal fraternity; they generate shared prayer and meditation, paradoxically hushed by their very volume. But when harnessed to a national or partisan anthem, to the hammer-thrust of a march, the same choral practices, in an identical key, can unleash blind discipline, tribal mania, and collective fury.[82]

As a human action we cannot consider music to exist in "some zone immune to the effects of human corruption."[83] Much is made of Paul's warning to the Corinthians concerning "worthy" participation in the Eucharistic celebration. With great sobriety Paul declares that unworthy partakers are guilty of the gruesome death of Jesus. With our less than ideal concept of human freedom we individualise our way out of communing with anyone. Our small, daily acts of violence resulted in God on the cross. We can

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[79] Some would argue, however, that Wagner"s own anti-Semitism is merely representative of the prevailing sentiments of his day.
[80] Steiner, *Real Presences,* 145. See also *Errata,* 80.
[81] 1 Corinthians 11:17-22.
[82] Steiner, *Errata: An Examined Life,* 81.
[83] Jeremy Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 276.

enact the same violence in our music. When falling short of sublime – or the sacramentally God-oriented transcendent – at best what remains is sound, noise, perhaps cacophony. When falling short of *communion* in the Eucharist, Paul warns us of judgement.

In the careless (or perhaps malicious!) use of music we risk small acts of selfish violence becoming great. We should take care not to underestimate music's ability to foster violence. But then again, music is neither innocent of blood, nor is it fully responsible for it. A reasonable person will not be engendered with a desire for genocide merely upon hearing Wagner; but neither will a malevolent (or even well-balanced) person "necessarily" be moved to benevolence.

From a Christian perspective artistic creativity operates as an expression of authentic human freedom within constraints. A spirit other than the Holy Spirit is present when artistry is used in a way that is damaging to others. By this I mean that in our music we may be expressing a spirit of human depravity, or of negative sentiment which may be demonic in character.

> Through falseness and unrighteousness human beings can grieve and banish God's Spirit... the knowledge of faith says... that God can take back God's Spirit and can turn away God's face, but that without God's will human beings are unable to activate the action of the Spirit. There are no interconnections between the behavior of human beings and the action of the Spirit that automatically run their course and necessarily produce definitive relations.[84]

In discussing the possibility of a sacramentality of music we must be honest that there is no promise, no divine contract, which obliges God to act in and through music. Yet I still posit that our experience of music shows us that something greater than the mere physics of sound waves is occurring in much music. Where we are drawn out of ourselves in such a way that results in openness to God, truth, or others we have made use of God's prevenient grace. I would allow room for us to recognise even a partial utilisation of prevenient grace when one empathises with that which is communicated through music but is not completely drawn out of self or open to others. God's prevenient grace is that which allows us to turn to him and come to a saving knowledge of

[84] Welker, *God the Spirit*, 161-62.

him, nevertheless such a result is more likely when music is accompanied by the word of the Gospel or is enacted within the Church. Yet where we are drawn out of ourselves only to turn against God and others (even against a healthy knowledge of self) we have grieved and banished the Spirit. God is not obligated to "enliven... the dead and the dust" – though he may if he so chooses.[85]

Conclusion

This paper has revolved around an "openness" for God to work through music. God's work through music is most likely realised when we foster an environment of consideration or magnanimity. Begbie considers musical improvisation to demonstrate "liberating constraint."[86] Jazz improvisation takes hold of certain constraints and uses them to enhance the music. "The improvised elements are not simply held by the constraints but reinforce the dynamism of those very constraints...[resulting in] mutual enhancement through interplay."[87] One such constraint is that of respect and care for others. Improvisers need to be aware of other performers and make "room" for them. Music is characterised by relationships. It is heavily involved in interplay with other media, with persons, and cultures. Where our encounter with music turns us from ourselves and frees us from hatred and fighting, I suggest that we have tasted God's grace. This grace allows us to love, to know others and to know God. I find sacramentality to be a fitting way to describe this action of God in music. It captures the irreducible physicality of song, and also the social dimension of music. It provides a framework for envisioning God's movements while allowing God to move as he will. In most traditions, song is at the heart of the Church's worship life. This is more than coincidence. God's overtures may be heard in music, the question is whether we join his song or choose to remain deaf to it.

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[85] Welker, *God the Spirit*, 162.
[86] Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time*, 204.
[87] Begbie, 212.

AUGUSTINE'S RENUNCIATION OF CLASSICAL LITERATURE

Maurice Nestor

This article examines St. Augustine's relationship to classical literature, the Aeneid in particular. It explores the complex nature of Augustine's early love and later rejection of the classics. Tracing his narrative in the Confessions, a parallel is drawn between Augustine's experiences, in particular his relationship with his mother Monica, and the stories of Aeneas, Dido and Creüsa in the Aenied.

> *Give me a man in love: he knows what I mean. Give me one who yearns; give me one who is hungry; give me one far away in his desert, who is thirsty and sighs for the spring of the Eternal country. Give me that sort of man: he knows what I mean. But if I speak to a cold man, he just does not know what I am talking about...*
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> - *Augustine,* On the Gospel of St John[1]

There is a passage in Book I of the *Confessions* in which St Augustine looks back upon his childhood education from a station somewhere about the middle of his life. It is a passage which disappoints me, much as one is hurt by any matter of disagreement with a friend, and where the disagreement only becomes the deeper for trying to resolve it. I am not presently concerned with what Augustine says about Greek versus Latin, in this passage, or with what he says about pedagogy, but with what he says about the *Aeneid*.

> Even now I cannot fully understand why the Greek language, which I learned as a child, was so distasteful to me. I loved Latin, not the elementary lessons but those which I studied later under teachers of literature. The first lessons in Latin were reading, writing, and counting, and they were as much of an irksome imposition as any studies in Greek. But this, too, was due to the sinfulness and vanity of life, since I was *flesh and Blood, no better than a breath of wind that*

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[1]*Confessions*, I: 13. Augustine's treatise *On the Gospel of St John* is cited in Peter Brown's fine biography, *Augustine of Hippo* (NewYork: Dorset, 1986).

> *passes by and never returns.*[2] For these elementary lessons were far more valuable than those which followed, because the subjects were practical. They gave me the power, which I still have, of reading whatever is set before me and writing whatever I wish to write. But in the later lessons I was obliged to memorize the wanderings of a hero named Aeneas, while in the meantime I failed to remember my own erratic ways. I learned to lament the death of Dido, who killed herself for love, while all the time, in the midst of these things, I was dying, separated from you, my God and my Life, and I shed no tears for my own plight...
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> What can be more pitiful than an unhappy wretch unaware of his own sorry state, bewailing the fate of Dido, who died for love of Aeneas, yet shedding no tears for himself as he dies for want of loving you? O God, you are the light of my heart, the Bread of my inmost soul, and the Power that weds my mind and the thoughts of my heart. But I did not love you. *I broke my troth with you*[3] and embraced another while applause echoed about me. For to love this world is to break troth with you, yet men applaud and are ashamed to be otherwise. I did not weep over this, but instead I wept for Dido, who surrendered her life to the sword, while I forsook you and surrendered myself to the lowest of your created things. And if I were forbidden to read such books, I was sad not to be able to read the very things that made me sad. Such folly is held to be a higher and more fruitful form of study than learning to read and write.[4]

Apart from a distinction between what we might call primary and secondary schooling (to which I will return later), the passage turns upon the trope of a set of interconnections between love and death. Dido's love for Aeneas leads to her death: Augustine's love for Dido – more properly, for the Dido story - would lead to his death too, if he only knew it. And just as the full pathos of Dido's love was not in that love itself, but in love unreturned, so by implication was God's love, that love which he now understands to be "the light of his heart," and "the Bread of his inmost soul," unreturned. He has been a sort of faithless Aeneas. And yet, what was he to Dido, or Dido to him, that he should weep for her?

The episode recalls a strange experience that St Jerome had as a young man. Augustine's contemporary, Jerome had his education in grammar and rhetoric from the best teachers in Rome, where

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[2] Psalm 77.
[3] Psalm 72.
[4] All references to the *Confessions* are to the translation of R.S. Pine Coffin (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961).

Augustine's had been a mere provincial education. As Jerome told it later in a Letter to Eustochium, instead of the Scriptures he used to read his Cicero by day and his Plato by night, because, as the medieval *Golden Legend* tells the story, "the coarse language of the prophetic books displeased him."[5] One time during Lent he fell into a high fever, and he had one of those dreams in which you cannot tell whether you are sleeping or waking, either during the dream or afterwards. In this state he saw that preparations for his funeral were already under way - as they may well have been, for he was gravely ill - and he found himself on trial before an unnamed tribunal. It was a Kafkaesque kind of trial, one of those in which you do not know at first, what you are on trial for - and yet you did know it, all along. In this waking dream the judge asks him what his profession is; and he replies without hesitation that he is a Christian. "You lie!" the judge says. "You are no Christian, you are a Ciceronian, for where your treasure is, there your heart is also." At first Jerome is shocked and can make no reply. But when he is about to be flogged, he bursts out passionately begging the Lord to have mercy upon him (the judge had not previously been given a name – if indeed the Lord is the judge). Others present plead for him too, on the ground of his youth. And he takes an oath that if ever he reads or even possesses worldly books again, he will be knowingly denying the Lord. Suddenly his case is dismissed; and with its dismissal, both his dream and his fever are dismissed too - though his shoulders still ache from the flogging.

It is a remarkable story, where the oneiric continues to resist explanation on merely physical and psychological grounds. But the thrust of the dream is clear. "What has Horace to do with the Psalter...?" he writes (echoing Tertullian's "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between Academy and Church?" when commenting upon the Alexandrian theology's conciliatory attitude to Greek philosophy).[6] "What has Horace to do with the Psalter," Jerome writes, "Virgil to do with the Gospel, Cicero with Paul." How can the Christian continue to love the pagan literature and love Christ at the same time, and in the same mind? "Where your heart is, there your treasure is also," the judge says in a terrible voice, making the words into an accusation. Christ has

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[5] The story of Jerome's dream/vision is retold in *The Golden Legend*, the compendium of legends made by Jacobus de Voragine in the 13th century; translated William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[6] Hamlet's "For what is Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba" etc., seems to be echoing everyone.

warned the Christian about trying to serve two masters, and about the house divided against itself that cannot stand. Jerome's dream-vision seems to arise from just such a house divided against itself. The fables of the gods and heroes, as Augustine calls them, may not have been believed in by the later 4th century; but neither were they disbelieved, as they commonly are disbelieved in the modern era - leaving the way clear, as we have congratulated ourselves, for modern appreciation. The pagan gods were a much nearer presence to such as Jerome and Augustine, requiring a more strenuous rejection than we would see any need for.

