THE WAYS OF LIVED RELIGION: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF EPISCOPALIANS IN RURAL SCOTLAND

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ABSTRACT

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Scholars in disciplines such as the sociology of religion and religious studies have increasingly recognised that religion and how it is lived is no simple matter. In addition to shared religious beliefs, it includes experiences and practices, which at the personal level may differ from religion at the official level.

The recent field of Lived Religion explores this insight by focussing on everyday religiosity in practice, and this thesis explores how this is formed, understood, and practiced among Episcopalian participants living in a rural Scottish context. It adopts an ethnographic methodological approach combining the use of a questionnaire, interviews, exploring relevant literature, and researcher observation, and also adapts a typology by Rainer Albertz originally applied to the Old Testament to investigate the participants' religiosity at institutional, local and personal levels, with a particular emphasis on participants' descriptions of their personal religiosity and practice.

In exploring the ways of Lived Religion among Episcopalians to discern some characteristic features of the subject, this research indicates both the prevailing influence of the church at institutional and local levels and the diverse, idiosyncratic nature of individual religiosity, offering a counterweight to pervading views of the separation of religion and spirituality.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to

My wife Alice, without whose unfailing love and support

this research would never have been completed;

to the staff at the Urban Theology Union, Sheffield -

the best academic community I could ever have studied with,

among tutors whose knowledge is encyclopaedic;

and in memory of my parents,

Anthony and Ellen Curry,

who lived their religion.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

In 2005 Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead wrote a book entitled The Spiritual Revolution, whose subtitle is Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality.[1] Working from the premise that there has been a general decline in traditional religion in Western societies, they adopt Charles Taylor's notion of the "massive subjective turn of modern culture,"[2] involving a shift of emphasis away from a life of roles and duties proscribed by social expectations and external authority – what Heelas and Woodhead term 'life-as' – and towards a life focussing on the importance of personal, subjective experience – what they call 'subjective-life.' Together, these contrasting ideas form what Heelas and Woodhead term the 'Subjectivization Thesis,'[3] which they used as a tool to contrast religion as a 'life-as' set of activities and spirituality as those related to 'subjective-life.' Their central tenet was that while 'life-as' religion was in general decline, 'subjective-life' spirituality was increasing in popularity, and in the remainder of the book Heelas and Woodhead sought to account for why this may be so. From this, it seems that

[1] Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, with Benjamin Seel, Bronislaw Szerszynski, and Karin Tusting, The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005) [hereafter, Heelas and Woodhead, Spiritual Revolution].

[2] Charles Taylor, The Ethics of Authenticity (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p.26. Quoted in Heelas and Woodhead, Spiritual Revolution, p.2.

[3] Essentially, the Subjectivization Thesis attempts to make sense of both the decline of some forms of the sacred and the rise and growth of others by relating them to a single process. As Heelas and Woodhead explain, the 'subjective turn' is 'away from worlds in which people think of themselves first and foremost as belonging to established and 'given' orders of things which were transmitted from the past but flow forward into the future …[and] what matters is obeying, heeding, pursuing ways of life which stand over and above the individual self and bestow meaning upon life.' By contrast, subjective life 'has to do with states of consciousness, states of mind, memories, emotions, passions, sensations, bodily experiences, dreams, feelings, inner consciousness and sentiments …The subjectivities of each individual become a, if not the, unique source of significance, meaning, and authority …The goal is not to defer to higher authority, but to have the courage to become one's own authority. Not to follow established paths, but to forge one's own inner-directed, as subjective, life.' See Heelas and Woodhead, Spiritual Revolution, pp.3-4.

Heelas and Woodhead work from the assumption shared by a number of contemporary writers, that religion and spirituality are distinct subjects that deal with different types of subject-matter. This stands in contrast to understandings from previous generations, where spirituality was regarded as a technical term within Christianity and other faith traditions and was considered to emanate from a religious approach to life and belief,[4] leading to a comparatively clear understanding of what both religion and spirituality involved. In more recent times, however, there has been a shift in perception of both terms, with an increased openness to differing meanings that take into account considerations such as context, culture, and both communal and individual concerns and to regard religion and spirituality as dynamic, rather than fixed, concepts. This has gradually led to religion and spirituality being viewed as a dichotomy, with writers tending to champion or dismiss *either* religion *or* spirituality, and ultimately to proposals like that adopted by Heelas and Woodhead.

In recent years, Lived Religion is a subject that has garnered much interest in the fields of the sociology of religion and religious studies,[5] and is one that can be explored in a variety of ways. This research seeks to articulate an understanding of how Lived Religion can involve both religion and spirituality, and to explore how this can be exercised among some Episcopalian Christians in an area of rural Scotland, a group of Christian believers among whom there is comparatively little contemporary research and in a reasonably new but developing subject area. The research aims to discover what Lived Religion means to this group of participants – how it

[4] As Philip Sheldrake has written, 'The historical origins of the word 'spirituality' are explicitly Christian. Etymologically, the word derives from the Latin noun *spiritualitas*, which is associated with the adjective *spiritualis* (or spiritual). These Latin terms ultimately derive from New Testament Greek – the word *pneuma*, or spirit, and the adjective *pneumatikos*, spiritual – as they appear in St Paul's letters ... In broad terms, it is important to note that in the theology of Paul, 'spirit' and 'spiritual' are not meant to be the opposite of 'physical,' 'material,' or 'bodily' (Greek *soma*, Latin *corpus*) but rather the opposite of 'fleshliness' (Greek *sarx*, Latin *caro*). This concept has a moral sense and refers to everything that is contrary to the Spirit of God. The intended contrast is not therefore between the body and the soul but between two vastly different attitudes to life. Thus, a 'spiritual person' (e.g. in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 2: 14-15) is not someone who turns away from material reality or who undervalues the body. Rather, he or she is simply a person within whom the Spirit of God dwells, or, in other words, who lives under the influence of God's Spirit.' See Philip Sheldrake, Spirituality: A Guide for the Perplexed (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp.5-6, [hereafter, Sheldrake, Perplexed].

[5] The subject of Lived Religion will be explored more fully in Chapter 3.

has been formed and is articulated, how it is nurtured and sustained, and the differing practices that might contribute to the participants' understandings and expression of it.

The research seeks to address these issues by posing a research question (1.2) and three research goals (1.3). The thesis is divided into three parts:

Chapters 1 to 3 introduces the subject of Lived Religion and sets the research within a theoretical framework based on a model proposed by Rainer Albertz.[6] It also discusses the development of ethnographic research methods to be used in the study, and offers a fuller description of Lived Religion through exploring literature on the subject.

Chapters 4 to 6 describes the fieldwork stage of the research beginning with an exploration of the context, history and ethos of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and then records the results of a Research Questionnaire and twelve Research Interviews with Episcopalians in rural Scotland and what these suggest about the nature of the participants' Lived Religion. This is supplemented by researcher field notes.

Finally, Chapter 7 endeavours to draw the research together and to offer a thick description of the ways of Episcopalian Lived Religion among the participants, to assess the wider implications of the research, and how it contributes to an understanding of Lived Religion within the broader fields of the sociology of religion and religious studies.

[6] See Rainer Albertz, A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period. Volume I: From the Beginnings to the End of the Exile (London: SCM Press, 1994) [hereafter, Albertz, History].

CHAPTER 1

DEVELOPING THE RESEARCH FOCUS FROM SPIRITUALITY TO LIVED RELIGION

Religion is one of the most powerful, deeply felt, and influential forces in human society. It has shaped people's relationships with each other, influencing family, community, economic, and political life. Religious beliefs and values motivate human action, and religious groups organize their collective religious expressions. Religion is a significant aspect of social life, and the social dimension is an important part of religion.[7]

Spirituality is present in some form in everybody's life, and is not always directly connected to religious beliefs and practices ... If spiritual awareness is indeed a human universal ... then we ought to be able to learn something about the nature of God by listening to people talking about their spiritual experiences.[8]

The appeal to spirituality has captured the religious imagination of contemporary people as encompassing ... spiritual quests more than an appeal to organized religion ... By centring attention on practical, lived human experience, spirituality is viewed as a more inclusive, tolerant, and flexible canopy under which to pursue the mysteries of the human spirit and the Sacred … The metaphor of the spiritual journey captures the perpetual migration from interest to interest, need to need, and practice to practice, [as people envision] ... an authentic spirituality detached from church affiliation.[9]

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[7] Meredith B. McGuire, Religion: The Social Context (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 1992), p.3.

[8] David Hay and Kate Hunt, Understanding the Spirituality of People Who Do Not Go to Church: A report on the findings of the Adults' Spirituality Project at the University of Nottingham (Nottingham: Centre for the Study of Human Relations, 2000), p.9 [hereafter, Hay and Hunt, Understanding].

[9] Valerie Lesniak, 'Contemporary Spirituality,' in Philip Sheldrake (ed), A New SCM Dictionary of Christian Spirituality (London: SCM Press, 2005), pp.8, 10.

1.1. Introduction

The above quotations make clear the trend alluded to in the Introduction to this thesis of the active attempt to treat religion and spirituality as two distinct concepts, with writers being inclined to favour one concept over the other. So, Meredith McGuire argues that religion has a powerful social role in motivating human action and collective expressions of religiosity. David Hay and Kate Hunt, however, stress that a spiritual dimension is present in everyone, but this may not be linked to religious practices and beliefs. Then Valerie Lesniak outlines how a concept of spirituality has captured the imaginations of many contemporary people, but that this seldom includes an appeal to institutional or organized religion. Typical of the 'either/or' dichotomy in which religion and spirituality are often perceived is also evidenced by Carole McEntee Taylor of the Spiritual Workers Association:

> Sadly, the word 'religion' has so many negative connotations that it has now lost its original meaning. It has become a man-made concept that, however well intentioned, can be manipulated by unscrupulous people to exercise control over others. By contrast 'spirituality' is personal and outside the control of others. It is our inner voice, our consciousness, our soul, our true identity. It forms the basis of our connection with the earth and all its inhabitants and it is our spirituality that recognises the good in everything and encourages us to strive to become the best we can be.[10]

Words like these make explicit the bias of the writer, and it appears that such sentiments are almost taken for granted among some contemporary approaches to religion and spirituality. Yet as also stated in the Introduction to this thesis, the inevitability of such a stark dichotomy is open to question, and indeed, Lesniak indicates this when she writes that spirituality can centre on 'attention on practical, lived human experience;[11] and herein is a link with what has become known as 'Lived Religion.'

Some scholars would trace the origins of Lived Religion back to the 1940s, when French sociologists began to use the concept of *"religion vecue,"* or 'lived religion,' an idea which partly grew out of pastoral concern and fears of declining religiosity. Scholars such as

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[10] Carole McEntee Taylor, 'What is spirituality?' from www.spiritualengland.co.uk, 2010. The Spiritual Workers Association exists to promote excellence and improve standards for all who offer any kind of mediumistic, psychic, holistic, spiritual, therapeutic, complementary or esoteric services to the public. See www.theswa.org.uk

[11] Sheldrake, SCM Dictionary, p.8.

Gabriel Le Bras[12] sought to explore and describe the religious activities of ordinary people, and under his research programme a sociology of religion developed that was attuned to the geographic, historical, and cultural factors that help to explain the differences in everyday religious practices, primarily among French Roman Catholics. However, at that time the religious authorities were generally inclined to dismiss such differences as 'folk religion,'[13] and it was not until the latter part of the twentieth century that scholars such as David Hall[14] and Robert Orsi[15] began to use the term 'Lived Religion' more widely and to outline the facets that the concept can entail. In the last thirty years in particular, Lived Religion has become an area of inquiry that has generated interest from a variety of disciplines, but especially from researchers whose interest lies not so much in what religious authorities constitute to be 'orthodox' belief and practice, but in what ordinary people actually *do* with their religion in an everyday setting and on a regular basis. As Orsi writes:

> Religious practices and understandings only have meaning in relations to other cultural forms and in relations to the life experiences and actual circumstances of the people using them.[16]

Therefore, in broad terms, and by way of an initial description, the focus of Lived Religion is on the practices, rituals, and interpretations used by religious people within their usual contexts that enable them to understand and respond to their sense of the sacred in ways that give some measure of coherence and meaning to their lives.

With this broad focus in mind, I started to wonder how Lived Religion might reveal itself in action, especially through studying the religious and spiritual practices of a group of religious people living within a particular context. As I was living and working among

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[12] See Gabriel Le Bras, Etudes de Sociologie Religieuse. Volumes I and II (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1955, 1956).

[13] See 3.4 for a further discussion of folk religion and related concepts.

[14]See David D. Hall (ed,) Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

[15] See Robert A. Orsi, The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem 1880-1950 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) [hereafter, Orsi, Madonna], and Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[16]Orsi, Madonna, p. xxxviii.

Episcopalian Christians in rural Scotland when I embarked upon this research, which as explained in the Introduction is both a context and a client group about whom relatively little research has been undertaken, I felt that a study of participants from within this context and Christian denomination could potentially provide some interesting and useful insights into the nature of Lived Religion from such a perspective. In particular, I am interested in exploring what religious people actually do, what makes something 'religious' for them, and their own understanding of what it means to 'be religious' at a personal level. This also picks up on something that the sociologist Robert Wuthnow has written about spirituality, but which could equally be applied to Lived Religion. Wuthnow writes that this consists

> … not only of implicit assumptions about life but also of *the things that people talk about and the things they do*: the stories they construct about their spiritual journeys and the prayers they offer, the inspirational books they read, the time they spend meditating, their participation in retreats and at worship services, the conversations they have about it with their friends, and the energy they spend thinking about it [my italics].[17]

Therefore, this research sets out to further understand the role of religion and spirituality within the Lived Religion of church participants by offering a 'thick description' of Lived Religion among some Episcopalian Christians living in rural Scotland. In doing so, the intention is to add to knowledge about the realities of Lived Religion and so to contribute to the fields of the sociology of religion and religious studies.

1.2. The Research Question

I think it would be helpful to describe the process whereby I came to decide upon the Research Question. When I contemplated beginning this research my original intention was to explore the phenomenon of 'Churchless Christianity' and to consider whether it is possible to live an authentic Christian life outside of the institutional church. However, it quickly became clear that such an undertaking was too wide and that I needed to narrow my focus.

Given my interest in spirituality, I then began investigating an idea that has been identified as of note within spirituality, that of a 'Turn to the Self' involving an inner search for the answers to spiritual issues and questions and to use this as a vehicle around which to base

[17] See Robert Wuthnow, After Heaven: Spirituality in America since the 1950s (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p.viii [hereafter, Wuthnow, After Heaven].

my research. Yet although such a 'Turn' is an important idea, it gradually became apparent that this seemed too narrow and could exclude the role of religion, which was also important to me as a practitioner.

So, from here, I considered focussing on forms of expression that value the place of a person's own interests, convictions, and needs – what might be termed a *personal spirituality*. This is an area of study that several writers working within wider spirituality have raised awareness of as an idea that could fruitfully be explored more extensively.[18] However, as I explored this notion more fully, it became clear that this also was too narrow a focus, for similar reasons. What I actually needed to be able to research was something that included religion as well as spirituality and to endeavour to understand how people demonstrated what they believe. Therefore, I decided to investigate the idea of *Lived Religion* concerned with both religion *and* spirituality. This will include discovering what Lived Religion might involve and the varying factors that may contribute to it, how Lived Religion can be described, and how this can be articulated and practiced as revealed through a study of the Lived Religion of a particular group of participants living within the same geographical area, and within a particular expression of the Christian religion. Therefore, the Research Question that I explore in this thesis, in the context of contemporary religion and spirituality, is this:

What are the ways of Lived Religion among Episcopalians in rural Scotland?

This is a question that identifies Lived Religion as a diverse subject ('the ways of Lived Religion'), but one that can be explored in relation to a particular genre of people ('among Episcopalians') resident in a certain geographical context ('in rural Scotland'). In addition, it can be said that like other churches Episcopalians are a Christian denomination that can

[18] See, for instance, Benedict Groeschel, Personal Spirituality (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1986); Alan Jamieson, A Churchless Faith: Faith Journeys Beyond the Churches (London: SPCK, 2002); Alan Billings, Secular Lives, Sacred Hearts (London: SPCK, 2004); Jeremy Carette and Richard King, Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion (London: Routledge, 2004););); Joyceline Dawes, Janice Dolley, and Ike Isaksen, The Quest: Exploring a Sense of Soul (Winchester: O Books, 2005); John Drane, Do Christians Know How To Be Spiritual? (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005); Daniel J. Benor, Personal Spirituality: Science, Spirit and the Eternal Soul (Guelph: Wholistic Healing Publications, 2006); Peter Masters, The Personal Spiritual Life (London: Wakeman Trust, 2013); and Thomas Moore, A Religion of One's Own: A Guide to Creating a Personal Spirituality in a Secular World (New York: Gotham Books, 2015).

be looked at from three different perspectives: as a national institution; as separate, local congregations; and as individual Christians living out their beliefs in practice. It therefore seems appropriate to explore the subject of Lived Religion by reference to these differing ways of operating using several Research Goals that reflect this; and it is to these Research Goals that I now turn.

1.3. The Research Goals

Having identified the Research Question, and seen that the Episcopal Church can be approached from different angles, it is necessary to identify ways of enabling this question to be answered. A useful framework for handling this is provided by the biblical scholar Rainer Albertz. In his two-volume work A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period, Albertz writes that

> … a 'history of Israelite religion' today … must investigate consistently the human vehicles of the various religious traditions [of which this is comprised] … It cannot ignore the question whether religious statements or symbolic worlds are formed or developed in relation to the individual in their family circle, the local community, or in relation to the people or the state, and it will attempt to investigate the material of the tradition at different levels in accordance with these social entities.[19]

With this in mind, Albertz proceeds to develop a categorization of religion based on three levels: the *official level*, approved by designated authorities and differentiated into various theologies and cultic beliefs and practices; the *local level*, consisting of the village community combining regional and sociological characteristics and internal religious pluralism; and the *family level*, consisting of personal piety and beliefs that hold meaning for a particular group or for individuals and which is especially marked by the importance of practices as ways of 'being religious.'

Such a categorization seemed a coherent way of exploring, not just ancient Israelite religion, but *all* religion, including religion within a contemporary context. Using this as a basis, I decided to adapt Albertz's categorization in order to engage in research in a particular field within the sociology of religion and religious studies, as Albertz's model would seem to reflect the three distinct levels of religion and practice still prevalent within contemporary religious research and within the main Christian denominations in Britain. There remains

[19] Albertz, pp.11-12.

the institutional or national level, whereby appointed religious authorities decide what can be regarded as 'orthodox' or 'unorthodox,' legitimate or illegitimate, in terms of beliefs, practices, and the general approach to religion by those who adhere to this authority. Then there is the local or intermediate level, characterised by the local church congregation, where such 'official' understandings can be teased out, explored, and shared among those who come together in a specific locality on a regular basis. But then there is the final level, the family or home level. Albertz states that at the time of the three biblical patriarchs[20] the family was both the basic economic and social unit in life and the key vehicle of religion, with the father regarded as the 'priest,' the family as the cult, and religious experiences and notions chiefly governed by the horizon and needs of family life, and with God conceived, not as an abstract concept, a distant mystery, or a moral judge, but as the Head of the family, protecting, defending, and sustaining it.[21] However, while people continue to wish to express their religion in ways that are important to them, in contemporary times traditional patterns of family life and religious expression have greatly altered since the patriarchal age, with an increased focus upon individual and personal fulfilment in both life and religion, as indicated by ideas like the 'Turn to the Self.'[22] Therefore, for the purposes of this research I suggest that it is now more accurate to speak of a *personal level* of religion rather than a family level. This comprises beliefs, attitudes and practices, which might incorporate elements from the institutional and local levels identified by Albertz, and be shared by a group of people, but may also include elements from other sources which hold meaning for people and is less linked to the family unit . It is this personal level that this research is

[20] This is the era of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, according to the narratives of Genesis 12-50, estimated to be c.1813-1506 BCE. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchal_age.

[21] See Albertz, pp.23-39.

[22] See, for instance, Paul Heelas, 'The Spiritual Revolution: From 'Religion' to 'Spirituality' in Linda Woodhead, Paul Fletcher, Hiroko Kawanami, and David Smith (eds) Religions in the Modern World (London: Routledge, 2002), pp.412-436; Justin B. Poll and Timothy B. Smith, 'The Spiritual Self: Towards a Conceptualization of Spiritual Identity Development.' Journal of Psychology and Theology, Volume 31, Issue 2, 2003, pp.129-142; Dick Houtman and Stef Aupers, 'The Spiritual Turn and the Decline of Tradition: The Spread of Post-Christian Spirituality in 14 Western Countries, 1981-2000.' Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion Volume 46, Issue 3, 2007, pp.305-320; and Andrew Wright, 'In Praise of the Spiritual Turn: Critical Realism and Trinitarian Christianity.' Journal of Critical Realism, Volume 10, Issue 3, 2011, pp.331-357.

especially concerned with, and which in comparatively recent times has come to be termed 'Lived Religion.'

Also in addressing the Research Question, I shall work towards a description of Lived Religion by exploring how this has been described in the writings of key scholars on the subject and other ways that this has been used within different academic fields, especially in relation to practice rather than theory. Using my adapted form of Albertz's categorisation of religion, I shall then explore how Lived Religion is revealed at the institutional, local, and personal levels and how these levels may relate to each other. This will be done using differing ethnographic research methods with people from the research context in rural Scotland. Therefore, in this research I shall address the following Research Goals:

1. To identify how the institutional Church and contemporary spiritual writings describe and contribute to an understanding of Lived Religion.
2. To discover the ways in which Lived Religion is described at the personal level by ordinary Episcopalians who attend and participate at the local level.
3. To assess how a Lived Religious approach influences the ways religion and spirituality is understood and practiced by participants at the personal level.

These are discussed in turn.

Research Goal 1: To identify how the institutional Church and contemporary spiritual writings describe and contribute to an understanding of Lived Religion.

The focus of attention here will be on how the Scottish Episcopal Church regards its role and how this may contribute to further understandings of Lived Religion. This will involve an exploration of other contemporary writings on Episcopalian religion and spirituality, such as material published by the Scottish Episcopal Church and on the church's official website, in the hope of presenting as full a description as possible of how the Scottish Episcopal Church as an institution regards its role and how it envisages Lived Religion.

Research Goal 2: To discover the ways in which Lived Religion is described at the personal level by ordinary Episcopalians who participate at the local level.

In contrast to the emphasis of the previous Research Goal, here the focus will be on the personal level and on how members of local Episcopalian churches understand and practice their religion and spirituality. This will entail finding out what people regard as important for their religion, the kinds of words and terms they use in relation to religion and spirituality, and how they show this in practice. Some assessment of the role of the local level will also be made and of where the personal level of religion coheres with the beliefs outlined at the institutional level and where there are divergences, and then exploring why this may be so. In general, the emphasis will be on a thick description of what Lived Religion looks like within a group of Episcopalian Christians from three neighbourhood congregations.

Research Goal 3: To assess how a Lived Religious approach influences the ways religion and spirituality is understood and practiced by participants at the personal level.

The aim of this Research Goal is to assess the ways that Lived Religion might affect the personal religiosity of the participants at the personal level. Contributory factors might include the place of religion in the participants' upbringing, the role of key life-experiences in forming attitudes and understandings, and what things continue to sustain and nurture them. It might also include elements and ideas gleaned from contemporary understandings of spirituality. In general, the hope is to discover what has brought the participants to their personal religiosity. Overall, my intention in this research is to give a portrait of Lived Religion among a group of participants within a Scottish context, and so to contribute further to the understanding of the subject of Lived Religion in general.

The following chapter will discuss the research methods used for the field work and the reasons why certain methods have been adopted to achieve these goals.

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPING ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

2.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the research methods to be used in the field work. Firstly, I explain the use of a qualitative, ethnographic approach as the most suitable one for engaging with a relatively small group of participants and which includes the researcher's role as a participant observer. This has been used in relation to both Research Goal 1 and Research Goal 2 (2.2). I then explored the possible ethical considerations to be borne in mind while engaged in this research (2.3). I employed a form of triangulation,[23] a concept involving the viewing of a phenomenon in differing ways in order to generate a more accurate assessment of it and to cross check results, and that generally includes more than one method of research and analysis of a subject. Originally based on the search for convergence and on the assumption of a single reality 'out there' to be measured and agreed upon, in recent times triangulation has increasingly been used by researchers less as a method of validation, but to ensure that an account of a phenomenon or subject is rich, robust, comprehensive, and well-developed, and so to facilitate deeper meaning. With subjects such as religion and spirituality, where meanings can be multifarious, this revised approach to triangulation would seem to be more appropriate.

I used different methods of data collection and analysis including an examination of ideas related to Lived Religion and a description of what Lived Religion might involve (Chapter

[23] The concept of triangulation in social research was originally formulated in the 1950s by scholars such as Donald T. Campbell and Donald W. Fiske. In traditional understandings, triangulation often proceeds from the assumption that data from differing sources or methods must necessarily converge or be aggregated to reveal 'the truth;' in fact, Nigel Fielding refers to triangulation as 'convergent validation' (Nigel G. Fielding, 'Triangulation and Mixed Methods Designs: Data Integration with New Research Technologies.' Journal of Mixed Methods Research, Volume 6, no. 2, April 2012, pp.124-136 [hereafter, Fielding, Mixed Methods Research,]).

3), an exploration of the social and religious context of the research (Chapter 4), the use of a Research Questionnaire (2.4 and Chapter 5), and structured Research Interviews with twelve participants with a rationale for the questions used in the interviews as an appropriate method of gathering information about people's Lived Religion (2.5 and Chapter 6). As appropriate, I also made use of field notes and observations made in the course of the research. To address Research Goal 3, I analysed the results of data received from the participants at each point in terms of the elements and themes that emerge as important for their Lived Religion, then assess the way that religion and spirituality contribute to their Episcopalian Lived Religion. (Chapter 7).