Here then, in the latter half of the 4th century, are two of the four (western) Fathers of the Church who go through something of the same crisis of relation to the classical literature in which, metropolitan and provincial, both were educated, and for which both show a love. Both reject it, or try to reject it. Yet their relation to the pagan authors remains inconsistent, or complex. So far as Augustine is concerned, his renunciation of the pagan writers may in some part proceed from the accident of his intense dislike of school, and of anything associated with it. Even all those years afterwards, his memory for the child's sharp sense of pain, and for that oppressive dread of punishment under which children sometimes live, are both still as fresh to him as any of his memories. And this is notwithstanding his entirely competitive wish to succeed at school, whenever he is challenged. He recalls a school prize that he won for the recitation of a speech composed in the character of Juno, at the point where she was "pained and angry because she could not prevent Aeneas from sailing to Italy."[7] (We will see that his example has a later significance in his own story). He is too young yet for ambition to have formed - but turn anything, even school, into a contest, and he will rise to it. It is an instance of that sense of the contradictions of the human soul which makes reading Augustine an experience to quicken the reader's attention towards life itself. It is part of what makes him read, for us, as we read a modern writer. He is not a satirist, because he lives in the eye of God; but he could be, if he wanted. His eye for human inconsistency, in general, is as sharp as a satirist's, as it is for his own inconsistency in that opening passage. We only overlook his sharpness because of his charity. Some part of his renunciation of the pagan authors may also be owing to a dislike of the uses to which such literature was put in the course a rhetorical education. Later in the *Confessions*, he refers to

[7] *Confessions*, I: 17.

very summit of his career, his professorship of rhetoric at Milan, as "a chair of lies."[8] And earlier in the book, he writes of rhetoric in scathing terms, as an art which when exercised in order to gain a conviction in a criminal trial, whether the man is guilty or not, is nothing less than murderous.

But why Virgil? Well, there are several reasons why he might choose to ground his renunciation of all the pagan writers, not on Cicero, as Jerome does, but on Virgil. For Virgil was not only admired, but loved – and loved, it is clear, by the young Augustine himself. Moreover, it is only what we might expect that Virgil's epic poem should have been at the centre of the curriculum of a North African literary education, and that Augustine should cite it, since it afforded, not an imaginary past exactly, but a place in the imagination, for him and for other North Africans of Roman culture. For such a North African, Virgil's poem would give to one of the highest of one's faculties - the imagination - a local habitation and a name: Carthage and Dido.

But it may also be that Virgil was Augustine's chosen ground because Virgil was used as a kind of source-book by those nostalgic late-4th century pagans, trying to revive the rituals of ancient Rome. For there was the pious Aeneas, with his father on his back, and the household gods along with him, trying to preserve them all from the destruction of a whole civilisation, much as these 4th-century pagans might see themselves as doing in the face of the Christians and Goths. There is no sign of such a reason for his choosing Virgil as this. But then the *Confessions* is, as I take it, a most restrained text, and not at all what might be expected from something called, or miss-called, 'a confession.'[9] It is not a tell-all book, but continually says far less than it might. Other passages elsewhere in the first Book of the *Confessions* state the common moral objection to pagan literature, one that already had a long history and, as Augustine points out, was advanced by pagans themselves. Homer, for example, makes human beings into gods, and not very moral ones at that. And the comic theatre is worse, since it mocks the gods, and accords to them the flippancy of the dissolute.[10]

Yet Augustine's objections seem to go deeper still than to pagan poets and writers as such. At bottom there seems to be an objection

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[8] *Confessions*, IX: 2.
[9] Garry Wills argues for a renaming of the book, *The Testimony*, in the Introduction to his *Saint Augustine* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999).
[10] *Confessions*, I: 16

to poetry and story in themselves. That is to say, the objection seems to be to what we would now call "imaginative literature."[11] One of the most startling aspects of the passage quoted above is the wholly instrumental view of education that it proposes – a primary rather than a secondary education is what it amounts to. It is unwise to suspect of philistinism such a writer as can say of his elementary lessons in Latin, irksome though they were: "They gave me the power, which I still have, of reading whatever is set before me and writing whatever I wish to write." Yes, one feels it to be there presently. This is writing – and reading – that becomes aware of itself, without in the least confusing or impeding the simplicity of its utterance. Lamenting, as he says in this passage, for the dying Dido, while yet himself separated from the springs of his own life, in God; or sad when he could not read what yet made him sad, he shows a capacity to make our common worldly reasonableness seem a ramshackle construction of inconsistencies. And yet, such an instrumental view of education is still startling. What is one to make of such a radical rejection of poem and story in themselves, as Augustine does here - especially for such a one as the present writer who has long made a profession of them? Augustine puts you on the spot, with himself as an example - a young man who, in his own view of it, went on professing rhetoric years after he should have known better. I can only make some kind of an answer by continuing to apply my profession to Augustine's own book.

Jerome could not keep his promise to renounce the pagan authors. "After frequent night vigils," he wrote, "after shedding tears, with the remembrance of past sins brought forth from my inmost heart, I would take up my Plautus."[12] And later, when his former friend and now bitter enemy, Rufinus taxed him with his backsliding, he seems to have settled for living with his own inconsistency. "It was only a dream," he said on another occasion, of the vision of the trial. Augustine did not himself come to a moment of personal crisis over the pagan authors as Jerome had done. He seems, rather, to have left them behind him than to have renounced them, exactly. There is already a distance from them by the time he

[11] See also Confessions, III: 2 for Augustine's objections to the theatre – though at III: 6 he does explicitly allow some virtue to imaginative literature: "There is certainly more to be gained from verses and poems and tales like the flight of Medea than from their [the Manichees'] stories of the five elements disguised in various ways by the five dens of darkness."

[12] Charles Christopher Mierow, *St Jerome: The Sage of Bethlehem* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1959), 18.

writes the *Confessions*, when he has been only a few years a bishop. (The *Confessions* was written 397-400 A.D.) You can see it in the way in which he writes of "being obliged to memorize the wanderings of a hero named Aeneas," as if the reader might need to be reminded of who these characters are, and as if the "wanderings" were more than Aeneas's. The vagueness that he professes is of course strategic, not real.

He was as imbued with those pagan authors as Jerome was. He was never less than the grateful reader of Cicero's (lost) *Hortensius* – even though I gather that it was probably one of those obligations which was in excess of the writer's merits. His debt to the neo-Platonic philosophers was much greater still, as he also warmly acknowledged. The encounter with Cicero's book was an accident. He might have found something else to cause the same shift in his attitudes. But the neo-Platonic ascent from the mutable to the immutable was structural. Everything that he subsequently thought was built upon it.[13] Pagan writers might come to his mind still at any time, to make a distinction with, or to set a meaning resonating. In the *Confessions*, for example, he will quote Sallust so as to make a point about violence – though I think it happens to be a mistaken one - and that the violent come to engage in political murder for its own sake, and not for some other end.[14] In an extended passage in Book IV, on the sudden death of a friend whom he carefully does not name (to which I will return later), he analyses his own responses with the aid of a reference to the friendship of Orestes and Pylades. And a few lines later, he will help to ground his own confusing and contradictory state by another reference, this time to Horace: "I wondered that other men should live when he was dead, for I had loved him as though he would never die. Still more I wondered that he should die and I remain alive, for I was his second self. How well the poet put it when he called his friend the half of his soul."[15]

As for Scripture, his case is once again similar to Jerome's: when he first read the Scriptures he found them just as Jerome had done, disappointing, and uncouth. Such a reaction is surprising, surely.

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[13] For Augustine's sense of obligation to Cicero's Hortensius, see *Confessions*, III: 4. For his debt to Platonism, see VII: 17-20.

[14] *Confessions*, II: 5. Augustine's point is that not even Catiline, whom Sallust tells us 'was a man of insane ferocity', and who encouraged his men to random killing so as to keep their hands in, did so for the sake of doing evil in itself, but for the honour and power and wealth that it was thought to serve. After the 20th Century, perhaps it is easier for us to see that Sallust has the right of it.

[15] *Confessions*, IV: 6.

What expectations, what standards could they have been bringing to their reading? What assumptions?

> I discovered something that was at once beyond the understanding of the proud and hidden from the eyes of children. Its gait was humble, but the heights it reached were sublime. It was enfolded in mysteries, and I was not the kind of man to enter into it or bow my head to follow where it led. But these were not the feelings which I had when I first read the Scriptures. To me they seemed unworthy of comparison with the stately prose of Cicero, because I had too much conceit to accept their simplicity and not enough insight to penetrate their depths.[16]

Apparently Augustine, for his part, would have been reading the so-called old Latin Bible of Africa, rather than Jerome's Latin; and the old Latin version, Peter Brown says, was harsh and slangy, and used what Augustine would have found an alien and inward-looking jargon.[17] Yet it is still difficult to comprehend the strength of the habits that they must have brought to their reading from their rhetorical education in the classical authors. We seem to be as far removed from their expectations and satisfactions in literature as Augustine is here from those of Scripture, however barbarous the form in which it came to him. Augustine seems to have been unable even to read Scripture, until he encountered Bishop Ambrose in Milan. It was not however the famous personal eloquence promised in Ambrose's name that opened his eyes, even though he says in the *Confessions* that it was to listen to Ambrose as a rhetorician that he first attended his sermons. It was rather the dawning of an understanding of a new way to read and to think, altogether.

> ...Every Sunday I listened as he preached the word of truth to the people, and I grew more and more certain that it was possible to unravel the tangle woven by those who had deceived both me and others with their cunning lies against the Holy Scriptures. I learned that your spiritual children...do not understand the words God made man in his own image to mean that you are limited by the shape of a human body, and although I could form not the vaguest idea, even with the help of allegory, of how there could be substance that was spiritual, nevertheless I was glad that all this time I had been howling my complaints not against the Catholic faith but against something quite imaginary which I had thought up in my own head...O God, you who are so high above us and yet so close, hidden and yet always present,

[16] *Confessions*, III: 5.
[17] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (London: Faber, 1967), 41.

> you have not parts, some greater and some smaller. You are everywhere, and everywhere you are entire. Nowhere are you limited by space. You have not the shape of a body like ours. Yet you made man in your own likeness, and man is plainly in space from head to foot.[18]

The tardiness of his grasp of the idea of a non-literal interpretation of a text is surprising to us, now. This too is one of those places where one feels our distance from him, that he should have had such difficulty in getting beyond the literalism and materialism of the Manichees (the Manichees are the others "who had deceived him with their cunning lies against Scripture" in the passage above). Or it would be, were it not that language is already working in a new and tentative way in that passage, directing, or leading us to what cannot be contained by language.

Over the last half of his life, when he was continuously engaged as Bishop of Hippo in preaching and writing for the occasion, and even down to the last year of his life, Peter Brown makes it clear that Scripture was to become for Augustine nothing less than an alternative literature to the classical tradition: "For such is the depth of the Christian Scriptures that, even if I were attempting to study them and nothing else, from boyhood to decrepit old age, with the utmost leisure, the most unwearied zeal, and with talents greater than I possess, I would still be making progress in discovering their treasures..."[19] Its importance was founded upon his sense of the soul's relation to God - which in turn was working itself out in a new theory of language and reading, where the mind feels its way beyond the word to what draws it:

> The presentation of truth through signs has great power to feed and fan that ardent Love, by which, as under some law of gravitation, we flicker upwards, or inwards, to our place of rest. Things presented in this way move and kindle our affections far more than if they were set forth in bald statements...I believe that the emotions are less easily set alight while the soul is wholly absorbed in material things; but when it is brought to material signs of spiritual realities, and moves from them to the things they represent, it gathers strength just by this very act of

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[18] *Confessions*, VI: 4.

[19] *Letter 137*, cited in Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 263. For a revolution in the classical 'levels of style' in the new Christian writing – a revolution implicit in the Incarnation itself – see Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, tr. Willard Trask (New York: Dooubleday, 1957), chapter 3 and especially 58-66.

> passing from the one to the other, like the flame of a torch, that burns all the more brightly as it moves...[20]

That concluding image of the moving torch itself both clarifies and convinces of what the mind can scarcely grasp. Here in itself is a new literature, in a new culture. Yet Augustine still shows himself to have been a warm, passionate reader of the *Aeneid*, even in seeming to renounce it. His inclination is clear: it is to love those stories - though an inclination of nature is no validation of itself, since it may be a distraction from one's true nature. I note that, from all of the *Aeneid* his examples are from the first books, and that his instances are Dido and Creüsa and, as we have seen, Juno. The conjunction of Dido and Creüsa is significant.[21] It is a response to precisely the two places in the early books of the poem, of the utmost pathos – perhaps the two such places in the whole poem. One, Dido's death, is long prepared for by the narrative. The narration of her self-immolation on own funeral pyre reverberates with the magnificent, baleful account of the burning of Troy, two books earlier. But the other one, the manner of Creüsa's death, that night when the Greeks were found to be already within the city, and when all was flame and darkness, and death or survival a matter of chance, Creüsa's fate catches one's breath with its unexpectedness. The two kinds of end seem balanced against one another in the turn of the narrative.

But how could a boy's being moved by Dido and by Creüsa be a "breaking of his troth to God," I want to ask? Here is Aeneas's recollection of that terrible night, when he lost Creüsa:

> I was already near the city gates and thinking that I had come all the way in safety, when suddenly we seemed to hear hurrying steps and my father, looking forward through the darkness, cried, 'Son, you must run for it. They are drawing near; I can see shining shields and flashes of bronze.' Then, in the severe stress of my anxiety and haste, some unkind power robbed me of my wits. For after leaving the streets, which I knew, I lost direction, and I was running over trackless country when - oh, terrible! - my wife Creüsa - did she stop running because some bitter fate meant to steal her away from me, or did she perhaps stray from the path or just sink down in weariness? We cannot know; but we never saw her again. I had never looked back for her when she was first lost, or given her a thought till we came to the hillock consecrated to the worship of Ceres. There we finally rallied all our

[20] Letter 55.
[21] *Confessions*, I: 13.

> company and found that she alone was missing, and that without knowing it her husband, her son, and her friends has lost her forever.[22]

Here is a loss perhaps more grievous than any other would have been. Life, it seems, is such that we can lose what is most cherished, and not even know that we are losing it. At least Orpheus *knew* what he was losing. In what follows the passage above, Aeneas retraces his steps through the streets of Troy, scarcely registering the burning buildings, the heaps of plunder, the sudden sight of mobs of Greek soldiers, the odd doorways of strange silence. He fills the empty streets with crying out her name, calling for her, heedless of anything else; and then finally he meets her spirit, there in the dark, taller and more majestic than in life, and at first his hair stands on end. She speaks to him of pointless grieving, and prophesies his destiny. And she, the spirit of the lovely wife, comforts him in his loss of herself, the dead comforting the living, at once close and immensely distant. She speaks of the queen that he will marry – the wife who will replace her, some time in the future. How hard it must have been to say that; how profoundly gentle the soul that can say it. The difficulty and the ghostly grief that she herself suppresses, even as a spirit, is left hanging in the air in her very last words, "And now goodbye. And guard the love of the son whom we share." It scarcely matters to the reader what Aeneas feels here, for the loss is felt even more as our own than it is his.

How can it be wrong for the boy, Augustine, to love the sadness of this? I would hope that the *lacrimae rerum*, the immeasurable sorrow of things, while it intensifies the conscious recognition of just how much this life is to be loved, yet points beyond itself – a sorrow arising from this life that this life cannot contain - as does his sorrow for the death of his Un-named Friend, in those deeply moving chapters in Book IV of his own book. The expression, there, of his own grief is as memorable as Virgil's, or anyone else's, though of a quite different quality from Virgil's. The pain of loss forces its way into utterance at once analytic of his own state, and a lyric expression of it. It is a grief that has been felt in, and passed through, the intellect. He, like Aeneas, searches for the lost one. But his reactions are stranger far than in Virgil, and quickly noted; and his eye for his own momentary falseness, intellectual rather than emotional, is merciless:

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[22]*Aeneid*, Book II, in the translation of W.F. Jackson Knight (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1956).

> My heart grew sombre with grief, and wherever I looked I saw only death. My own country became a torment and my own home an abode of misery. All that we had done together was now a grim ordeal without him. My eyes searched everywhere for him, but he was not there to be seen. I hated all the places we had known together, because he was not in them and they could no longer whisper to me 'Here he comes!' as they would have done had he been alive but absent for a while. I had become a puzzle to myself, asking my soul again and again 'Why are you downcast? Why do you distress me?' but my soul had no answer to give. If I said 'Wait for God's help', she did not obey. And in this she was right because, to her, the well-loved man she had lost was better and more real than the shadowy being in whom I would have her trust. Tears alone were sweet to me, for in my heart's desire they had taken the place of my friend.[23]

I began by speaking about the intellectual friendship that a reader may feel for what he or she reads. Augustine was, and remained, a man of warm attachments – of friendships. The man who could write of disagreements in friendship as part of their pleasure, "as a man might differ with himself,"[24] must be as joyous in friendship as he is subtle in it. There were many such friends, most of them left un-named. But among those who are given a name, there was Alypius, Nebridius, and, it seems strange to say, his son Adeodatus – of whom he writes little, but writes of him more as friend than son.[25]

Yet his deepest attachment was to Monica, his mother. More even than an attachment, he writes of her, after her death: "It was because I was now bereft of all the comfort I had from her that my soul was wounded and my life seemed shattered, *for her life and mine had been as one*."[26] And it was this Monica with whom he had equivocated about his plans for leaving Africa, and for trying himself out in the metropolitan centre. It was she whom in some sense he had betrayed, putting to sea in the dark as Aeneas had done to Dido. There is a scene in both the *Aeneid* and the *Confessions* where each of the two women is lied to, and where each more or less knows it, but does not wish to believe it.[27] "Traitor," says Dido bitterly, "did

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[23] *Confessions* IV: 4.
[24] *Confessions*, IV: 8.
[25] For Augustine's friendship with Alypius and Nebridius, see for example, VI: 7-10, where Alypius is the subject of several anecdotes.
[26] *Confessions*, IX: 12, emphasis mine.
[27] *Aeneid*, IV: l. 296ff; *Confessions*, V: 8.

you actually believe that you could disguise so wicked a deed and leave my country without a word?" But her denunciation of Aeneas does not mean, even now, that she has relinquished all hope of him. Not even when she makes her own death the more likely by predicting it can she separate self-torment from desperate hope: "And can nothing hold you, not our love, nor our once plighted hands, nor even the cruel death that must await your Dido?" Similarly, there is a scene in both where the sun comes up on the women's desertion, and where the wind fills the sails of Aeneas and Augustine, in an action that implicitly mingles their relief with their remorse. Yet no explicit connection is ever made, in Augustine's book, between Aeneas's desertion of Dido and his own of his mother. Ever a restrained, and even a reticent author, whose continuous allusions to the Psalms and other Scripture, and to the pagan authors, have been a way of mediating between a deeply private and a public discourse, he leaves the connection to be felt.

The shaping narrative of the first nine Books of the *Confessions* – which is to say, of the more *narrative* part of the whole book – is ostensibly the story of Augustine's conversion. And the nearer Augustine approaches to that conversion, the more intensely it is delayed, both historically and narratively. First it was delayed year by year; and then in Book VIII, it is delayed day by day. So it will not do to diminish the importance of the conversion narrative. And yet I believe that there is what amounts to another narrative in the book, more or less in parallel with this ostensible one, and to some extent in tension with it. For the story of his conversion is also the story of himself and Monica. She is a very impressive woman. His flight from Carthage is a flight from her, as it is a flight from God. And as we have seen, this double narrative takes its shape, at a critical juncture, from the *Aeneid* - though the *Aeneid* had seemed in Book I to have been renounced, as the exemplary case of the pagan literature that he himself had once loved.