In using these methods, my hope is to present a considered portrait of the Lived Religion of some Episcopalian Christians living in rural Scotland as a contribution to the wider fields of the sociology of religion and religious studies.

2.2. The Use of Ethnography

In 1961, the sociologist Erving Goffman wrote:

> Any group of persons – prisoners, primitives, pilots or patients – develop a life of their own that becomes meaningful, reasonable, and normal once you get close to it, and … a good way to learn about any of these worlds is to submit oneself in the company of the members to …[their] daily round.[24]

Goffman's words could be regarded as a sound justification for the use of ethnography as a research tool in the investigation of Lived Religion among a particular group of people.[25] Although there is no absolutely agreed definition of ethnography,[26] broadly speaking ethnography involves the participation of researchers in people's daily lives over an

[24] Erving Goffman, Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1961), pp.ix-x.

[25] See also David M. Fetterman, Ethnography Step by Step (London: SAGE, 1989), Norman K. Denzin, Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 1997), John Brewer, Ethnography (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000), Paul Atkinson, For Ethnography (London: SAGE, 2015), and Karen O'Reilly, Ethnographic Methods (London: Routledge, 2005). See also Nigel Fielding, 'Ethnography,' in Nigel Gilbert (ed), Researching Social Life (London: SAGE, 2008), pp.266-284, [hereafter, Gilbert, Researching], Martin Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, Ethnography: Principles in Practice (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995 [hereafter, Hammersley and Atkinson, Ethnography), and Jim Thomas, Doing Critical Ethnography (London: SAGE, 1993).

[26] See Hammersley and Atkinson, Ethnography, pp.1-2, for a discussion of this.

extended period of time within their own cultural and social settings and then trying to understand how this group understand their own behaviour. Beginning with an interest in some aspect of social activity, ethnography has been described as a research method that evolves in design through the course of a study as the researcher engages with a particular group, refining the initial focus of interest until it is narrowed down to concentrate on a specific research question and the meeting of several research goals. Ethnography is mainly exploratory in nature and considers the nature of shared understanding between people, acknowledges the role of language in constructing meaning, and that meanings can be developed within groups through patterns of behaviour that are in some way distinctive. In order to understand such meanings, the researcher must engage fully with and try to adopt the perspective of the group members in order to see things as they do. Consequently, field work plays an essential role in ethnographic research. However, as David Fetterman writes:

> Whereas in most research analysis follows data collection, in ethnographic research analysis and data collection begin simultaneously … Analysis is an ongoing responsibility … from the first moment an ethnographer envisions a new project to the final stages of writing and reporting the findings.[27]

Ethnographic research can involve data collection using multiple methods, which often include participant observation complemented by interviews.[28] Finally, an ethnographic study is usually a small-scale study of a particular group or a few cases, in order to facilitate in-depth investigation. As a way of getting close to informants and the worlds in which they live, ethnography can be a highly effective means of comprehending social life in particular settings.

As my research relates to a context in rural Scotland where I was living and working as a priest to three congregations, and to the Lived Religion of a group of people that I had come to know well and had lived among for some years, an ethnographic approach seemed the most logical means of further describing a picture of their Lived Religion. Yet I was aware that the role of a researcher was a different one from my role within these communities, so, I would need to become a participant observer. This would have the advantage that much of the observation and interaction with others could be part of everyday life, alongside more

[27] David M. Fetterman, Ethnography Step by Step (London: SAGE, 1989), p.12.

[28] The role of participant observation will be discussed later in this section.

formal methods of data collection such as a Research Questionnaire[29] and Interviews.[30] The ethics of 'insider research' will be discussed in 2.3, but here it is necessary to note the comments on participant observation made by Karen O'Reilly, who warns of the tension there can be between detached observer and empathetic participant and of the need to be clear about what the role entails. She writes:

> The participant observer … is participating in order to observe, notice, record, and try to make sense of actions and events. This involves an element of standing back intellectually and reflecting on things, writing them down and then objectifying them, asking directed questions in order to address research questions, and seeking access to groups and situations that another participant might not access … [Yet] participation [also] gives an insight into things people may otherwise forget to mention or would not normally want to discuss.[31]

The need for a degree of detachment in order to observe, but also to be able to engage effectively with the participants, is clearly a tension that as the researcher I needed to be continually aware of. But my hope is that through building on the pre-existent relationships with the participants, some of this tension may be overcome.

Also, given that an ethnographic approach generally seeks to study behaviour within people's natural social settings, and to understand the meanings people apply to their own experience, this seemed to cohere with a study of Lived Religion, in discovering and understanding the meanings that people give to the activity of 'being religious' and shaped by the understandings they bring to this. This might also be said to be in line with what John Vincent has written about ethnography as

> … concerned with investigating discrete, identifiable areas or groups or organizations as if they were a distinct *ethnos* ... [and] to approach a group … or movement or community [and] treat it as a separate, self-standing, unique phenomenon.[32]

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[29] See 2.5.

[30] See 2.6.

[31] Karen O'Reilly, Key Concepts in Ethnography (London: SAGE, 2009), pp.152, 155. See also pp.150-156 and 157-162.

[32] John Vincent, Christ in the City (Sheffield: Urban Theology Unit, 2013) Chapter 1.11. Similar and additional points are made by Al Dowie, who has written that 'Ethnography is hermeneutically grounded in that it takes account of the intersubjective nature of understanding, the role of language in constructing meaning, and the role played by the participant observer's own horizon in the hermeneutical conversation.' See Al Dowie, Interpreting Culture in a Scottish Congregation (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), p.137.

My intention, therefore, was to treat the participants as a distinct *ethnos*, for although this group may have some sense of group identity, chiefly through their membership of the Episcopal Church and their location, I think it is important to investigate the participants as in some way a self-standing phenomenon, and crucially to seek to discover the character of their Lived Religion. So, I adopted an ethnographic approach that includes participant observation as the best means of doing this.

2.3 Ethical Considerations

A copy of the Application for Ethical Review and the recommendations of the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee are included as Appendix I. I was granted conditional ethical approval on 19th October 2012 and full ethical approval on 11th January 2013. Here I wish to explore the issues highlighted by the Committee alongside other areas that would seem pertinent to this research.

The main issues raised by the Committee were these:

- The possibility of a conflict of interest and/or sensitivity arising from the fact that the researcher already has an established relationship with, and is in a position of authority in relation to, the participants.
- Explaining how selection criteria would be implemented and explained to both the participants and those not invited to take part in the research.
- Issues relating to anonymity and confidentiality and the possibility of inadvertently identifying participants from their quotes.

These will be discussed in turn, as well as some other ethical issues.

2.3.1 Insider Research, Power Dynamics, and Authority

An initial dilemma for many researchers has been whether to undertake research from an insider or an outsider perspective,[33] with each approach having its advocates and its critics. A succinct summary of the debate is given by Akemi Kikumura:

> On the one hand, advocates for the outsider perspective generally argue that access to authentic knowledge is more obtainable because of the objectivity and scientific detachment with which one can approach one's investigation as a non-member of the

[33] See, for instance, Russell T. McCutcheon (ed.), The Insider-Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion: a Reader (London: Continuum, 1999) and Michael Crossley, Lore Arthur, and Elizabeth McNess (eds.),Revisiting Insider-Outsider Research in Comparative and International Education (Oxford: Symposium Books, 2016).

> group. On the other hand, proponents of the insider perspective claim that group membership provides an insight into matters (otherwise obscure to others) based on one's knowledge of the language and one's intuitive sensitivity and empathy and understanding of the culture and its people.[34]

Marlize Rabe[35] also suggests that there are three concepts that can lead to a better understanding of this issue: *power, knowledge*, and *anthropology*. With many researchers, Rabe holds that there is power involved in the relationship between the researcher and the people and organisation participating in the research. Researchers gather the data from participants, write the articles and books, and can represent those participants as they choose to. Yet the research participants have some power, both in how they present themselves and in what they say and do not say. Regarding knowledge, the insider has 'insider knowledge' which the outsider does not; for instance, Rabe writes that lack of knowledge of a particular vernacular often places a researcher firmly as an outsider at the onset of the research. Finally, in considering anthropology, most anthropologists approach those being studied as outsiders, but as researchers experience the life of those being studied by living with them, they acquire more of an insider's perspective and an understanding of how those participants understand themselves. Rabe writes: 'In sum, when insiders and outsiders are under discussion, power, knowledge, and the self-understanding of those being studied along with the researcher's analysis of them are relevant. At the same time, it should be recognised that the positions taken in relation to these three constructs are fluid.'[36]

This last point is noteworthy because increasingly in research circles the dichotomy made between insider and outsider research is being reassessed. For although most researchers start off with a preference for one over the other, many scholars are discovering that insider and outsider perspectives are *themselves* more fluid in their understandings and practices. For example, Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Jennifer Buckle have argued that rather than considering research from a dichotomous perspective they concentrate on exploring the notion of 'the space between' these concepts that allows researchers to occupy the position

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[34] Akemi Kikumura, 'Family Life Histories: A Collaborative Venture,' in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds.), The Oral History Reader (London: Routledge, 1998), pp.140-144.

[35] Marlize Rabe, 'Revisiting 'insiders' and 'outsiders' as social researchers.' African Sociological Review, Volume 7, Issue 2, 2003, pp.149-161 [hereafter, Rabe, Revisiting].

[36] Rabe, Revisiting, p.152.

of both insider *and* outsider, rather than one or the other.[37] Similarly, in their research on bullying in schools Pat Thomson and Helen Gunter challenge the binary language of insider-outsider because the relationship between the two is more complex then this suggests, and can result in a researcher being involved in 'fluid identities … neither inside nor outside of the [research cohort], but rather … engaged in messy, continuously shifting relationships.'[38] Also, in their work on researcher identities in research with lesbian and bisexual women, Nikki Hayfield and Caroline Huxley similarly conclude that that the insider/outsider boundaries may be more blurred than these terms imply.[39] Finally, Lauren Breen argues that the insider/outsider dichotomy is too simplistic and fails to adequately capture the role of researchers, which is better conceptualised on a continuum which includes both insider and outsider aspects.[40] This position has, however, been questioned by Melanie Green in her study of insider research, arguing that for insiders and outsiders 'there are differences in how each position may be viewed, how each affects the type of data that is gathered, and how it is analysed. Most important, insider researchers may be confronted with methodological and ethical issues that may be deemed to be irrelevant to outsider researchers.'[41] These are just some of the issues researchers have raised in relation to the inside/outsider debate.

However, despite the continuing debate, and for the purposes of clarity, within this research I adopted the position of an insider-researcher working with a group of participants with whom I had an existing relationship; but I was aware that such a position could raise certain ethical issues. For instance, while like Breen viewing insiders and outsiders in terms of a

[37] See Sonya Corbin Dwyer and Jennifer L. Buckle, 'The Space Between: On Being an Insider-Outsider in Qualitative Research.' International Journal of Qualitative Methods, Volume 8, Issue 1, 2009, pp.54-63.

[38] See Pat Thomson and Helen Gunter, 'Inside, outside, upside down: The fluidity of academic researchers' "identity" in working with/in schools.' International Journal of Research and Method in Education, Volume 34, Issue 1, 2011, pp.17-30.

[39] See Nikki Hayfield and Caroline Huxley, 'Insider and Outsider Perspectives: Reflections on Researcher Identities in Research with Lesbian and Bisexual Women.' Qualitative Research in Psychology, Volume 12, Issue 2, 2015, pp.91-106.

[40] See Lauren J. Breen, 'The researcher "in the middle": Negotiating the insider/outsider dichotomy.' The Australian Community Psychologist, Volume 19, Issue 1, May 2007, pp.163-174.

[41] See p.2 of Melanie J. Green, 'On the Inside Looking In: Methodological Insights and Challenges in Conducting Qualitative Inside Research.' The Qualitative Report, Volume 19, Issue 29, 2014, pp.1-13.

continuum rather than a dichotomy, Justine Mercer[42] consider to what extent an insider researcher acting as a participant-observer can alter the research process, and remarks that opinion is divided on this, with some scholars suggesting that a participant-observer who continues in their usual role within an institution will have more impact on the research than a consultant from outside, while others see insiders as able to more naturally blend into a setting, making them less likely to alter it.[43] Mercer's view is that this 'partly depends on the position the researcher occupies within the institution,'[44] and also suggests that the research topic itself might be a factor.[45] In my case, I was serving as the Rector of the three churches attended by the participants researching religion and spirituality. While my role gave me a certain position within these church communities, this was a specifically religious and spiritual one, and therefore it might be argued that the participants could view the research as a natural extension of my existing role as their priest. This would also seem to be consistent with Mercer's view.