It seems, from what we read in Book X, that Monica was an uneducated woman, as well as an obviously persistent one. She seems to have been a woman of confused, or impure will. But she also came to learn how to know her own mind. She has dreams; and she knows how to distinguish true from false significances in them.[28] In Book III, Chapter 2, Augustine recalls just such an episode: fearful of her son's involvement with the Manichees, she

[28] For Monica's impressive level-headedness about the varying significance of her own dreams, see *Confessions*, VI: 13.

tells him one day of a dream she has just had, in which she is standing upon a wooden rule, and is approached by a young man out of a splendour, who asks her why she grieves, though it seems that she knows his question is a way of delivering a message to her, and that he already knows why. When she replies that her tears are for her son's lost soul, the angel bids her take heart, for if she were to look carefully she would see that her son was there with her. And as in dreams the word becomes the deed, she does look and find Augustine "standing there beside her on the same rule." Yet it was not quite the dream itself that was the point of Augustine's story, so much as it was the interpretation of it. Augustine, the bright young intellectual, tells his peasant mother that the dream meant she should take comfort, and that one day she should be with him, such as he was then. But with utter assurance, she instantly corrects him about what is after all her own dream. She points out that the angel did not say "Where he is, there you are," but "Where you are, he is." Similarly, there is a briefer mention of her while on her own way to Rome, following her son, and of her calming, if not the sea as Christ had done the Sea of Galilee, then the sailors on the ship on which she was taking passage, which must have been just about next in order of difficulty. And she was able to impose the calming force of her nature because, once again, she had seen a vision, and in that vision that she would be with her son – and by inference, with him upon land.[29] Augustine must feel that there is a God-like knowledge of himself, in Monica. The whole book, the *Confessions*, is written in the expanded consciousness of knowing that what he is writing is already known to God, who is one of the readers of it. Monica too seems to know him better than he knows himself - and rather as God knows us, not us God. Augustine lives in the condition of being known – known by God of course. But Monica is an earnest of such a knowledge of his inner self, beyond that self's own knowledge.

But to return, finally, to the matters of grief and loss, love and death: there are many deaths in the book. Whether or not there is an unusual number for the time, these intense feelings of loss and grief are in tension with the main narrative of conversion and of joyous surrender to God, a tension that Augustine has difficulty in resolving. Their note is first sounded in his recalling of Dido and Creüsa; and they are given fuller resonance in the extended passage in Book IV (chapters 4-10) on the death of the Un-named Friend, where they generate a train of thought that leads us to God via the

[29]*Confessions*, VI: 1.

sense of the transience of all things, and the permanence of God. And then in Book IX there are three more deaths, suddenly, unexpectedly: Verecundus and Nebridius,[30] and then "the boy Adeodatus," who had not even been named previously, until we are told of his death.[31] He is named in the book, and thus enters it more fully, only to be lost to it.

But the last of the deaths in Book IX is also the most extended in treatment, as if all the others had been unrecognised portents of it – a treatment that answers in gravity to the death of the Un-named Friend in Book IV. It is the death of Monica herself. Monica's death clearly precedes the death of Adeodatus in time; but Augustine has left it till last. When mother and son had returned to Ostia, waiting to take ship at last for Africa, Monica, strong to the last, had in effect given herself her own release. The relevant passage is a long one, and difficult to summarise, since it consists of something rare that happened to them both, without their either intending or expecting it. And what happened did so because it happened to both of them at the same time. It all happened in a sort of momentary quiet in their lives, one of those phases of hiatus in which we are more open to change than we know. They stood at the window of the house where they were staying, and looked out upon a garden in the courtyard, talking first of bodily pleasure and passion, and then in a kind of ascent, of all the things of this earth. And they began to be moved by the love in which, as they saw, these things find their true purpose for us.

> Higher still we climbed, thinking and speaking all the while in wonder at all that you have made. At length we came to our own souls and passed beyond them to that place of everlasting plenty, where you feed Israel for ever with the food of truth. There life is that Wisdom by which all these things that we know are made, all things that ever have been and all that are yet to be. But that Wisdom is not made: it is as it has always been and as it will be for ever – or, rather, I should not say that it *has been* or *will be*, for it simply *is*, because eternity is not in the past or in the future. And while we spoke of the eternal Wisdom, longing for it and straining for it with all the strength of our hearts, for one fleeting instant we reached out and touched it. Then with a sigh, leaving out *spiritual harvest* [*Romans* 8: 23] bound to it, we returned to the sound of our own speech, in which each word has a beginning and an ending...[32]

[30]*Confessions*, IX: 3.
[31]*Confessions*, IX: 6.
[32]*Confessions*, IX: 10.

This was five days before Monica died, and before the sudden fever caught perhaps from the swamps round Ostia, where Augustine too had fallen ill on his arrival in Italy. Among the things that Augustine was to remember of his mother as she lapsed in and out of consciousness is a sort of contentment. She had long spoken of her wish to return to Africa, to end her days there, and to lay her mortal remains down by her husband Patricius - the troublesome and not always faithful husband round whom she seems to have grown her affections. Now she is to die not in Africa, but here in Ostia, indifferent now to wherever she dies. "It does not matter where you bury my body," she tells him. "Do not let that worry you! All I ask is that, wherever you may be, you should remember me at the altar of the Lord."[33]

Ever the sharp analyst of his own state, he goes through a confusion of responses to her death. First, suppressing his tears, he begins to find next that the tears do not come when he has the time for them. And when finally they do come, unbidden, he feels the need to apologise for his grief, as being guilty of "perhaps too much worldly affection."[34] One is reminded of grief and loss, extending all the way back to Dido and Creüsa, in Book I. Though there of course the grief and loss were imagined, yet they do represent a similar kind of attachment to this life through the profundity of emotional response to it. He has undergone his conversion – he is not supposed to feel like this. And yet he is incapable of fudging what he does feel. The conclusion of Book IX is, I believe, the closure of the narrative:

> Let her rest in peace with her husband. He was her first husband and she married no other after him. She served him...so that in the end she also won him for you. O my Lord, my God, your servants my brothers – they are your sons and my masters, whom I serve with heart and voice and pen – inspire those of them who read this book to remember Monica, your servant, at your altar and with her Patricius, her husband, who died before her, by whose bodies you brought me into this life, though how it was I do not know. With pious hearts let them remember those who were not only my parents in this light that fails,

[33] *Confessions*, IX: 11.

[34] Gary Wills, op. cit., p.63, contrasts Augustine's uncontrollable grief at the death of his Friend in Book IV with what he says is a new-found control of that grief at the death of his mother. But Augustine's response seems to me only to be suppressed, and delayed, rather than controlled, as becomes clearer from what immediately follows.

> but were also my brother and sister...and will be my fellow citizens in the eternal Jerusalem for which your people sigh throughout their pilgrimage, from the time when they set out until the time when they return to you. So shall it be that the last request that my mother made to me shall be granted in the prayers of the many who read my confessions more fully than in mine alone.

I read this final paragraph as a reparation for his leaving Monica behind, at Carthage. It joins her to her dead husband, though she had died far from him. And it joins the book to its audience, both the readers for whom Augustine first wrote the *Confessions,* at their insistence – the "brothers," the community of friends referred to above - and the readers who read it still. All are joined in a single action of remembering her in prayer, as she had asked him to do; so that our own reading, of itself, has been made to take on the condition of prayer too, and of remembrance of Monica - she whom he had once abandoned, grieving on the shore, as Aeneas had abandoned Dido.

THE ROLE OF THE ELIHU SECTION IN THE BOOK OF JOB

Moses Khor

Much has been written about the contribution of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job, their authenticity, authorship, and role. The conjecture that these speeches were interpolations to Job led to doubts whether there is a role for them at all. There is very little basis for rejecting the authenticity of these speeches, and the case for excising them is weak. Approaching the Elihu speeches holistically – seeing them as an integral part of the book of Job, giving due consideration to both their literary design and their doctrinal contributions – brings the conclusion that the Elihu speeches form the theological bridge on which a righteous person may maintain faith and integrity in the midst of suffering, moving from faith that is untested towards faith that is tested and vindicated.

Introduction

The Elihu speeches (chs 32–37) in the book of Job are the theological-philosophical contributions of a man who is young relative to the four men (Job, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) whose Dialogue dominated the book thus far (3–31). His contributions have been variously described as "the product of the [Joban author's] experience during a lifetime,"[1] or as not carrying the discussion forward any distance.[2] His character and style have also been variously described as "overweening vanity,"[3] pompous, insensitive and opaque,[4] and prolix.[5] A survey of the literature amply demonstrates that much has been written about the contribution of the Elihu speeches to the book of Job, the authenticity and authorship of this section (whether it is an interpolation of another author or authors), and the role of these speeches[6]. This essay focuses on more recent articles and

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[1] R. Gordis, *The Book of God and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1965), 287.
[2] E. M. Good, *In Turns of Tempest* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1990), 321.
[3] D. Wolfers, *Deep Things Out of the Darkness* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1995), 297.
[4] Good, 321.
[5] F. I. Andersen, *Job* (London: Tyndale, 1976), 51.
[6] See the surveys in recent articles by L. J. Waters, "The Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches in Job 32–37," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156 (Jan–Mar 1999): 28–41; R. V.

commentaries on the role of the Elihu speeches in discussing the proposition that these have no role in the book of Job. Doubts as to whether there is a role for them had been founded on the conjecture that these speeches were later (and usually deemed inferior) accretions to Job.[7]

It is noted that even as the discussion on whether there is a role for the Elihu speeches rages on, it appears that there *is* indeed a role for them in stoking a lively scholarly discussion. Althann's recent (1999) short essay[8] on Elihu's contribution listed five Elihu studies produced in the preceding decade alone, while Waters' two articles in the same year, which presented an extensive study on Elihu's theology[9] and robustly asserted their authenticity,[10] have a very ample bibliography spanning more than two centuries.

Critical Analysis of the Authorship and Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches

According to Waters, critical analysis of these speeches in the 19th century set the ball rolling on doubting that they were part of the original.[11] This, together with questions on the integrity of other parts of Job, has in turn given rise to countless theories about the composition of and redaction schemes shaping the book of Job.[12] Janzen listed some major objections to the authenticity of these speeches[13] - the lack of reference to Elihu elsewhere in Job, not even in the Epilogue, the diffuse and pretentious literary style, the linguistic differences with the rest of the book, and the tangency between these speeches to the divine speeches as resolution to Job's problem.

McCabe, "Elihu's Contribution to the Thought of the Book of Job," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 2 (Fall 1997): 47–80.

[7] L. Wilson, "The Role of the Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job," *Reformed Theological Review* 55:2 (1996): 81–94.

[8] R. Althann, "Elihu's Contribution to the Book of Job," *Old Testament Essays* 12:1 (1999): 9–12.

[9] L. J. Waters, "Elihu's Theology and His View of Suffering," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156 (Apr–June 1999): 143–159.

[10] Waters, "The Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches," 28–41.

[11] Waters, "The Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches," 29.

[12] Andersen, *Job*, 41-42.

[13] J. G. Janzen, *Job* (Atlanta: Knox, 1985), 217–18, cited in Waters, "The Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches," 30.

Other scholars remarked upon their seeming disruption to the flow of events,[14] their unremarkable theological content,[15] or their inferior literary style and quality,[16] as further proof of their non-authenticity. Some have also suggested that these add nothing new to what has already been presented, e.g. Elihu's suggestion of suffering as discipline from God in 32:19–22 rehashed Eliphaz's point in 5:17,18. As a result, one could surmise a "real" version of Job without the intruding of Elihu speeches.[17]

The ramifications of the view that the Elihu speeches are inauthentic, again, appear to be myriad. Some have theorised a multiplicity of editors or authors; some decided that they have no role in the overall scheme of Job and have excised them from their scheme of the study of Job; some have advocated radical reorganisations of the material, while others hold that notwithstanding their non-authenticity, they are not only essential but also beneficial as contributing to the understanding of Job's suffering.[18]

It is important to canvass and evaluate some of these objections to the authenticity of the Elihu section. As Waters pointed out, one net effect of rejecting the authenticity of the Elihu section is a deficient view of the uniqueness of Elihu's contribution to the philosophical and theological arguments concerning suffering.[19] Wilson also pointed out that Elihu's contribution is not only at the level of the speeches themselves, but also to the literary and thematic purposes of the book of Job as a whole.[20]

The authenticity of these speeches has been somewhat enthusiastically defended in recent studies in the literature. Hartley pointed out that Elihu's absence in the Prologue and Epilogue could be explained from a stylistic point: the lengthy introduction of Elihu in Job 32 compensated for his absence earlier, and neither the Satan nor Job's wife received a mention at the end. Moreover, supposing that Elihu had finished fulfilling his role of preparing Job for the

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[14] R. N. Whybray, *Job* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 22.
[15] R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (1952), 673, cited in Andersen, *Job*, 51.
[16] H. H. Nichols, *AJSL* 27 (1910–11): 97ff, cited in Andersen, *Job*, 51.
[17] Andersen, *Job*, 42.
[18] Waters, "The Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches," 31–32.
[19] Waters, "The Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches," 31–32.
[20] Wilson, "The Role of the Elihu Speeches," 94.

theophany, there is neither a need for a divine verdict on him, nor any special mention at the end.[21]

On the literary, linguistic and stylistic bases against the integrity of the Elihu speeches, Gordis has provided a fairly robust defence. He began by noting that the dissection and atomisation of ancient literary documents, without due attention to the unity and meaning of the literary whole, is poor scholarship and was beginning to fall out of favour to a more holistic approach.[22]

On the contention that the there are marked variations in the vocabulary between the Elihu speeches and the rest of the book, e.g. the divine names, pronouns and prepositions, Gordis stated that these variations are relative rather than absolute – these words occur throughout the whole book but the proportion of usage in the Elihu speeches differed from the rest.[23] Snaith's later study also demonstrated no significant degree of variations in the vocabulary to warrant a theory for separate authorship.[24] As Andersen pointed out, one could line up impressive names and supply lists of words and idioms on both sides of this question. In actual fact, the vocabulary difference could also be explained by the author's desire to give Elihu a distinctive character.[25]

The fact that Elihu appears to quote earlier speeches by Job and the other friends has been used as evidence that his speeches are later interpolations. But Gordis pointed out that it could equally be argued for a single authorship - the use of quotations is commonplace in ancient literature.[26] Elihu's quotation of earlier speeches could be part of the author's plan, e.g. in his role as Job's arbiter.[27] Moreover, Job's quotations of Yahweh's speech (42:2–6) further strengthen the case for single authorship.[28]

Arguments from the alleged differences in style and quality of style between the Elihu speeches and the rest of the book could be quite simply subjective. One could easily line up students of Job on one side or the other.[29] Andersen highlighted that a good author

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[21] J. E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 28.
[22] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 106.
[23] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 106–107.
[24] N. H. Snaith, *The Book of Job* (London: SCM, 1968), 75–85; cited in Waters, "The Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches," 26–37.
[25] Andersen, *Job*, 51–52.
[26] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 107.
[27] N. C. Habel, "The Role of Elihu in the Design of the Book of Job," in *In the Shelter of Elyon*, W. B. Barrick and J. S. Spencer, eds. (Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 81–98.
[28] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 107.
[29] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 108.

does not make all the characters speak the same. Furthermore, if the last human word appears "weak and turgid," they serve to contrast the brilliance of the final word from God.[30]

Much has also been made of the integrity of the Elihu speeches within the structure of the book of Job. The abrupt appearance and disappearance of Elihu, together with the sudden incursion of the "Wisdom poem" in Job 28, and the absence of a third speech by Zophar, have long been the subject of much discussion and conjecture.[31] The question of structure is extremely vexed and subjective.[32] One example is that while it is generally recognised that Job's dialogue with his three friends in chapters 3–31 could be structured as three cycles with the third cycle breaking down, the long-recognised propensity for the number four in Job has led some students to recast Job 3–31 into two cycles of 4 speeches, thereby smoothing over the supposed absence of Zophar.[33] The fact that Elihu made four distinct speeches appear to bolster the case for their integrity with the rest of Job. Further complicating matters is the proposal of a five-part division of the Elihu speeches![34]

Getting back to the subject of the integrity of these speeches within the structure of Job proper, it has been argued that the elimination of these speeches would allow for Yahweh to appear immediately after Job's plea for his presence in Job 31. This could simply be refuted by the argument that Yahweh's appearance had already been requested right from the start (9:3), and again at several places (13:3, 16:18–22) to no avail. There is no reason to expect Yahweh's immediate appearance to Job's plea in chapter 31.[35] Freedman's structural study of the Elihu speeches also indicated that they are reasoned responses to the ideas found in earlier sections of Job, and notwithstanding his novel reconstruction of Job which involves redistributing the Elihu speeches, he showed that

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[30] Andersen, *Job*, 51.
[31] A. E. Steinmann. "The Structure and Message of the Book of Job," *Vetus Testamentum* 46: 86–88.
[32] A quick scan through commentaries on Job would quickly reveal as many structural schemes as commentators!
[33] See for example Andersen, *Job*, 19–23; and Steinmann, "The Structure and Message," 91.
[34] D. A. Diewert, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis", unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1991, cited in Waters, "The Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches," 28.
[35] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 108.

there is likely structural integrity of these speeches within Job.[36] There is also increasing recognition that for all the difficulties with the presence of Elihu structurally, these speeches play an important function in the design of the book of Job,[37] and that they set the stage for the Yahweh speeches.[38]

Arguments against the content of the Elihu speeches are the ones that strike at the heart of their authenticity, and whether there is a role for these in the book of Job. A major contention is that they add nothing new or significant to the discussion. However this contention is self-defeating for it would raise the question of why anyone would take the trouble to add these to the book of Job.[39] Furthermore, the sheer volume of these speeches – going on for nearly six chapters, and nearly as long as the speeches of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar put together – indicate that these have more substance than just mere repetition.

It has also been suggested that these speeches were added by a writer dissatisfied with, variously, the theological perspective of the original, or the inconclusive nature of the arguments. These speeches are "orthodoxy at its safest."[40] However, if the original ideas in the book of Job were as heretical as it was supposed, the book would have been consigned to neglect and oblivion, rather than revision or addition[41]. Moreover, as has been mentioned earlier, Elihu appear to agree with Eliphaz on the educative nature of suffering; and by the time he spoke in chapter 37, he was speaking in language and terms that are almost identical to that of Yahweh in Job 38–41[42]. It appears more likely that Elihu occupies a 'middle ground' between the perspective of Job and that of his three friends.

They Have No Role! Excise them?

Where once upon a time, objections against the authenticity of the Elihu section have led many to conclude that these speeches play no role in the "real" scheme of the book, and therefore they ought to

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[36] D. N. Freedman, "The Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job," *Harvard Theological Review* 61 (1968): 51–59; cited in Hartley, *Job*, 29.
[37] Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 321
[38] G. W. Parsons, "The Structure and Purpose of the Book of Job," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138 (Apr-Jun 1981): 141.
[39] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 109.
[40] Andersen, *Job*, 50.
[41] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 109–110.
[42] Whybray, *Job*, 23.

be excised, there now appear not to be many who favour excision of the Elihu section. Waters listed only four proponents of this drastic course of action among recent works.[43] My own survey turned up only one, by Ross, who while not actually advocating excision, asserted that this section was clearly a later addition, included for its cultic connection with the lament psalms, and basically adds nothing to the scheme of the book of Job.[44] There appears widespread recognition that excision creates more problems than it purports to solve by getting at the "real" message of Job, the most significant problem being the abrupt appearance of Yahweh in Job 38 following Job's speech in Job 31. It has long been recognised, even by those who did not accept the Elihu speeches as authentic, that they play a preparatory role to the theophany.[45]

The most significant issue, which is most difficult to be set aside by those advocating excision, is that among the extant manuscripts of Job, the Elihu speeches are never absent.[46] Indeed the Jewish "tradition has never known a book of Job without [them]"[47] and although this may be viewed as an argument from silence,[48] all scholarly proposals of an "Elihu-less" Job have been found wanting. It has been noted also that three of the four Qumran manuscript fragments of Job are portions of the Elihu speeches.[49] As Whybray concluded his introductory remarks on the Elihu section, if the burden of proof is upon those favouring excision, their case is not proven.[50]

There appear to be little support for the case that the Elihu speeches play no role in the book of Job. Even so, enthusiasm for their inclusion could well lead one to overplaying one's case. For example, Althann argued that Steinmann's structural fourfold grouping in Job is evidence that the fourfold Elihu speeches belong

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[43] Waters, "The Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches," 31–32.

[44] J. F. Ross, "Job 33:14–30: The Phenomenology of Lament," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (Mar 1975): 38–46. It must be commented that this study is putting too much emphasis on a small section of the Elihu speeches. It ignores the fact that this section is only part of a larger contribution by Elihu, and that the entire speech contributes to the overall scheme of the book of Job.

[45] H. H. Nichols, *AJSL* 27 (1910–11): 101, cited in Waters, "The Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches," 30.

[46] D. A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 156, cited in Waters, "The Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches,"41.

[47] W. L. Michel, "Job's Real Friend: Elihu," *Criterion* 21 (Spring 1982): 29–32, cited in Waters, "The Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches," 41.

[48] Absence of an Elihu-less Job is not evidence of absence of an Elihu-less Job.

[49] Parsons, "The Structure and Purpose of the Book of Job," 153.