Researchers have also raised issues surrounding rapport and familiarity in insider-research. O'Reilly describes rapport as 'establishing reciprocal relationships based on mutual trust and understanding'[46] and built up gradually over a period. This is generally regarded in a positive light in ethnographic research, enabling researchers to get closer to participants and to access knowledge that would not be shared with those with whom they had no rapport.[47] Yet as Mercer shows, there are also drawbacks here. She argues that while it may be true that insider-researchers will have a better initial understanding of the social setting through their familiarity with the context, and are likely to understand 'the subtle and diffuse links between

[42] See Justine Mercer, 'The Challenge of Insider Research in Educational Institutions: Wielding a double-edged sword and resolving delicate dilemmas.' Oxford Review of Education, Volume 33, Issue 1, 2007, pp.1-17 [hereafter, Mercer, Insider Research].

[43] Mercer, Insider Research, p.10.

[44] Mercer, Insider Research, p.10.

[45] Mercer, Insider Research, p.6.

[46] Karen O'Reilly, Key Concepts in Ethnography (London: SAGE, 2009), p.174.

[47]See, for instance, Corinne Glesne, 'Rapport and Friendship in Ethnographic Research.' International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, Volume 2, Issue 1, 1989, pp.45-54; Elizabeth J. Hanson, 'Issues Concerning the Familiarity of Researcher with the Research Setting.' Journal of Advanced Nursing, Volume 20, Issue 5, November 1994, pp.940-942; and Alison Abbe and Susan E. Brandon, 'Building and Maintaining Support in Investigative Interviews.' Police Practice and Research, Volume 15, Issue 3, 2014, pp.207-220.

situation and event' than outsider-researchers, it is questionable whether or not such familiarity 'leads to thicker descriptions or greater verisimilitude.'[48] In addition, Mercer states that some researchers hold that greater familiarity may mean that insiders can take things for granted and fail, for instance, to ask the 'obvious' question because they assume they know the reply, or raise the 'sensitive' topic because it is supposed that this will cause difficulty. Mercer writes: 'Preconceptions may colour accounts [by insiders] because so much more is already known (or thought to be known) about the interviewees' opinions. Whilst the outsider [has no] history … the insider cannot escape his or her past.'[49] However, Mercer writes that it is generally agreed that insider-research can provide a more nuanced understanding of the research context and 'in addition insider-researchers usually have considerable credibility and rapport with the subjects of their studies, a fact that may engender a greater level of candour than would otherwise be the case.'[50]

At the start of the research process I had been the Rector of these churches for over three years. In that time, I felt I had built up good relationships with most members of the congregations, especially those who came to the churches most regularly, and I was accustomed to speaking with them in diverse settings such as meetings, worship, and socially. Therefore, when I was beginning my research as an insider-researcher I felt there was a potential pool of participants from among those with whom over time I had established a relationship of trust, and my hope was that some members of the churches would therefore be open to taking part in the research, as proved to be the case.

Another point to examine is the idea that the researcher is often considered to hold the most power in an interview relationship, as he or she sets the questions, records the responses, and decides how these are to be written up and used, albeit normally in consultation with the interviewees; and certainly, such matters have to be taken into account and managed

[48] Mercer, Insider Research, p.11.

[49] Mercer, Insider Research, pp.13-14.

[50] Mercer, Insider Research, p.12. This is not a view shared by all researchers. Kirsten Hastrup, for instance, argues the reverse of this, and that it is the outsider-researchers who are more likely to be told things that insiders would not. See her chapter on 'Fieldwork among friends: ethnographic exchange within the Northern civilization,' in Kirsten Hastrup, Island of Anthropology: Studies in past and present Iceland (Odense: University Press, 1990), pp.253-268.

sensitively, and it was my intention as a researcher to act in an ethically appropriate manner.[51] Yet it was also the case that the interviewees have some power in that they are ultimately in control of the information and convey only those elements that they believe it is appropriate to do so, which can also affect the experience and outcome of the research.[52] However, as my research was based upon the expressed belief and practices of the participants, this latter point seems eminently appropriate. For although it could be argued that this may mean that some aspects that could be of interest are thus excluded from the research, it might also be argued that this means that what *is* provided by the participants is what they genuinely wish to be known, and is therefore authentic. A related dilemma is that the insider-researcher may possess prior knowledge concerning the participants and/or have incidental data revealed to them.[53] It would surely be unacceptable to probe further into areas into areas with which the participants were uncomfortable, but it may be in order to use incidental data with prior permission. This was the approach I took.

There is one further aspect of the power relationship between the researcher and the participants that it is important to raise. As it is fairly distinctive to Scotland, it may not have been considered elsewhere, but it is pertinent to the relationships involved in this research and it concerns the payment of the clergy stipend. The Scottish Episcopal Church is self-supporting, and the stipend of the Rector is met directly by the congregations of each church, and to varying extents this affects how Episcopalian clergy are regarded by some members of their congregations. For there are some members who are inclined to treat their priest rather like an employee with particular duties and functions; and therefore, the power dynamic in the relationship inevitably alters from other churches. This is not the case for clergy in the Church of England, but it would seem to be a factor in this instance; i.e. the priest does not have all the power in their relationship to the church's members.

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[51] On this issue, Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson conclude that 'All that can be required of ethnographers is that they take due note of the ethical aspects of their work and make the best judgements they can in the circumstances.' See Hammersley and Atkinson, Ethnography, p.228.

[52] On this issue, see Alan Floyd and Linet Arthur, 'Researching from Within: Moral and Ethical Issues and Dilemmas.' SRHE Annual Conference, December 2010, and Frederick Anyan, 'The Influence of Power Shifts in Data Collection and Analysis: A Focus on Qualitative Research Interview. 'The Qualitative Report, Volume 18, 2013, pp.1-9.

[53] On the issue of incidental data, see Mercer, Insider Research, p.43.

2.3.2 Issues relating to the Selection Criteria

Some of the issues relating to selection and consent will be addressed below in 2.5.2 and 2.5.3. It was my hope that four participants from each of the three congregations will be willing to take part in the Research Interviews;[54] these were identified through the Research Questionnaire. It was suggested to me by my supervisor that twelve was both manageable for a small-scale study and in broad terms a representative sample of the three congregations, but in addition to their willingness this will depend on availability.

I hoped to undertake the Research Interviews in a suitably relaxed environment, hopefully the participants' own homes unless requested otherwise. I gave copies of the Participant Information Sheet and of the Research Interview questions to each participant in advance of the Interview to give adequate time for preparation. The Consent Form, however, was read and signed at the start of each Interview.[55]

As for those people who agreed to take part in the research but with whom a Research Interview did not subsequently take place, I sent a personal letter to each person giving my thanks for their willingness to take part in the research, expressing my regret that this has not been possible, and outlining the reasons why this has been so, with the hope that they will understand why this has been the case. In this way, I hoped to convey my appreciation to the people for their willingness to consider being part of this research.

2.3.3 Issues of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Although I had worked on the Ethical Review Committee's concern relating to issues of anonymity, confidentiality, and the unintentional identification of participants through their quotations, in an earlier version of this research this concern was again raised. Unfortunately, as I had failed to be as rigorous in addressing these matters as necessary, it became imperative to me, in this thesis, to ensure that all references that could readily identify locations and people were removed and to be much more circumspect in my approach. To this end, I referred to the participants throughout in term of gender and the church they attend i.e. Male 1, Church C, Female 3, Church A, etc.

[54] However, see 6.1.

[55] See Appendix III, IV, and V.

I have also used quotations more carefully and, unless they are used to make a particular point or observation, sought to incorporate the participant's words into the text rather than as 'stand-alone' quotations. In addition, I have removed references to specific locations unless it is germane to the discussion.

In so doing, I hoped to preserve confidentiality more effectively. In addition, the original focus of this research on individuals had now shifted to a thematic approach as more consistent with the form of the Interviews and more protective of individual identity. In these ways, I hoped to provide as fully as possible confidentiality and anonymity to the participants in the research.

2.4 The Research Questionnaire

2.4.1 Introduction

The choice of a Research Questionnaire as the first stage addresses Research Goal 2, to acquire preliminary information about the themes that Episcopalians within selected congregations could think relate to their own personal faith and spirituality. The Questionnaire suggested possible themes for consideration as a means of assisting participants to consider their personal understandings and practice of religion, but also allowed space for them to make personal comments and offer their own definitions of spirituality. Therefore, the purpose of this Questionnaire was to begin to discern the kinds of themes and issues that were important to the respondents and so to start to build up a picture of the overall 'flavour' of their understanding and approach to religion and spirituality, and so to begin to see how this might be related to the concept of Lived Religion.

However, a key motivation in offering this Questionnaire was to identify a pool of potential participants who may be willing to take part in more in-depth, one-to-one Research Interviews. So, a final question asks participants whether they would be willing to be involved. My hope was that several people from each congregation will express their willingness to speak to me further.

This was a self-administered Questionnaire presented to participants on a Sunday during the morning service, because this was the main occasion each week when members of the

congregations naturally gather together. Apart from those unable to be present in the churches on the day of distribution, the Questionnaire was distributed to most of the membership across the three congregations. My hope was that in presenting on such an occasion that the response rate from those willing to take part would be fairly high, although the Questionnaire would be voluntary. I invited people to only give the information they wished to give and would assure them that the responses offered would be treated as confidential. This was so that the participants might feel in control of their contribution and hopefully would feel sufficiently at ease to offer honest answers to the questions.[56]

The purpose of the Questionnaire was as a survey of attitudes about people's religion and spirituality. The questions included were mainly multiple-choice questions, which are generally considered to be easier for participants to answer, and were phrased in such a way as to include both religious and non-religious responses and in the hope that this would elicit replies from different sorts of people, and not just from those who would regard themselves as 'religious.' But the Questionnaire also included an open-ended question which invited participants to describe how they see spirituality, which at the time that the Questionnaire was compiled was intended to be more of a focus for this research prior to focusing on Lived Religion. However, given that the relationship between religion and spirituality is an important one in relation to Lived Religion, I decided the question should be included to help discover the kind of language and ideas people chose to use in thinking about this term, and to see whether these included predominantly religious understandings or other understandings as well. Finally, there was also an opportunity for participants to supply any other information that they may wish to. My overall hope was that the Questionnaire would give a picture of how members of the congregations actually see religion and spirituality, and some insight into their own religiosity.

2.4.2 The Questionnaire in Detail: Exploring Religion and Spirituality.

It is now time to offer a detailed analysis of the Questionnaire as a research tool. In doing so, I aim to clarify the motivations for asking these questions and the sort of data I hope to

[56] The issue of the preservation of anonymity and confidentiality in relation to questionnaires has been questioned. See A.N.Oppenheim, Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement (London: Continuum, 1992), pp.49, 105; Martin Bulmer, in Gilbert Researching, pp.155-156; and Bill Gillham, The Research Interview (London: Continuum, 2000), pp15-16, and Research Interviewing (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2005), pp.13, 79 [hereafter, Gillham, Research Interviewing].

collect. To be user-friendly, the Questionnaire was limited to seven questions with some multiple-choice ones at the beginning. In detail, the first question was intended as a purely factual one designed to gather details regarding the range of participants, while the second question was a general one about religion and spirituality. Then the third and fourth questions focus mainly on religion, and the fifth question on spirituality. Finally, the sixth question was designed to invite participants to make any special comments that they may wish to, and the seventh question asked about further willingness to participate in the research.

2.4.3 Title

After much consideration, I decided on the title Exploring Religion and Spirituality for the Questionnaire as being concise and clear enough in its focus while allowing for a breadth of interpretation about what the terms mean. Participants would then be free, if they wished, to place their prime emphasis on religion or spirituality or to take the title as a whole. Although this may be open to question, my adoption of this title is based on the assumption that people of all types will have some notion of what *they* understand by the words 'religion' and 'spirituality,' although this may differ considerably from that of the person sitting next to them. Certainly, a term such as 'Lived Religion' is generally unknown and would have been unhelpful to use. My hope was that the majority of participants would to some degree feel able to complete the Questionnaire as honestly and in as much detail as possible, so that a picture of their religiosity would emerge.

A copy of the Research Questionnaire can be found in Appendix II. What follows is an examination of each question in turn and why they have been selected.

2.4.4 Question 1: Factual Data

This was a factual question about gender, age range, level of educational attainment, and employment, designed to assess the range of participants. However, it is made clear to the participants that confidentiality would be assured and that this type of information was for my use alone, should they wish to complete it.

2.4.5 Question 2: General Impressions

This question tried to capture something of the nature and focus of each participant's sense of religion and spirituality. It was opinion-based and asked the participant to rank a reply for each of the options in terms of agreement or disagreement.[57] The question might therefore be said to ask for a participant's instinctive response, rather than for a more considered reply. It was intended as a means of introducing the participant to elements of their own faith and spirituality. Purposefully, a mixture of replies had been offered, some of which explicitly mentioned God, others were more concentrated on what might be termed 'the search for the self,' while others picked up on themes such as the importance for human beings of belonging with others, of belief demonstrated by actions, and a perception of the sacredness of the natural world. This was designed to encourage a wide breadth of responses beyond conventional ecclesiastical assumptions and was based upon my reading in the field.