[50] Whybray, *Job*, 23.

to Job from the beginning.[51] However, arguments from the structure of the book of Job must remain tentative because of their subjective nature. Moreover, Steinmann's fourfold scheme appears contrived at some places, e.g. the classification of Yahweh's condemnation of Eliphaz and his friends in 42:7-8 as the fourth speech by Yahweh.[52]

Fitting the available data

In an attempt to fit the variations exhibited in the style of the Elihu section, Gordis suggested that these chapters are the product of the same author writing at a later period in life. He suggested that the greater complexity and near unintelligible form of these chapters could be compared to the same complexity of later works of relatively modern writers such as Shakespeare and Goethe. The Elihu speeches allow the author to express his own experience over a lifetime through a character interpolated into a traditional folktale, thereby explaining some of the structural incongruence.[53] Substantially speaking, Elihu's speeches offered a "solution" that denies the conclusions of both Job and his three friends: suffering may not be the penalty of sin, yet God's justice is unassailable.[54] In addition, a proper comprehension of suffering as discipline and as warning could not easily be located within either the three friends, with whom the author (and Job) are out of sympathy, or with Job, who has already denied any justification for the suffering of the righteous, or with Yahweh, where it might weaken the main answer. The creation of Elihu enabled the author to express this idea and give it due weighting.[55] Gordis also dwelt on the pedigree of Elihu, the only person in the entire book to have a substantial genealogy. He cited Elihu's obvious Hebraic origin as proof of a single authorship.[56]

Writing at an era where critical scholarship was still quite skeptical about the integrity of the Elihu section, Gordis was a trailblazer for a holistic reading of the book of Job. Although the projection of Elihu as a character representing the author late in life appears quite contrived in today's reading, perhaps Gordis needed to overstate his case for the scholarship of his era?

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[51] Althann, "Elihu's Contribution," 9.
[52] Steinmann, "The Structure and Message," 93–94.
[53] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 110–112.
[54] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 113.
[55] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 112–113.
[56] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 115–116.

It is now generally recognised that, notwithstanding the possibility of more than one author, the Elihu speeches are not an independent composition by an unthinking interpolator. There appears to be awareness of the previous speeches by Job and his three friends, and his arguments reflect that.[57] Elihu's theological contribution is very distinct, and rather than interrupting the sequence of events, they appear to deliberately retard the flow, thereby heightening the climax of the theophany.[58] He could even be viewed as a herald of the theophany, correcting the arguments of Job's three friends.[59]

Hartley also suggested that Elihu was deliberately both given prominence and downplayed at the same time. His discourses were not contradicted, and appear before the Yahweh speeches. Yet he appears to be cast as an angry young man, bombastic and altogether comical. This serves to amuse and provide light relief for an audience tensed by Job's climactic oath in Job 31 and the expectation of the theophany.[60]

Other modern students are not as congenial towards Elihu. In Habel's legal metaphor framework of the book of Job, Elihu's self-understanding of his role is that of an arbiter that Job had sought to arbitrate his case before God.[61] However, the depiction of Elihu as hotheaded and untutored,[62] together with his self-ascription of being a "windbag" using the satirical language of Eliphaz,[63] leads one to conclude that he is a young fool. Elihu asserted that Yahweh does not answer people like Job (35:13–14), but then the response of Yahweh from the whirlwind pronounced a verdict on Elihu without a word being spoken directly to him.[64]

Wilson noted that, even though the Elihu speeches fulfil important literary and thematic purposes, Elihu's words are not the final verdict, nor were they entirely endorsed by the book. Yahweh's appearance dismissed his arguments, and Yahweh's freedom sweeps aside his rather orthodox view of retributive justice[65]. Viviers suggested, in his rhetorical analysis of the Elihu speeches, that the

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[57] Whybray, *Job*, 22.
[58] Whybray, *Job*, 23.
[59] Whybray, *Job*, 23.
[60] Hartley, *Job*, 29.
[61] N. C. Habel, *The Book of Job* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 452.
[62] Habel, *Job*, 447.
[63] Habel, *Job*, 454.
[64] Habel, *Job*, 516.
[65] Wilson, "The Role of the Elihu Speeches,"94.

author cast him as a defender of the doctrine of retribution. This character was cleverly and deliberately crafted to be ignored, functioning as an "anti-model" to overturn traditional wisdom.[66]

A more sinister appraisal of Elihu reads 38:2 as Yahweh's judgement on Elihu for his speeches in 32–37. Wilcox suggested that in condemning Job, Elihu presumed himself to be equal to God, and is therefore condemned as "darkening [God's] counsel."[67] While he correctly pointed out that God's verdict on Job's words is that they are right in contrast to the three friends, 42:7–8, his attempt to explain the absence of any mention of Elihu in the Epilogue falls flat. Job's repeat of the question in 42:3 clearly identified himself as the subject of the question in 38:2, and 38:1 also clearly identified Job as the one God questioned directly. Despite his elaborate post-modern re-reading of both 38:2 and 42:3, Wilcox is totally unconvincing.[68]

Towards a Role for Elihu

Even without exhausting the extensive literature on the Elihu speeches, this study has shown (in truth, only partially) the mind-boggling breadth of viewpoints and opinions on the character Elihu and his speeches. It was perhaps with his tongue-in-cheek, after sketching the various interpretations of Elihu in the literature, and drawing from no less than seventeen different publications, that McCabe suggested the multiplicity of interpretations actually "provide an invitation to reexamine [*sic*] Elihu's contribution!"[69] Ah well! What difference does one more opinion make? "I also will give my answer; I also will declare my opinion."[70]

First, it is noted that one has to approach the Elihu speeches holistically – seeing them as an integral part of the book of Job, giving due consideration to both the literary design and the doctrinal contributions.[71] The general consensus of scholars today is that the Elihu speeches could be fruitfully explored, they can be purposeful

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[66] H. Viviers, "Elihu (Job 32–37), Garrulous but Poor Rhetor? Why is He Ignored?" in *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture*, S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht, eds. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 150–151.
[67] K. G. Wilcox, "'Who is This...?': A Reading of Job 38.2," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 78 (1998): 88–90.
[68] Wilcox, "'Who is This...?'," 91–94.
[69] McCabe, "Elihu's Contribution,"49.
[70] Elihu, Job 32:17 (NRSV).
[71] McCabe, "Elihu's Contribution," 49.

in the present context, and that excision of these speeches is unwarranted.[72]

Considering the book of Job as a whole, and giving due weight to the Prologue as introducing the plot, Steinmann seems right in asserting that the central concern of Job is how a righteous person's faith and integrity comes through a crisis,[73] though one need not be in agreement with his proposed structure of Job.[74] The plot is propelled forward by the Satan accusing Job, before God, of self-serving righteousness. Job's suffering is consequential to this plotline, and so it somewhat misleading to suggest that human suffering is the focus of the book (although there is much to be said concerning human suffering and God's justice).

Job maintained his integrity, and refused to charge God with wrongdoing and did not sin in what he said (1:22, 2:10). He did however curse the day he was born (ch. 3), and it was this protestation of innocence that precipitated the Dialogue. His three friends argued from conventional wisdom, rigidly applied the doctrine of retribution, *viz.* God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked, and thereby condemned Job of having committed some gross sins to warrant such great suffering. They counselled repentance before God to effect restoration of his wealth and health. Nevertheless, Job continued to hold on to his innocence and challenged his friends to prove him wrong. They failed to press their case and ran out of puff. This too, is the verdict of the author (32:1). Into this silence Elihu stepped in.

Fast-forwarding to the end (ch. 42), we find that the doctrine of retribution, as espoused and expounded by the three friends, was condemned by God as "not spoken of [God] what is right" (42:7). Job was vindicated: his innocence affirmed, and his integrity intact. This was clearly demonstrated by God's affirmation of Job as his servant (42:7-8), and the fact that God accepted his intercession for his friends (42:8-9). The restoration of his wealth, and to his family and community followed the vindication, thereby showing him to be well and truly a righteous man, as God had said to the Satan (1:8, 2:3).

Job had spoken *of God* what is right. However, Job had not spoken right. He had spoken "words without knowledge" (38:2) and

[72] Wilson, "The Role of the Elihu Speeches," 83.
[73] Steinmann, "The Structure and Message," 99.
[74] See above.

so had clouded God's design.[75] Significantly, when he responded to God in 42:3–4, Job quoted God not just once but twice, therefore doubly affirming that he had indeed clouded God's design through his ignorance. Consequently, Job despised himself and repented in dust and ashes (42:6). However, this is not a picture of a dejected Job who crumbled before an overpowering God; rather it is a picture of a triumphant Job, who, having received what he had asked for - to see God with his own eyes (42:5, cf. 19:26,27) - is vindicated and proven innocent. He had overstated his case in 31:37, prior to the Elihu speeches, that he would approach God "like a prince." But now, having been put in his rightful place, he may be rightfully justified as well. Although some commentators take the view that by his appearance, God humiliated Job and overpowered him, "showing him his foolishness and impertinence," [76] yet there may be irony at play here. God's interrogation of Job was not threatening, but rather educative; as though God was taking a walk through his creation and inviting Job to accompany him and consider his sustenance of the created order.[77]

How does one transition between the Job who was exasperated and exhausted from the Dialogue, and the Job restored and vindicated by Yahweh? How does a righteous person maintain integrity in the midst of suffering, even when the cause of the suffering is obscured? We the readers, of course, know why. Elihu, of course! Here is one who at first sight would not be a threat to the orthodox doctrine of retribution: a young obfuscating fool who took five verses just to say "Listen to me" (33:1–5)! He was disarmingly comical, but he is not a comic.[78] Here is one who will lay the axe to the root of conventional wisdom, who understands that God's relationship with human beings is far more complex, and accepts that the righteous may suffer. As Elihu proceeded, he assisted Job to reach the point where he was no longer overwhelmed by his suffering and the seeming injustice of it, and he was prepared to

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[75] Habel, *Job*, 517.

[76] D. Atkinson, *The Message of Job: Suffering and Grace* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1991), 145.

[77] D. Atkinson, *The Message of Job*, 145.

[78] If he was truly a fool as Habel declared (*Job*, 452), whose assertion (that Yahweh does not answer people like Job) was dramatically contradicted by the response of Yahweh from the whirlwind, then why did his discourse go for nearly six chapters? Why give him four discourses, one more than the others bar Job? Why not cut him off mid-sentence somewhere in chapter 34 or 35 to further highlight his irrelevance? As will be shown later, his theology deepened as he progressed, and his stature rose to great (though unexpected) heights by the time we reach the end of his discourse.

meet God and receive vindication.[79] Commentators have long remarked upon the similarity of Elihu's language in Job 37, and Yahweh's in Job 38,[80] and have vividly imagined that even as Elihu was marvelling at the complexity of storm meteorology in 36:27–37:18, the storm from which Yahweh appeared was rising over the horizon.[81] Along the way, he subtly yet significantly reshaped the doctrine of retribution. Whereas Job's friend held that a person suffers because of some sinful deed, Job developed the thesis that God uses suffering to instruct a person (33:12–22).[82] In fact, his most important contribution could be that God's presence is precisely where Job least expected it – in suffering.[83] Job himself had to abandon the doctrine of retribution, but he had also not yet received vindication of his faith.

Elihu's arguments developed in a systematic and well thought-out way. He quoted Job's case (33:8–11), made his case for the educative purpose of suffering (33:14–22), and suggested that the sufferer may be restored through humble repentance of sin (33:27–30). He then made it clear that he was not abandoning orthodoxy altogether. He started with a proper theology of God, his justice and righteousness, who is transcendent and whose ways are inscrutable (34:10–33). While it is true that God is affected, neither by our righteousness, nor our wickedness (35:4–15), yet he is immanent and involves himself in human affairs to judge the wicked (36:5–21). He reminded Job again of God's transcendence (36:22–26) and ended by turning Job's attention to God's might, displayed in the atmosphere (36:27–37:18), and prepared him for the theophany.

Elihu's argumentation is not without flaw. After all, he was only another human player, who was not privy to the events behind the scene in the Prologue. His understanding is part of flawed human wisdom.[84] He did not know the *real* cause of Job's suffering, and thus spoke from that limited point of view. But he did not speculate as the three friends did, and did not speak of God wrongly.

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[79] Waters, "Elihu's Theology," 158.
[80] e.g. Whybray, *Job*, 23.
[81] Gordis, *The Book of God*, 117.
[82] Hartley, *Job*, 485.
[83] Waters, "Elihu's Theology," 158. Waters unhelpfully uses the term "compensation theology" for what is commonly termed in the literature "retribution theology." He reserves the term "retribution theology" to describe the principle that there is room for exceptions in the operation of God's justice. In "'conventional" retribution theology (and compensation theology), punishment for sin and reward for righteous acts are automatic and fixed, 149–151.
[84] McCabe, "Elihu's Contribution," 70.

Conclusion

It is abundantly clear that, far from having no role, the Elihu speeches form the theological bridge on which a righteous person may maintain faith and integrity in the midst of suffering, moving from faith that is untested towards faith that is tested and is vindicated (Job 23:10).

SELF-DIFFERENTIATION AND THE CHRISTIAN LEADER

Peter Dobson

Self-differentiation has its origins in the application of systems theory to family therapy by Murray Bowen in the 1950s and 1960s. It is the ability to be an individual (or self) while at the same time being connected with others. Every person is either more or less differentiated and this affects his or her ability to deal with the anxiety and tension caused by the two basic needs of individuality and togetherness. The Jewish rabbi Edwin Freidman was the first to apply Family Systems theory to congregational life, and many others who have also made applications of various aspects of family systems to how congregations function as families have followed him. Self-differentiation is especially important for leaders because they exert the most influence on the group. The self-differentiated leader is able to be objective, non-reactive and self-determining while at the same being part of the group even when the group is experiencing emotional chaos and high levels of anxiety. These characteristics of objectivity, non-reactivity and self-determination are consistent with biblical qualities of leadership but must be grounded in an active and personal relationship with God. This paper will define and describe self-differentiation from its origins in family systems theory and its application to congregational life. The primary characteristics of self-differentiation will be identified, expounded and assessed in terms of their application to Christian leadership.

The Origins of Self-Differentiation

The term self-differentiation[1] was originally used by Murray Bowen and is one component of Family Systems Theory. Family systems theory is the application of general systems theory[2] to family therapy and includes the following: (1) a focus on the emotional

[1] Authors often just use the term differentiation but because this can relate to a number of different fields (e.g. maths, science) in order to provide context it is more commonly referred as self-differentiation or differentiation of self.

[2] "Systems theory is an interdisciplinary field which studies the organisation and interdependence of relationships and systems. Systems theory was founded by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, William Ross Ashby and others in the 1950s on principles from ontology, philosophy of science, physics, biology and engineering." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Systems_theory

process rather than symptoms, (2) seeing effects as parts of structures rather than the result of lineal cause, (3) eliminating symptoms by modifying structure rather than changing the individual part, and (4) predicting the functioning of a part or individual based on its position in the system.

Bowen's application of systems theory to family therapy includes concepts such as: anxiety, togetherness (homeostasis), family of origin, triangling, over-functioning, projection, emotional cut-off, and (the focus of this paper), differentiation of self.[3] Edwin Freidman was the first person to apply Family Systems Theory to the congregational context and his application has provided the springboard for others to continue to identify the connections between Family Systems Theory and congregational life. Bowen defines self-differentiation as "holding separateness and closeness in balance."[4] Friedman similarly says self-differentiation is "the capacity to be an 'I' while remaining connected."[5]

Self-Differentiation as a Tension

Many authors also define self-differentiation as it relates to the tension present between individuality and relational connectedness.[6] Self-differentiation is the ability to hold in tension the two emotional forces that exist in relationships: being separate and being together.[7] The drive to be alone or separate originates in

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[3] For a concise summary of Bowen Family Theory see Julienne Heras, "A Clinical Application of Bowen Family Systems Theory," http://www.dreamworld.org/sfc/a_clinical_application_of_bowen_.htm

[4] Michael E. Keer and Murray Bowen. *Family Evaluation: The Role of the Family as an Emotional Unit that Governs Individual Behaviour and Development (*Norton, 1988), 97, cited in Edwin Freidman, *Generation to Generation* (New York: Guildford Press, 1988), 27.

[5] Freidman, 27.

[6] "Being Separate Together," Peter L. Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works (*Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1993), 11; "The ability to know who we are apart from others," Jim R. Herrington, Robert Creech and Trisha Taylor, *The Leaders Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2003), 18); "Be in charge of self when others are trying to make us different," Ronald W. Richardson, *Creating a Healthier Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 87; "Taking an 'I' stand and staying in touch," Arthur Paul Boers, *Never Call Them Jerks (*Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1999), 94); "Being an individual while remaining part of the group," Paul R. Stevens, "Analogy or Homology? An Investigation of the Congruency of Systems Theory and Biblical Theology in Pastoral Leadership," *The Journal of Psychology and Theology* 22:3 (Fall 1994): 173-181.

[7] Freidman defines these two forces as "being self" and "being connected." Edwin Friedman, *Generation to Generation* (New York: Guildford Press, 1985), 230.

the basic personal need for independence and is connected to our distinctiveness or differentiation from others. The drive to be together or close originates in the basic relational need for connection with others, which is motivated by our similarities and shared experiences. The tension created by these two forces produces anxiety. If the anxiety is not managed, a person is drawn towards either of the two extremes identified with these forces: being separate or being close.

At either extreme one is less objective about reality. The focus will either be on self and the personal subjective perspective or the person will be lost in the group and have no distinct or separate view of reality. Self-differentiation is the ability to maintain self-identity while remaining relationally connected and, in doing so, reduce the level of anxiety that this tension produces. Steinke defines the ideal of self-differentiation as the ability "to define self to others, stay in touch with them, and, even though there is tension between the two positions, manage whatever anxiety arises."[8]

Kerr and Bowen use a scale of 0-100 to define the level of differentiation in an individual.[9] 0 represents a no-self, the person who is incapable of being an individual in a group. 100 represents the person who can choose to be an individual in a group and who does not foster or participate with the irresponsibility of others. Richardson uses the term "fused" to define the un-differentiated person and presents a scale from fusion to differentiation.[10] Both Bowen and Kerr and Richardson define differentiation in terms on one's ability to distinguish between the intellectual (rational) and emotional (feeling) processes and the ability to choose whether one will be guided by feelings or thoughts.[11]

> Fusion and differentiation refer to two processes in particular: internally, the degree to which a person can separate thinking and feeling, and bring greater objectivity to his or her own inevitably subjective stance; and interpersonally, the degree to which a person can be clear or more objective about the emotional separateness

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Steinke uses the terms "remote" and "entangled." Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works*, 29.

[8] Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works*, 29.

[9] Kerr and Bowen, 97.

[10] Richardson, 81.

[11] See Appendix 2 for a helpful table from Steinke describing the differentiated and undifferentiated person

> between self and other, knowing what is self and self's responsibility, and what is not.[12]

These two processes are congruent with the basic needs of separation and closeness. No person is completely fused or differentiated. Each person is either more or less differentiated. Bowen recognised that achieving 100 on the scale of differentiation was theoretically but not realistically possible.

This scale of fusion to differentiation is helpful in defining the levels of differentiation, however, the scale only relates to one half of the emotional tension – fusion or togetherness. The opposite tendency is equally problematic – distancing or emotional cut-off. Steinke presents an extended continuum ranging from clutching (fusion) to cut off (distancing).[13] He identifies two healthy centres of "defining self" and "touching others" which characterize the self-differentiated position. Steinke makes a clear distinction between the healthy state of distinction, that is, the awareness that we are different from others, and the unhealthy distancing which is a separation and disconnection from others. It is in the context of Table 1 (appearing at the end of this paper) that Friedman's definition of self-differentiation as "the capacity to be an 'I' while remaining connected" is most clearly illustrated.[14]

The Characteristics of Self-Differentiation[15]

The theoretical definition of self-differentiation is well summarised by Herrington as "the ability to remain connected in relationship to significant people in our lives and yet not have our reactions and behaviour determined by them."[16] The behaviour of the self-differentiated person that Herrington refers to is evidenced by three distinct characteristics: they are objectivity, non-reactivity and self-definition.

Objectivity

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[12] Richardson, 81.
[13] Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works*, 32.
[14] Friedman, 27.
[15] See Appendix 1 for Friedman's list of the advantages of self-differentiated leadership.
[16] Herrington, Creech and Taylor, 18.

Objectivity is the ability to remain neutral, accurately to perceive reality, to maintain emotional detachment,[17] and to distinguish between thoughts and feelings even during times of extreme anxiety and pressure. Bowen points out that "a *differentiated self* is one who can maintain emotional objectivity, while in the midst of an emotional system in turmoil, yet at the same time actively relate to key people in the system."[18] Objectivity enables the self-differentiated person to care effectively for hurting or anxious people without becoming emotionally enmeshed with their problems.

Non-reactivity

The self-differentiated person is also non-reactive. When anxiety levels are high and relational connections are tested, the self-differentiated person is able to emit a calming, non-anxious and non-reactive presence.