2.4.6. Question 3: Finding God

As all the participants are Episcopalians, this question assumed that they will have some understanding of and relationship with God in their religiosity but allows for the possibility that the precise locus for that understanding may be different. So as in the previous question, participants were asked to rank their replies in order of importance and so to help indicate what they saw as their priorities regarding their relationship with God.[58] Again, to encourage a wide breadth of responses, a variety of possible ones were included, ranging from the explicitly religious to more personally-based ones while also allowing for the possibility that a participant's own relationship with God may not find expression within the responses mentioned and inviting the participant to use their own words to express this. Also underlying this question was an attempt to help participants to consider where they feel closest to God, and to begin to think about whether in general this is in more passive, solitary

[57] In that there are a relatively limited range of responses to such questions, these are known as 'closed-ended questions.' The ethnographer David M. Fetterman writes that such questions 'are useful in trying to quantify behaviour patterns [and are typically used] during [the] conformational period [of research].' See David M. Fetterman, Ethnography Step by Step (Newbury Park, California: SAGE, 1989), p.54. However, as well as quantifying behaviour patterns, I would also contend that closed-ended questions might be used to indicate particular kinds of opinions and beliefs as well, and this is how I intend them to be understood in this questionnaire.

[58] As Rosemarie Simmons has written, 'A ranking scale is a form of closed question that can be valuable when trying to ascertain the level of importance of a number of items.' See Rosemarie Simmons, 'Questionnaires,' in Gilbert, Researching, pp.192-193. It has also been suggested that ranking questions guarantees that each item is given a unique value. See http://blog.verint.com/ranking-questions-vs-rating-questions.

activities and expressions or in more active, community-based ones. The intention was to help participants to consider further where they feel the focus of their religion and spirituality lies, and principally whether this was externally or internally based, or a combination of both.

2.4.7 Question 4: Relationship with God

In many ways, this question was an attempt to expand on the information provided in the previous two questions by asking for more specific details about how the participants perceived their relationship with God as part of their religiosity. A graduated scale of importance is again suggested to help guide the participants' replies, with a primary focus on how a participant's particular relationship with God effects and supports their religiosity. Some of the suggested responses are aimed at encouraging participants to look outward ('It helps me to make decisions about how to live my life, especially when life is difficult,' 'It helps me to be … concerned for other people'), while others are apt to concentrate on the participants' 'inner landscapes' ('It helps me to look inward, and to find the resources I need to be happier,' 'It provides me with a feeling of reassurance and security'), and one is quite general ('It helps me to be a better person and to lead a good life'), which may be regarded as a kind of 'catch-all' response which intends to communicate *something* about a participant's personal relationship with God but may be somewhat vague on the actual details. A slightly similar, but more open, response is the final one, 'It is full of adventure and opportunities for me, both outwardly and inwardly,' and is intended to capture participants who enjoy a continuing and unfolding relationship with God that satisfies them on a number of different levels. Essentially, the intention is that these differing types of responses would be of use in helping participants to ponder on what is truly important about their particular relationship with God, while also assisting them in becoming clear about what is definitely *not,* or is a comparatively minor, part of that relationship.

2.4.8 Question 5: Definition of Spirituality

Unlike the previous questions, this one focused on spirituality. Moreover, the style of this question was deliberately open-ended, in that it allows the participants to interpret its

meaning and to think about how they wish to reply.[59] This question about spirituality lies near to the issue of Lived Religion, and the purpose of the research. Given that defining "spirituality" is problematic, I was concerned that people should feel able to interpret the meaning of the term *for themselves*, rather than to have some exterior meaning placed upon it. This grows out of the impression gained from various contemporary spiritual writings that spirituality continues to be a meaningful concept for many people, but has become more of a personal construct involving an amalgam of differing convictions, beliefs, and practices garnered from a variety of sources and experiences that people feel are important to them.[60] Therefore, this question was an attempt to find out the sorts of ideas that the participants associated with spirituality, as indicated by the words and phrases they used in describing it. It may be that some participants, as they are Episcopalians, may use fairly traditional and religiously influenced ideas in their definitions, but it will be interesting to discover how far some may use different kinds of ideas to indicate their understanding of spirituality. My over-riding concern was that the words and notions that the participants used are their own, and that they are used because they genuinely mean something personally to them. As these definitions are explored later, I hope that they will help provide a fair portrait of how the participants understand spirituality and where their definitions and understandings both cohere and differ.

2.4.9 Question 6: Further Comments

Whether this section was completed by the participants or not, I thought that it was important to include an open-ended question of this sort as it provided the opportunity for the participants to make an independent contribution about their religion and spirituality, and to provide (a) particular ideas or experiences connected with their faith and spirituality which

[59] For further discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of open questions, see Rosemarie Simmons in Gilbert, Researching, p.193, and A. N. Oppenheim, Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Management (London: Continuum, 1966, 1992, reprinted 2006), pp.112-115.

[60] See, for instance, the scale of usage of the term 'spirituality' identified by William Stringfellow as including 'occult phenomena …yoga disciplines, escapist fantasies …jogging cults, monastic rigours…wilderness sojourns, political resistance …hospitality …or, I suppose, among these and many other things, squatting on top of a pillar.' See William Stringfellow, The Politics of Spirituality (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006), p.19. See also David Lyon, Jesus in Disneyland: Religion in Modern Times (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), p.18; Valerie Lesniak, 'Contemporary Spirituality,' in Philip Sheldrake (ed.), The New SCM Dictionary of Christian Spirituality (London: SCM Press, 2005), pp.7-8, 10; Ursula King, The Search for Spirituality: Our Global Quest for a Spiritual Life (New York: BlueBridge, 2008), p.14; Meredith McGuire, Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life (Oxford: University Press, 2008), pp.146, 151, 188; and Philip Sheldrake, Spirituality: A Guide for the Perplexed (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp.8-9.

are not addressed elsewhere in the Questionnaire, or (b) a connection with a group or an intentional spiritual community, or (c) an annual event that they always attend, or (d) a devotion to the writings of a particular spiritual writer. Alternatively, there may be a particular spiritual technique or therapy that has become important to a participant and that they practice on a regular basis, and this, too, would have a connection with their approach to Lived Religion. It could be that this question would provide some of the most interesting answers.

2.4.10 Question 7: Further Participation

This final question, although very brief, was an important one in terms of the next stage of the research, revealing as it does the participant's further willingness or unwillingness to take part in the more in-depth Research Interviews. For all sorts of reasons, such as pressures of time or just personal disinclination, some participants may not wish to be involved in the research any further than beyond the completion of this Questionnaire, but my hope was that a sufficient number of participants would indeed express their willingness to be part of the Interviews.

2.4.11 Summary

In summary, the Research Questionnaire was designed to be a user-friendly, non-threatening research tool that would help participants think carefully about how they understand their religion and spirituality and feel able to engage as honestly and fully as they can. It could provide some useful information and helpful insights into the nature and understanding of the religiosity of a small group of Episcopalians and so assist the next stage of the research. Finally, it would assist in the selection of participants for the proposed Research Interviews, to which I now turn.

2.5. The Research Interviews

The Research Interview questions were created with the aim of getting to the heart of Research Goal 2, the investigation of the Lived Religion of a group of rural Episcopalians. Each of the participants were asked the same questions in the same order, with the intention of providing a detailed portrait, a thick description, of how the participants themselves see

their own religion and spirituality so that key themes and issues may be identified in this particular sample.

2.5.1 The Interview Method

My original intention was to adopt a semi-structured approach using a series of Research Conversations with fairly open questions. These were to be Research Conversations as understood and employed by David Hay and Kate Hunt and concentrating on the words and ideas that people themselves use about their religion and spirituality in order to unlock in-depth responses.[61]

However, although remaining committed to the use of a mixed method approach, following the results of the Questionnaire it became apparent that there was a particular issue for the participants. For although it was perhaps easier for religious people, and especially church attendees, to discuss their religion, in that they had become familiar with a particular kind of vocabulary and set of ideas and may have been encouraged to use these in relation to their religion, there would appear to be less confidence regarding their spirituality. From the Questionnaire results, I concluded that in general people were unaccustomed to thinking and speaking about their spirituality in an informed way. They struggled with how to approach and articulate key terms, and in particular people voiced how challenging they found it to consider what spirituality involved for them. This is unsurprising, as researchers in a number of different fields have encountered the same problem. For example, a survey of reviews by Pam McCarroll, Thomas St James O'Connor and Elizabeth Meakes dealing with spirituality gave twenty-seven explicit definitions of spirituality, about which, they concluded, 'there was little agreement.'[62]

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[61] As Hay and Hunt write on their research on spirituality, 'We deliberately called [our] sessions [with participants] 'research conversations …because we were interested primarily in understanding what people had to say rather than testing a hypothesis ... We felt it was important to be very permissive in mode, so that the individuals felt that they were given the space and time to speak about their own understanding of spirituality rather than being forced into predetermined categories by tightly structured questions. This style of investigation [also] helps to overcome some of the issues of power that are almost always present in research.' See Hay and Hunt, Understanding Spirituality, p.9.

[62] Pam McCarroll, Thomas St James O'Connor, and Elizabeth Meakes, 'Assessing Plurality in Spiritual Definitions,' in Augustine Meier, Thomas St James O Connor and Peter L. Van Katwyk (eds), Spirituality and Health: Multidisciplinary Explorations (Waterlooo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005), pp.44-59. See also John Paley, 'Spirituality and secularization: nursing and the sociology of religion.' Journal of Clinical Nursing, Volume 17, Issue 2, January 2008, pp.175-186; Bruce W. Speck, 'What is Spirituality?' New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 104, 2005, pp.3-13; and Brian J. Zinnbauer, Kenneth I. Pargament, and

In the light of such findings, it seemed appropriate to revise my approach to offer the participants a degree of guidance in considering what spirituality might mean for them, and so instead of the proposed Research Conversation I used a more structured Research Interview. This consisted of a structured format but, crucially, would still include the use of open questions which the respondents were free to interpret and answer as they felt appropriate. To allow me to compare and contrast different answers to the same questions, I decided to use the same question order for each participant and to move from questions requiring comparatively straightforward factual information, through more reflective questions about meaning and participation, through again to more factual questions, and ending with an open question where the participants were free to provide any information they considered relevant. The subject-matter for the Interview questions emerged out of the results of the Questionnaire and the themes highlighted there as of particular concern by differing respondents. This included questions about the participants' religious background and how they saw their faith now, what especially nurtured their religion and spirituality such as particular practices and places of significance, and I also asked whether involvement in the Episcopal Church played a role here. As a helpful way of categorising themes that had emerged as important in the Questionnaire, this could be said to be an example of coding, as part of the ongoing process of the interpretive analysis of source material on religion and spirituality.

In using these questions, the intention was to help the participants to focus their attention on religion and spirituality, and to offer them suggested areas to think about in considering what they had themselves identified as difficult concepts. These suggestions were never intended to restrict people or force them into giving some kind of prescribed response, and I was clear that in no way should the participants feel coerced into sharing information that they had no wish to. So, I made it clear that the participants were entirely free to reject these suggestions and to respond in the ways that they felt to be appropriate. This was particularly the case in relation to how participants interpreted religion and spirituality, where the question was purposely designed as an open one in order to elicit the participants' own understandings of these concepts. Above all, my intention in using this structured format was both to help the

Allie B. Scott, 'The Emerging Meaning of Religiousness and Spirituality: Problems and Prospects.' Journal of Personality, 67:7, December 1999, pp.889-919.

participants in considering these concepts but also to remain in control of the information they were sharing, and only to give the researcher what they perceived to be pertinent and appropriate to the topic. In doing this, my hope was to gain as broad an impression as possible of the religiosity of these participants, of the ways of Lived Religion.

2.5.2. Selection of People

The people selected to be involved in the Research Interviews was an example of purposive sampling, as it would be from among those who had indicated through the Questionnaire their willingness to be so involved.[63] The intention was to hold in-depth interviews with twelve participants from across the three churches attended by the participants, ideally with four people from each congregation. I asked each participant if I might hold a one-to-one interview with them in their own home, and most of them agreed to this; one participant chose to meet me in a local cafe. My hope was that in doing so the interviews would be conducted in a relaxed environment, and so they would feel able to be as open as possible about talking about their own religion and spirituality.

I am also aware that for differing reasons several members of these congregations have journeyed to their present place with the Episcopal Church from other religious traditions. If some of them were willing to participate in the interviews, it might be both appropriate and informative to see if the insights they have gained through involvement with other traditions influences their practice of Lived Religion now. Also, the replies received from completion of the Questionnaire may reveal that some participants have had differing types of experience that have helped to shape their religion and spirituality, and it would clearly be valuable to explore this with them. Although I could not predict whether this would be the case, it was important to be aware of such potential factors should they arise.