> One major sign of being better differentiated is when we can be present in the midst of an emotional system in turmoil and actively relate to key people in the system while calmly maintaining a sense of our own direction. It is relatively easy to appear to be differentiated when the system is calm; the test is being able to maintain a calmer sense of self when the emotional environment deteriorates and life becomes more chaotic.[19]

This ability to respond rather than react and to avoid becoming defensive allows the individual to think clearly and respond calmly and appropriately to the situation.

Self Definition or Self Determination

The self-differentiated person is able to hold true to principles, values and convictions even in the midst of significant group pressure that is compelling the person to conform. The self-differentiated person is not influenced by the emotional anxiety of

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[17] Kerr and Bowen define emotional detachment as "the ability to be in emotional contact with a difficult, emotionally charged problem and not feel compelled to preach about what others 'should' do, not rush in to 'fix' the problem, and not pretend to be detached by emotionally insulating oneself." Kerr and Bowen, 108.
[18] Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works*, 69.
[19] Richardson, 174.

others; but is able to maintain a principled position. They preserve their individuality and distinctiveness in a group but not in a way that is condescending or manipulative. In this way, self-differentiated people are able to contribute to the group while being true to themselves.

> To be differentiated is to know and act on one's own mind, especially when our position is different from the group's. It means to know one's opinion, stand or stance without imposing expectations or demands on others. It is the ability to state clearly and calmly our position without suggesting (with "must," "should," or "ought" language) that others need to have the same position.[20]

Self-differentiated persons determine their own course in life; they are not swayed by the emotional anxiety of individuals or groups to maintain the comfortable, traditional position which itself is resistant to change.[21] They expresse their distinct individuality, while at the same time remaining connected and committed to the group.

Differentiation of Self and Christian Leadership

The definition and description of self-differentiation provides the framework for a critical analysis of the relationship between self-differentiation and Christian leadership. On the whole, the concept of self-differentiation has strong corollaries with a biblical understanding of both the church and leadership, however, caution must be taken to interpret and apply these principles through the Christian lens.

The Church as the Body of Christ

The relationship of systems theory and the metaphor of church as the body of Christ is the focus of Steinke's *Healthy Congregations* but the connection is also made by others including Stephens who identifies the basic tension of being separate and close in the description of the body of Christ. The apostle Paul says, "In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all

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[20] Boers, 94.

[21] This natural force to maintain an interdependent and often unhealthy fixation on maintaining the traditional principles of the group is called Homoestasis. See Friedman, 23-26.

the others" (Romans 12:5). Paul "holds in dynamic tension unity (togetherness) and the unique existence of each member (diversity)."[22] Everyone who is part of the body of Christ, a local congregation, should strive for this dynamic tension, which is self-differentiation, but it is especially important for the leader to maintain both individuality and connection.

A consistent conclusion in the discussion of self-differentiation and leadership is that leaders exert the most influence on the body or group.[23] The pastor or other identified leaders in the church have the most impact in determining the direction and health of the congregation. For Friedman, "the key to successful spiritual leadership, therefore, with success understood as moving people toward a goal, but also in terms of the survival of the family (and its leader), has more to do with the leader's capacity for self-definition than with the ability to motivate others."[24]

Leaders will inevitably receive the most criticism and will bear the brunt of anxious and emotional responses from the congregation. It is therefore, most crucial, that they have the ability to be non-reactive and deal with sabotage in a calm, non-anxious manner.

> The capacity of members of the clergy to contain their own anxiety regarding congregational matters, both those not related to them, as well as those where they become the identified focus, may be the most significant capability in their arsenal. Not only can such capacity enable religious leaders to be more clear-headed about solutions and more adroit in triangles but, because of the systemic effect that a leader's functioning always has on an entire organism, a non-anxious presence will modify anxiety throughout the entire congregation.[25]

Self Differentiation as Wisdom and Fusion as Foolishness

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[22] Stevens, "Analogy or Homology?," 174.
[23] Katherine Kott, "Anxious Response to Change: The Leader's Role in Calming the System," http://dizzy.library.arizona.edu/conference/ltf2/papers/iiipstr.html; Richardson, 177; Friedman, 211; Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser, *Managing the Congregation: Building Effective Systems to Serve People.* Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 309; Boers, 94.
[24] Friedman, 221.
[25] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, 82, quoting Freidman.

Richardson connects self-differentiation and the Biblical terms "wisdom" and "foolishness." He equates wisdom with differentiation and foolishness with fusion. He defines wisdom as "a quality independent of a person's intelligence quotient and educational degrees" and comments that "genuinely wise people tend to be better differentiated people; they have a more solid sense of self."[26] The similarities of the attributes of wisdom and self-differentiation are evident but it is an overstatement to equate the two concepts as closely as Richardson does.

The Basis of Self Differentiation for the Christian Leader

In Family Systems Theory, the source of self-differentiation and the ability to improve one's level of differentiation rests with the individual. However, the Christian perspective looks beyond self to God, the creator, as the source of these qualities (2 Corinthians 3:5). Self-differentiation necessitates a focus on self through self-determination and self-definition. Care must be taken to ensure that the language of family systems is not adopted indiscriminately and therefore unconsciously making a statement that may undermine a position of dependence on God. An example of this is Boers' remark that "a major achievement of differentiation is realising that one's own happiness or contentment resides in oneself and not in the other."[27] The emphasis here is to downplay the role of other people in determining our self-assurance but at the same time this leaves God out of the picture. A more Christian perspective is that we can be self-defined and self-determined but only as we base our definition and direction on our relationship with God.

Howe links self-determination with a humble dependence on God.

> [Self differentiated leaders] possess a self-awareness and self-confidence which enables them to articulate a salvific vision convincingly, but without undue ego identification. They confront disagreements, criticisms, and even rejection without the kind of anxiety which generates either rigid defensiveness or concessions of principle for the sake of specious harmony and goodwill.[28]

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[26] Richardson, 85.
[27] Boers, 97.
[28] Leroy T. Howe, "Self-Differentiation in Christian Perspective," *Pastoral Psychology* 46 (1998): 353.

Being objective, non-reactive and self-defining requires a person to gain a perspective beyond themselves and the group. For the Christian leader, this perspective is found in God. It is in the midst of the emotional chaos that we are comforted and reassured by the peace, hope and love of God. More importantly, when we withdraw and seek "solitude with God, we open ourselves to a perspective of the Holy Spirit. . . As we quiet our inner selves through Christian meditation, we become more aware of the distinction between our emotions and our beliefs. It is from our relationship with God, our grounding in faith and a vision of Christlikeness that we are able to 'do the right thing'."[29]

Self-differentiation has a clear correlation with silence, solitude, prayer, fasting and meditation[30] but it is also consistent with Christian virtues such as contentment, godliness and faith. Moving beyond our personal goals and convictions, the self-differentiated Christian leader is grounded in a "faith that transcends beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and conformity with approved standards of behaviour."[31]

Conclusion

The concept of self-differentiation as defined by Family Systems Theory and applied to the congregational context is particularly helpful. While some attempts to relate the terminology to biblical concepts is at times forced, it is clear that the key attributes of self-differentiation are consistent with godly leadership. The application of family systems theory to the church family is obvious and Friedman, Stephens, Steinke, and Herrington in particular have done a good job at identifying the points of connection. It is only the area of self-definition and self-determination that attention must be given to moving beyond the self and identifying God as the source of objectivity, non-reactivity and self-definition. It is the application of these principles that will enable the Christian leader to exert a godly and healthy influence on the church.

[29] Herrington, Creech and Taylor, 18.
[30] Boers, 97; Herrington, Creech and Taylor, 19.
[31] Howe 360.

Appendix 1:

Advantages of Self-differentiated Leadership.[32]

- It fosters independence without encouraging polarization
- It allows interdependence without promoting cults
- It seeks to promote togetherness but not at the cost of progress
- It normalizes transition and is less susceptible to cut-offs
- It reverses the pull and drain of dependents who normally gain power from the expectation that their demand to be included at their price and pace will always be satisfied
- It makes the leader's job less complex, yet gives more leverage.
- It reduces enervating conflicts of wills (and triangles)
- It fosters less guilt among followers because of decreased interdependency
- It minimises the influence of the factors that contribute to burnout

[32] Friedman, 249.

Appendix 2:

Descriptions of the Undifferentiated and the Differentiated Person[33]

Undifferentiated	**Differentiated**
Quickly offended, easily provoked, too sensitive, slow to recover	Self managing, shapes environment, resourceful
Reactive, instinctive, automatic	Responsive, intentional, thoughtful
Underhanded, covert, flourishes in the dark	Open, light-shedding, aware
Demanding, wilful, stubborn, resistant (especially to reason and love), unbending	Resilient, has sense of proportion
Think in black/white or yes/no, intolerant of ambiguity, seek final solution, want all or nothing	Have breadth of understanding, allow time for things to process
Blame, criticise, displace, fault finding, have poor discrimination	Take responsibility for self, learn when challenged, define self from within self
Uptight, serious, defensive	Relaxed, at ease, sensible
Competitive, either with or against, see life as a contest, contemptuous	Take turns, collaborate, stay in touch even when tension grows
Vague, non-specific, cloaked	Clear objective, purposeful
Create too much or too little space and one-sided solutions	Create space, options, and common goals

[33] Steinke, 91-92.

Table 1: Healthy and Unhealthy Functioning[34]

Cutting off	**Defining Self**	**Touching Others**	**Clutching Others**
Reactive	Intentional	Spontaneous	Reactive
Automatic	Chosen	Playful	Automatic
Emotionally driven	Objectively aware	Emotionally expressive	Emotionally driven
Dependent	Responsible for self	Responsive to others	Dependent
Aggressive or defensive about keeping distance unaware of own need for others	Self-directed action Aware of self	Trusting exchange	Aggressive or defensive about embeddedness unaware of own need for self
Stiff, rigid boundaries	Flexible boundaries (able to reinstate after loosening them)	Boundaries lost in play, self forgetfulness	Soft, porous boundaries
Over-functioning to achieve self sufficiency	Functioning for self	Allowing others to function for themselves	Over-functioning to achieve togetherness
Minimal support, feedback, or encouragement from others	Self-respect	Respect for others, allows others to be themselves	Forces others to be like self or allows others to force oneself to be like them
Difference gained over against others	Defines self from within	Defines self to others	Differences are unacceptable; relationships are defined by sameness
Narrow goals	Clearly defined goals for self	Clearly def. relationship goals	Vague, nebulous goals

[34] Steinke, 32.