In summary, participants in the Research Interviews would be selected from the different churches on the grounds of their willingness to be involved and to explore further their understandings of faith and spirituality, especially from a personal perspective. By engaging

[63] See 2.4.10.

in these Research Interviews, my intention was to discover what Lived Religion looks like to this group of Episcopalians.

2.5.3 The Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Before embarking on the Research Interviews, I ensured that each of the participants was given a Participant Information Sheet outlining the purpose of the research and what it would involve for them. Originally, this research had the title 'Personal Spiritualities Among Episcopalian Christians in North East Scotland,' so this is the title that was used on the Participant Information Sheet included as Appendix III. However, as the research progressed it became clearer from the results of the Research Questionnaire and the Research Interviews that the participants' concern was not primarily with personal spirituality but with Lived Religion that focussed mainly on the religious aspects of their lives but included spirituality as well. Therefore, I subsequently changed the thesis title and adjusted the focus of the research to reflect this.

I was concerned that the participants fully understood that the field of study was religion and spirituality from a personal perspective and that the kind of information I was seeking concerned understandings and definitions of spirituality, how religious background and experience may contribute to this, and what elements currently nourish their understanding of faith and spirituality. I also explained that participants were being invited to participate as they had indicated their willingness to do so having completed the initial Questionnaire on Exploring Religion and Spirituality and that this would involve a one-to-one Research Interview about their faith and spirituality and that the Interview would last for approximately one hour.

I then explained that both the Participant Information Sheet and the accompanying Consent Form[64] had been approved by the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee of the University of Birmingham on 11th January 2013, that participation was entirely voluntary and that participants could withdraw at any time without giving a reason, that all information collected was entirely confidential and anonymity would be assured, and

[64] See Appendix IV.

that all data would be retained and stored in accordance with the University's policy on academic integrity.

The Consent Form also included the original title of the research project along with the name, position, and contact details of the researcher. Participants were invited to initial that they had read and understood the Information Sheet and had been given the opportunity to ask any questions, that they understood that participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any time, that they agreed to take part in the study and for anonymised quotes to be used in publication, following which any data gathered would be stored in a secure data centre and could be used for further research. Both the participant and the researcher would then sign and date the Consent Form. Both the Participant Sheet and the Consent Form were designed to ensure that each participant understood the nature of the research and what they were being invited to take part in and to reassure them that accepted academic protocol was being adhered to in relation to the research.

2.5.4 The Research Interview Questions

2.5.4.1 The Rationale

For the purposes of coding and in the interests of clarity, for both this rationale and in the later analysis of the participants' responses I have used the following headings for the questions:

1. Religious Background
2. Faith Now
3. Spirituality
    i. Definition
    ii. Personal Spirituality
    iii. Religion and Spirituality
4. Religious and Spiritual Nurture
5. The Scottish Episcopal Church
6. Other Comments

I decided on a sequence of questions consisting of a more factual question, a question involving further thought, a three-part question about spirituality involving in-depth consideration, two further questions involving less detail, and a final open question inviting

the participants themselves to raise any particular issues. This sequence was designed to assist participants to begin by exploring areas they might be more confident about like their religious backgrounds and their perceptions of the way they lived their faith now. Then the third question was intended to involve a more detailed consideration about definitions of spirituality, attitudes towards the idea of a personal spirituality, and the relationship, if any, that participants saw between religion and spirituality. The fourth and fifth questions were also intended to require less detailed consideration, and the final question was intended to allow participants to add anything else not already covered so that together a useful picture of their Lived Religion might emerge.

What follows is an examination of each question in turn and why they were selected.

2.5.4.2 Question 1: Religious Background

Please tell me about your religious background

This open question gave the participants the opportunity to speak about their own experiences of religion and faith. It may include family background, particular times of formative influence in their lives, key figures who have been important to them, and anything else they deemed to be relevant. It may be, however, that there are some negative experiences in a participant's background that it is difficult for them to discuss. This must be treated sensitively, and clearly it was for the participant to share as much or as little as they feel able to about such experiences. In general, however, I intended this as a question that helped the participants to begin to think about religion and spirituality in the broadest terms and from a personal perspective by asking about something that was familiar and hopefully easy for participants to talk about. It also provided a context for their subsequent responses.

2.5.4.3 Question 2: Faith Now

What words would you use to describe your personal faith now?

With this question, I hoped to get the participants to express what was important to them about their religious faith in the present. Clearly, the words and phrases that they decided to use to describe this would be of great importance in helping to reveal the 'flavour' of their spirituality and what elements of their Lived Religion each participant regarded as essential.

2.5.4.4 Question 3: Spirituality

I am interested in the subject of personal spirituality, but there can be varying views on what the term 'spirituality' means.

i. Definition

a) What does 'spirituality' mean to you?

This part of the question offered participants the chance to consider in further detail and to expand on the definition of spirituality they had previously provided in the Research Questionnaire. I anticipated a variety of replies to this, with some being overtly religious in the terms used and others consisting of ideas from differing sources that participants associate with spirituality. Essential to each reply was that it was entirely unprompted and that the words were those that the participants themselves chose to use as they gave their own understanding of what spirituality means to them.

ii. Personal Spirituality

b) In what ways would you say that your spirituality is 'personal' to you?

The aim of this part of the question was to encourage participants to 'ground' their understanding of spirituality in their own personal understanding and experience. Again, I anticipated that the replies to this could be varied, but my hope was that the question would at least help participants to consider whether there is *any* sense in which they regarded spirituality as personal to them, and what their personal religiosity might look like.

iii. Religion and Spirituality

c) Do you see spirituality and religion as the same, or different? Please explain your reply.

This part of the question stems from the contemporary trend in much literature on spirituality, and in parts of Western society in general, to see 'religion' and 'spirituality' as completely different, unrelated concepts. My intention was to try to ascertain whether this trend has impinged upon the participants' understanding and approach or whether they would regard such a separation as unusual. Given the present debate taking place about these concepts, I believed it would be a mistake to leave out some consideration of this and that it was appropriate to allow participants the opportunity to think about how they regarded this matter.

2.5.4.5 Question 4: Religious and Spiritual Nurture

What things in your experience and practice would belong to what you call your spirituality? These might include prayer, acts of worship and devotion, visiting special places, an appreciation of art, music, and nature, or something else again. Please mention all those that apply to you.

This question was the one most aimed at discovering Lived Religion and sought to find out how the participants expressed their religiosity, their spirituality in practice. Here I had included suggestions about the sorts of things this could involve in order to help the participants to think about what helps nourish their spirits. Again, I anticipated that the responses given might be very different from each other, as people are quite naturally attracted to and helped by different things. I was keen to see just what participants would include here, and to see if these were Christian or religious in tone, or more generally associated with being human, or some combination of them.

2.5.4.6 Question 5: The Scottish Episcopal Church

How does your involvement in the Scottish Episcopal Church influence your spirituality and its practice?

This was obviously a different type of question to the previous ones, but it was aimed at trying to assess how the participants' involvement in the Scottish Episcopal Church influenced their practice of religion and spirituality. Essentially, I was seeking to find out, firstly, how important to the participants was their membership of the Episcopal Church, and secondly, in what ways their involvement in this particular denomination influenced their religion and practice. The question assumed that the participant's membership does have some influence on their beliefs and practice, but again I was interested to find out what the participants themselves thought about this.

2.5.4.7 Question 6: Other Comments

Is there anything further you would like to add about your faith and spirituality?

As with the Research Questionnaire, here was an opportunity for the participants to mention any further matters that they saw as relevant to their spirituality. It was a purposefully open question, intended to elicit additional responses that might otherwise be missed.

2.5.4.8 Summary

As these Research Interviews were a vital element of the research, it was initially my intention to give each Interview a separate chapter in order to indicate their importance. However, after further consideration, I explored the questions thematically using the above headings. In doing so, I hoped to discover and describe in some detail how a sample group of rural Episcopalians understand their faith and spirituality and then seek to put this understanding into practice in their personal lives at the personal level. These may be regarded as the essential 'ground rules' for the Research Interviews.

The next chapter begins with a discussion of the issue of defining or describing concepts and ideas and will then explore some of the major writers who have studied Lived Religion, how these have contributed to a wider understanding of the subject, and how these might also contribute to a description of Lived Religion.

CHAPTER 3

TOWARDS A DESCRIPTION OF LIVED RELIGION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins to address Research Goal 1, the ways that Lived Religion is described by the Church and by contemporary spiritual writings. Clearly, it is necessary to consider the subject of Lived Religion more directly; yet given the broad focus of the subject as indicated in 1.1, my concern is to give a comprehensive portrait of the kinds of ideas this may involve but without being unnecessarily proscriptive. This being so, I start here by promoting the case for a description of Lived Religion rather than a definition of it (3.2) before offering some background history on Lived Religion as a field of study (3.3). This will be followed by exploring the work of some of the scholars whose contributions have influenced the development of Lived Religion as a subject area (3.4), and then considering some of the ways Lived Religion has been employed to investigate other areas of study (3.5). The chapter will culminate by offering a working description of the different facets that Lived Religion can entail (3.6). In these ways, my intention is to give a detailed portrayal of how Lived Religion has been approached in recent years and the kind of research undertaken from this perspective to assist my analysis of the Lived Religion of rural Episcopalians.

3.2 Definition or Description?

It is necessary to say something about my use of the terms 'religion' and 'religiosity.' There has been much debate about just how these words are to be defined,[65] and 'religiosity' has

[65] See, for instance, Victoria Harrison, 'The Pragmatics of Defining Religion in a Multi-Cultural World.' International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, Volume 59, 2006, pp.133-152, and Barbara Holdcroft, 'What is Religiosity?' Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, Volume 10, No. 1, September 2006, pp.89-103.

been used in a pejorative way as a description for someone who is excessively pious.[66] Most definitions of religion have concentrated on either what religion does (functional definitions) or on the content of religion (substantive definitions), while religiosity has sometimes been approached in relation to differing religious dimensions or popular religious expressions.[67] Also, scholars have sometimes used these terms interchangeably, which can add to the difficulty. Given the complexity surrounding these, I want to offer a basic, working understanding of each term.

Religion concerns a system of beliefs pertaining to divine or supernatural beings, perhaps to a personal God or gods, or the transcendent, which enables people to make sense of the world and gives meaning to their lives. It can include worship, rituals, and prayer, the importance of sacred objects, places, and times, the encouragement of sentiments such as awe and mystery, and organizing these aspects in formal ways. A religion is often shared with others, where bonds of belonging are important.

Religiosity is broadly concerned with religious orientation and involvement, the extent to which religious and spiritual ideas are internalised by individuals and groups, and how these are practiced in daily life.

While there may be an inevitable degree of crossover in the subject matter with which each is concerned, it is these understandings of religion and religiosity that are used in this research.

When it comes to Lived Religion, I want to tread more circumspectly, given its nature. The notion of providing a *description* of Lived Religion, rather than a *definition*, was suggested by Eley McAinsh of the Living Spirituality Network,[68] who wrote that while a definition is structured and strives to state the precise nature or meaning of something, a description is

[66] See the definitions in the online Free Dictionary and Collins English Dictionary (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1979).

[67] See Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, Religion and Society in Tension (San Francisco: Rand McNally, 1965).

[68] From an email correspondence, June 2011.

more free-flowing, involving more of a detailed representation in words of the salient aspects, characteristics, or features that could be included in a subject-area, but without restricting the meaning to a particular set of propositions. A similar point is made by Alistair Anderson and Marzera Strarnowska. What they say about entrepreneurship as 'too broad to be constricted in a single universal classification' and meaning 'different things to different people' yet drawing upon 'rich sources' in how people describe it and presenting it as 'a process of creating, not a thing in itself' could find a parallel in the similarly broad subject of Lived Religion.[69] Descriptions can therefore be more open and subjective in approach than definitions, allowing for a variety of potential topics to be included within the representation, which is more in accord with my purpose to discover what Lived Religion means for a particular group of people. Therefore, in this chapter I shall both outline how Lived Religion has been explored by other researchers and develop a working description of my own for this research.

3.3 Lived Religion and Other Academic Fields of Study

The subject of Lived Religion has been described as 'an innovative, emerging literature that seeks to map the contours of 'belief' [by exploring] the … religious experiences of [people] and their popular … practices [and] to engage with subjective understandings of religious identity and agency distinct from institutional (and secular liberal) settings through the study of life narratives.'[70] Yet clearly it is necessary to situate this subject within a particular academic field – or is it? Certainly, Lived Religion shares common features with other academic disciplines. While by no means an exhaustive list, it shares, for example, with *ethnography* a concern with the lived dimension of human experience and practice, and can use similar methods of acquiring data, such as participant observation, the researcher's own

[69] See Alistair A. Anderson and Marzera Starnowska, 'Research Practices in Entrepreneurship: Problems of Definition, Description, and Meaning.' International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Volume 9, Issue 4, 2008, pp.221-230. The authors also write that 'in describing something, we talk about its qualities … [and can use] metaphor … [in ways that] draw out critical qualities of the phenomenon being considered' and allow for the possibility of exploring people's '"lived experience" of the phenomenon' in terms of 'what people experience and how it is that they experience it' and therefore to 'describe the meanings that underpin [it]' (p.226). All this could be said of Lived Religion. See also Jan G. Platvoet, 'To Define or Not to Define: The Problem of the Definition of Religion,' in Jan G. Platvoet and Arie L. Malendyk (eds.), The Pragmatics of Defining Religion: Contexts, Concepts, and Contests (Leider: Brill, 1999), pp. 245-266, and Christopher Peet, 'Defining Religion: Strategies and Reflections on an Elusive Figure.' Journal of Psychology and Christianity, Volume 24, Issue 2, 2005, pp.105-112.

[70] Alana Harris, Faith in the Family: A Lived Religious History of English Catholicism, 1945-82 (Manchester, University Press, 2013), p.14 [hereafter, Harris].

reflection on what they are observing, and the use of questionnaires and different kinds of interview to gain further information. With the *sociology of religion* and *religious studies*, it shares a concern with experience, beliefs, rituals, and institutions and how these can be described, compared, and interpreted, often from a systematic, historically based and cross-cultural perspective. With *anthropology*, it shares a study of religion in relation to other social institutions and the comparison of different types of religious belief and experience, both across and within cultures. With *psychology*, it shares a concern with describing the content, attitudes, experiences and expressions of religious people and endeavours to explore the wider impact of religious attitudes and behaviour within people's usual contexts. With *philosophy*, it seeks to find out how people understand religious concepts and approaches to the sacred; and with the *phenomenology of religion*, it shares a concern with the experiential aspects of religion and the differing meanings and patterns that emerge as people describe and engage with these experiences.

These very brief comments indicate the points of contact between Lived Religion and other fields of academic study; but more than anything, these indicate that Lived Religion is primarily a multidisciplinary approach, meaning that religion can be explored from a variety of perspectives and views the boundaries between differing aspects of religious life as permeable, not immutable. It might also be said that Lived Religion complements the theoretical approaches of other disciplines by concentrating on Lived Religious contexts and practices, grounding religion in the embodied experiences of people as they engage with the sacred and each other on a daily basis. As such, it seemed to me an appropriate means of exploring the beliefs and practices of a group of Episcopalian Christians living in an area of rural Scotland. Given that Lived Religion is such a diverse subject that can be explored in a variety of ways, I believe it would allow me to engage with the participants in this study in some depth, by both observing their religious behaviour and practices as they live their everyday lives and by asking them to describe and interpret what they regard as important about their experiences and practices.

3.4 Some Background to Lived Religion as a Field of Study

As mentioned in 1.1, some writers trace the origins of Lived Religion back to the 1940s, when a growing group within French Catholicism became increasingly concerned at the

apparent declining influence of the Roman Catholic Church in French society. In seeking to remedy this, it was believed to be essential to gather accurate information, and so a group of French sociologists under the direction of Gabriel Le Bras sought to discover through a quantitative study of Catholic behaviour what were the characteristic elements of the religion and practices of ordinary people, in contrast to what may have been passed down from an ecclesiastical hierarchy. This became known as *la religion vercue,* or Lived Religion,[71] and it was from this point that scholars increasingly attempted to understand, rather than ignore, the relationship between religion as presented by institutions and organisations like the Church and varied, more autonomous local practices.

However, it was from the 1980s onwards that the subject of Lived Religion really became of interest to scholars in such fields as the sociology of religion, theology, and cultural and ethnographic approaches to religion and history. A key event took place in September 1994, when a group of American scholars comprised chiefly of historians of religion and some ethnographers gathered at Harvard Divinity School for a conference about Lived Religion, which resulted in a volume of essays edited by David D. Hall and entitled Lived Religion in America: Towards a History of Practice.[72] Part of the impetus for this conference was due to a growing awareness among historians of religion that, as Hall writes, 'while we know a great deal about the history of theology and (say) church and state, we know next-to-nothing about religion as practiced and precious little about the everyday thinking and doing of lay men and women.'[73] Therefore, the chief concern of these scholars was with the *practice*[74] of religion, rather than with the theoretical and doctrinal statements of theology and belief that researchers had often concentrated on. Hall and the other contributors to this volume also invited readers to think about religion dynamically, and to reconsider religious history

[71] The development of French research into non-institutional forms of religion has been charted by Daniele Hervieu-Leger. See her chapter '"What Scripture Tells Me": Spontaneity and Regulation Within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal,' in David D. Hall (ed.), Lived Religion in America: Towards a History of Practice (Princeton: University Press, 1997), pp.22-27 [hereafter, Hall, Lived Religion].

[72] Hall, Lived Religion.

[73] Hall, Lived Religion, p.vii.

[74] While acknowledging the importance of the term 'practice' for Lived Religion, Hall also states that defining this term is complex: 'As most of us use the term, it encompasses the tensions, the ongoing struggle of definition, which are constituted within every religious tradition and that are always present in how people choose to act. Practice thus suggests that any synthesis is provisional.' See Hall, Lived Religion, p.xi.

as more than past events in time but in terms of the practices that are linked to specific social contexts.

In addition, these scholars were concerned to rethink traditional binary approaches to religion, such as the model originally introduced into anthropological studies of world religions by Robert Redfield in 1956, who suggested that all world religions can be divided into "great tradition" and "little tradition." Redfield argued that the great tradition, associated with educated elites, was reflective, orthodox, textual, and consciously cultivated and passed down, while the little tradition, of those in village communities, was heterodox, peripheral, local, popular, and unreflective.[75] In using such an approach, other scholars in different disciplines applied it to make a high-low distinction between 'official' religion, which was regarded as authoritative and 'real,' and 'popular' religion, which was viewed as consisting of unofficial and even degraded forms of religion. As such, Hall and his contributors regarded this as problematic, as it is based on an implicit recognition of a hierarchy, whereas they sought to present such popular, non-institutional forms of religious practice as equally as valid as those given approval by sanctioned authorities. Hall pays tribute to the contributions made by historians of popular religion since the Reformation. He writes that the idea of popular religion came to signify 'the space that emerged between official or learned Christianity and profane (or "pagan") culture:

> In this space lay men and women enjoyed a certain measure of autonomy; here they became actors in their own right, fashioning (or refashioning) religious practices in accordance with local circumstances. Another aspect of this space is that religion encompassed a range of possibilities, some with the sanction of official religion and others not, or perhaps ambiguously so. The concept of popular religion has thus made it possible for historians to expand the scope of belief and practice beyond what was authorised by the institutional church … To this older … mode of inquiry we owe a questioning of boundaries, a sympathy for the extra-ecclesial, and a recognition of the laity as actors in their own right.[76]

Hall adds that such an approach to religious history has entered the subject of Lived Religion, but that then Lived Religion departs from this by breaking with the high-low distinction that seems to be an inevitable part of the popular religious approach. Rather than building around

[75] See Robert Redfield, The Little Community and Peasant Society and Culture, originally published separately in 1956 (Chicago: University Press, 1989).

[76] Hall, Lived Religion, pp.viii-ix.

a structure of opposition, Hall and his contributors seek to offer a close analysis of what practice and behaviour "mean" to those involved in them, including the contradictions and inconsistencies that occur as people speak about and demonstrate their religious practices, and to acknowledge the validity of these rather than judging or dismissing them.

Therefore, using the subject of Lived Religion as a vehicle for exploring the diverse ways that people carry out their religious beliefs on a daily basis, these early scholars of Lived Religion discuss a breadth of topics, such as charismatic renewal among French Roman Catholics, baptism in early New England, cremation, hymn-singing among the Native American Ojibwa tribe, and women's spirituality. Since these early days, researchers in various fields have continued to use Lived Religion to uncover and discover religious elements and practices in a diversity of subject areas, and the discovery of a largely untapped area of religious investigation has proved an exceptionally fruitful and continuing one. The diversity of expressions gives a clear indication of the richness of Lived Religion.

In the following sections, I shall begin to investigate Lived Religion from the perspectives of three key scholars in this field, Robert Orsi, Nancy Ammerman, and Meredith McGuire, who have provided important insights into how the subject of Lived Religion might be explored

3.5 Exploring Research on Lived Religion

3.5.1 Robert Orsi

Based at Northwestern University, Robert Orsi researches, writes, and teaches about religion in the United States, in the past and within a contemporary context, with a particular focus on American Catholicism. In his 1985 book, The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950.[77] Orsi describes Lived Religion as including 'the work of social agents/actors themselves as narrators (and interpreters) of their own experiences and histories, recognising that the stories we tell about others exist alongside the

[77] Robert A. Orsi, The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985; 2nd edition, 2002) [hereafter, Orsi, Madonna]. The book is a study of the annual *festa* of the Madonna of Mount Carmel in East Harlem, New York, as Italian immigrants and subsequent generations have celebrated it.

messy and varied story they tell of themselves.'[78] He therefore understands Lived Religion as centred on the actions and interpretations of religious persons. In his book Orsi gives a detailed analysis of 'the multiple, overlapping, even contradictory meanings embodied in a symbolic figure,'[79] but he also paved the way towards an approach to religion that considered more intentionally the idea of religion as a *lived* experience. Rather than a narrow archival study of religious writings, Orsi focuses on non-traditional forms of research whereby almost anything can hold meaning and serve as a source or text for study. He writes:

> The study of Lived Religion situates all religious creativity within culture and approaches all religion as lived experience, theology no less than lighting a candle for a troubled loved one; spirituality as well as other, less culturally sanctioned forms of religious expression (such as licking the stones of a church floor). Rethinking religion as a form of cultural work, the study of Lived Religion directs attention to institutions *and* persons, texts *and* rituals, practice *and* theology, things *and* ideas … Religious practices and understandings have meaning only in relation to other cultural forms and in relation to the life experiences and actual circumstances of the people using them; what people mean and intend by particular religious idioms can be understood only situationally, on a broad social and biographical field, not within the terms of a religious tradition or religious language understood as existing apart from history.[80]

In essence, this is to look again at what "religion" actually means, and from this basis, Orsi argues that the key questions of Lived Religion concern what people *do* with religious idioms, rather than what official religious doctrine or norms of behaviour encourage adherents to do: 'how they use them, what they make of themselves and their worlds with them, and how, in turn, men, women, and children are fundamentally shaped by the worlds they are making as they make these worlds.'[81] For Orsi and likeminded researchers, this is to insist on moving beyond dichotomies like 'orthodox' and 'unorthodox' beliefs as primary concerns, and to see that something called "religion" cannot be neatly separated from other aspects of people's lives and the actions they perform. It is to place religion amidst the ordinary concerns and venues of daily living, and therefore one of the tasks of Lived Religion

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[78] Orsi, Madonna, p.xxxix.

[79] In Hall, Lived Religion, pp.ix-x.

[80] Orsi, Madonna, pp.xix-xx.

[81] See Robert A. Orsi, 'Is the Study of Lived Religion Irrelevant to the World We Live In?' Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Volume 42, Issue 2, June 2003, p.172 [hereafter, Orsi, Journal].

is to query the complexities of Lived Religious practices and experiences. This also points to the crucial role of relationships within Lived Religion, as together people make religious worlds in relationship with each other and in relation to sacred beings who are held to have a real "presence" in the lives of the living. But Orsi is also keen to make clear that any religious act or practice can have no single, definitive meaning but can be interpreted in a variety of ways depending on the experiences and relationships of the people involved, who then shape, and possibly reshape, the meaning of this action or practice. This also means, as Orsi writes, that 'the interpretive challenge of the study of Lived Religion is to develop the practice of disciplined attention to people's signs and practices as they describe, understand, and use them, in the circumstances of their experiences, and to the structures and conditions within which these signs and practices emerge.'[82]

Orsi is also at pains to make evident the strong conviction that men and women do not simply inherit religious idioms, but rather accumulate them as their circumstances require them. As he writes, 'All religious ideas and impulses are of the moment, invented, taken, borrowed, and improvised at the intersections of life.'[83] In pursuing a more dynamic integration of religion and experience, Orsi also outlines several characteristic concerns in Lived Religion based around three areas: meaning, ritualization, and narrative. In more detail, he writes that what he terms 'the densely configured context' of religious practice needs to be understood in a way that includes four elements, which I summarize thus:

1. A sense of what is regarded as natural within a culture, including the possibilities and limitations of what it is appropriate to desire, imagine, and feel.
2. The role played by materiality and embodiment within a culture, and how important these aspects are in terms of the religion of the people within that context.
3. A comprehension of the varying social ties and networks that are significant within the culture, such as family and marriage patterns, legal and moral responsibilities, and community values.

[82] Orsi, Journal, p.172.

[83] See Orsi's chapter in Hall, Lived Religion, p.8.

4. An understanding of how tensions and times of crisis are managed within the culture.[84]

These differing elements have been explored by scholars of Lived Religion in a variety of ways, and this will be further discussed at 3.5.4.

Writing about the role of power in Lived Religion, Orsi states that power is fundamental to practice generally and especially of religious practice. This can be seen both in terms of the power some wield over others, as in an 'orthodox/unorthodox' dichotomy, but also in the power that flows almost by osmosis into a culture, sustaining some cultural forms while disparaging others. Orsi sees these as the 'taken-for-granted … inherently good … commonsensical' aspects of a culture that help us to know within ourselves that certain conduct and ways of being are 'the only appropriate ones for the world as we are taught the world is.'[85] As this applies to religious practice, such social power makes it clear what is acceptable and what is not, and somehow religious people imbibe this knowledge. Therefore, Orsi argues, just as religion can also shape, align, and limit people's imagination, so also it is 'pointless and irresponsible … to study religion without reference to … both kinds of power.'[86] However, as Orsi also points out, associated with the role of power is the fact that although Lived Religion centres on religious practice, this is not to say that this is entirely in opposition to ideas and theories. Rather, it is that both practices and ideas, along with gestures, signs, imaginings, and other forms of media, can all be involved in engaging with the world, and together participate in 'the necessary and mutually transforming exchanges [that take place] … between religious authorities and the broader communities of practitioners.'[87] So again, this is not viewed as a case of 'either/or,' a dichotomy, but as 'both/and,' associated.

Orsi's contribution to the subject of Lived Religion is considerable. He presents it as a lived experience centred on the actions and interpretations of ordinary religious people, and says

[84] See Orsi's chapter in Hall, Lived Religion, p.7.

[85] Orsi, Journal, p.172.

[86] Orsi, Journal, p.172.

[87] See Orsi's chapter in Hall, Lived Religion, p.9.

that this involves revisiting the meaning of religion in general, especially in terms of what religious practices mean to those who engage in them, rather than the meanings allotted to them by authority. He also places religion at the centre of people's daily lives, especially their relationships with others and with what they regard as sacred and how religious people approach crisis times in their lives. Yet Orsi also argues that no religious practice has a single meaning, as its meaning is dependent on those involved in it and how they interpret all that is happening. Finally, he highlights the role of power in relation to Lived Religion and how people interpret and engage with this.

For Orsi, the study of Lived Religion allows us to understand how creative people are and how much importance their personal experiences convey, and how religious creativity can be endlessly adaptive. He writes:

> Religion is always religion-in-action, religion-in-relationships between people, between the ways the world is and the ways people imagine or want it to be … The challenge of a Lived Religion approach is to balance carefully and self-reflectively on the border between familiarity and difference, strangeness and familiarity … [Above all,] Lived Religion … [allows us] to encounter and engage religious practice and imagination within the circumstances of other people's lives and within the contexts of our own, at all the places where these lives meet: in the archives, in the fields, in political crisis, and in contemporary distress.[88]

3.5.2 Nancy Ammerman

Another researcher who has provided valuable insights into the nature of Lived Religion is the sociologist Nancy Ammerman. Like Orsi, she has explored the evolution and meaning of religion, and of how it may be necessary to approach religion in a different way from researchers in the past. Previously, researchers in theology, sociology, and other related subjects were inclined to study and define religion mainly in terms of beliefs, membership attendance, and participation in services and other authorised religious activities, based principally on survey material. While these are certainly part of Lived, everyday Religion, Ammerman writes that such methodologies largely privileged traditional adherence and affiliation as measures of religious strength. She continues:

> Given that religion seems to be a part of the social world we encounter today, we ask, what are its characteristics and dynamics? *How* does religion operate in the modern world? When and where do we find experiences that participants define as

[88] Orsi, Journal, pp.172, 174.

> religious or spiritual? Where do we see symbols and assumptions that have spiritual dimensions, even if they are not overtly defined as such? Where are traditional religions present beyond their own institutional walls, and where are new religiosities gaining a foothold? [89]

In addressing such questions, Ammerman discusses what she terms 'Everyday Religion,' which she describes as an attempt to view religion from the viewpoint and experiences of 'nonexperts … [those] who do not make a living being religious or thinking and writing about religious ideas'[90] and as activity that takes place outside of organised religious events and institutions. This is not to dismiss the kind of religion emanating from "official" or institutional sources, or that the religion that happens in such places 'every day' is discounted.[91] Rather, it is that scholars like Ammerman become more interested in the ideas and practices of everyday religion when these are made sense of and become used by people other than religious professionals, in both the private and the public sphere, through mundane and extraordinary events, and whoever these people may be. As Ammerman writes, the concern of everyday religion is with investigating the social worlds in which religious ideas, practices, and experiences reveal themselves, in 'the many ways religion may be interwoven with … [people's] lives [and] … what makes some social events and individual actions religious in the minds of the actors and how those definitions are shaped by the various cultural and institutional contexts in which they take place.'[92]

Essentially, Ammerman asserts the need to turn away from earlier biases of what constitutes "real" religion, for while these earlier methods of study may have been useful indicators of some aspects of religion, they do not exhaust the range of possibilities of what this may involve for people. She asserts that it is time to expand the definition and boundaries of

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[89] Nancy T. Ammerman, Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.5 [hereafter, Ammerman, Everyday Religion].

[90] Ammerman, Everyday Religion, p.5.

[91] Indeed, Ammerman has also written that alongside the religious expressions taking place on the margins between orthodox prescription and innovative experience, 'What happens inside religious organisations counts too. Those who wish to 'de-centre' congregations and other traditional religious communities will miss a great deal of where religion is lived if those spaces are excluded from our research.' See p.190 in Nancy T. Ammerman, 'Finding Religion in Everyday Life.' Sociology of Religion, Volume 75, Issue 2, Summer 2014, pp.189-207 [hereafter, Ammerman, Sociology of Religion].

[92] Ammerman, Everyday Religion, p.5.

what religion involves, and that this will mean looking for 'the ad hoc religious beliefs, practices, and communities that also constitute the presence of religion in society.'[93] Ammerman also argues that an insight that could assist in such an expansion is the recognition of the porous nature of all institutional boundaries, including religious ones, as influences from different parts of people's lives flow back and forth across institutional boundaries. She writes that if this is so, then it is puzzling that so often we treat religion as a special case, 'incapable of escaping the one institution to which it has been confined.'[94] However, given that the boundaries are permeable and that we live in a time of significant change, we can no longer assume that religion will be found only in the predictable places and only in the predictable forms; but Ammerman also adds that 'if we do not find as much of it in these predictable places as we did before, we cannot assume that it is disappearing.'[95]

Ammerman also investigates an area of study related to Lived Religion over which there has been substantial disagreement, the relationship between religion and spirituality. In the last twenty years, there has been a fairly widespread tendency in the West to treat religion and spirituality as distinct concepts, which has been explored by a number of researchers.[96] This has been combined with an increased tendency for people to describe themselves as 'Spiritual But Not Religious,' or SBNR.[97] Ammerman notes that within Europe and the

[93] See Nancy T. Ammerman, Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes: Finding Religion in Everyday Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p.5 [hereafter, Ammerman, Sacred Stories].

[94] Ammerman, Sacred Stories, p.6.

[95] Ammerman, Sacred Stories, p.6.

[96] For instance, Valerie Lesniak identifies the attempts among many spiritual seekers to separate religion and spirituality, with religion seen as something authoritarian, patriarchal, exclusive, rule-bound and irrelevant in its concerns, whereas spirituality is perceived as more free-flowing, inclusive and liberating and where people have the potential to engage in varying subjects in ways that are holistic and life-enhancing; see Valerie Lesniak, 'Contemporary Spirituality,' in Philip Sheldrake (ed), The New SCM Dictionary of Christian Spirituality (London: SCM Press, 2005), p.8. See also Mike Starkey, God, Sex and Generation X (London: SPCK/Triangle, 1997), p.117; Davie et al, Predicting, pp.161-163; and David Tacey, The Spirituality Revolution (London: Routledge, 20014), pp.31, 38-39, 86-89. See also Diana Butler Bass, Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening (New York: Harper Collins, 2012); Tina Sacchi, My Spirit is Not Religious: A Guide to Living Your Authentic Life (New York: Morgan James, 2013); Linda A. Mercadente, Belief Without Boundaries: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual But Not Religious (Oxford: University Press, 2014); and Sam Harris, Waking Up: Searching for Spirituality Without Religion (London: Black Swan, 2015).

[97] Wikipedia has described SBNR as 'a popular … initialism used to self-identify a life stance of spirituality that takes issue with organised religion as the sole or most valuable means of furthering spiritual growth. Historically, the words religious and spiritual have been used synonymously to describe all the various aspects

United States, in both scholarly and popular perceptions, there seems to be a commonly held impression of declining "religion" and growing "spirituality."[98] Ammerman states: 'What is declining in this picture is "religion," usually assumed to be organized, traditional and communal, while "spirituality" is often described as improvised and individual.'[99] She concludes that, at best, the evidence for such division is ambiguous, and found that sociologists who have explored this perception have discovered that there is actually a considerable overlap between spirituality and religion, certainly in an American context. She cites, for instance, Chaves's 2011 study of the General Social Survey, where eighty percent of American adults claimed to be both religious *and* spiritual.[100] Other researchers found that those who consider themselves most strongly spiritual were also among the most religiously active.[101] Ammerman also asserts that such a religion/spirituality dichotomy does not do justice to the complexity of spirituality. In response, she proposes four cultural 'packages' or ways in which people construct the meaning of spirituality in conversations. Although there are frequent crossovers between these packages, the four packages are:

a) **Theistic,** which ties spirituality to personal deities. Here, spirituality is about God, especially one's relationship with God, and with any mysterious encounters or happenings that result from it. Ammerman and others found that 71 percent of their sample of participants referred to spirituality in God-oriented terms learned from their faith tradition.

b) **Extra-Theistic**, where spirituality is located in various naturalistic forms of transcendence – something that is "bigger than me" and beyond the ordinary.

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of the concept of religion, but in contemporary usage spirituality has often become associated with the internal life of the individual, placing an emphasis upon the well-being of the 'mind-body-spirit,' while religion refers to organisational or communal dimensions.' See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_but_not_religious.

[98] See, for instance, Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

[99] See Nancy T. Ammerman, 'Spiritual but Not Religious? Beyond Binary Choices in the Study of Religion.' Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Volume 52, Issue 2, June 2013, pp.258-278 [hereafter, Ammerman, Scientific Study].

[100] See Mark Chaves, 'Religious Trends in America.' Social Work and Christianity, Volume 38, Issue 2, Summer 2011, pp.119-132.

[101] See Penny Long Marler and C. Kirk Hadaway, '" Being Religious" or "Being Spiritual" in America: A Zero-Sum Proposition?' Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Volume 41, Issue 2, 2002, pp.289-300.

However, Ammerman also found that most participants who were active in a religious group also expressed spiritual experiences in extra-theistic terms.

c) **Ethical**, where the focus is on everyday compassion, and where spirituality is about living a virtuous life by helping others and transcending one's own self-interest to seek what is right. Ammerman found this an approach to spirituality that virtually all participants, from the most conservative Christians to the secular neo-pagans, agreed was the essence of authentic spirituality.

d) **Belief and Belonging**, a contested category tied to cultural notions of religiosity. This spirituality package was viewed differently by those who were religiously active and those who were not. Ammerman writes that 'Believing, for instance, could either be a way of talking about devout spirituality or a way of describing superstition, [while] belonging can represent a positive identity or a symbol of being trapped in an authoritarian tradition.'[102]

Ammerman argues that the tension between these perceptions sheds more light on why people describe themselves as SBNR:

> Those who are actively engaged with a religious tradition were very likely to link their belonging positively with the sense of what spirituality is. Being part of the Jewish faith, belonging to a local church, claiming a Catholic identity were interwoven with positive stories about spirituality, [whereas] those who have rejected traditional religious participation … link belonging with an absence of spiritual authenticity.[103]

Ammerman also found that among those who held a negative view of institutional religion, the claim to be SBNR was a way for people to draw moral and political boundaries, rather than make a statement of belief or practice. She discovered that some people wanted to describe themselves as "spiritual" to avoid being perceived as selfish and unaware that there is 'Something' beyond themselves. Yet they did not want to be labelled "religious" as they saw that identity as having been co-opted by an image of someone trapped by rules, rituals, and superstitions. However, Ammerman also argues that her research reveals that both the religiously affiliated and unaffiliated are misinformed about each other:

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[102] For a fuller discussion of these concepts, see Ammerman, Scientific Study, p.25.

[103] Ammerman, Scientific Study, p.25.

> The "religion" being rejected turn out to be quite unlike the religion being practiced and described by those affiliated with religious institutions. Likewise, the "spirituality" being endorsed as an alternative is at least as widely practiced by those same religious people as it is by the people drawing a moral boundary against them.[104]

However, from what Ammerman has written here it does appear that there is an approach to spirituality within the Ethical package on which many of the participants in her study find agreement, which Ammerman has described as 'Golden Rule Christianity.' Found in differing forms in many of the world religions, in Christian terms the basic 'Golden Rule' is the principle of treating others as one's self would like to be treated, often citing Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31 as corroboration.[105] Ammerman describes this as 'America's mainstream form of religiosity,'[106] and because this phenomenon is so pervasive it is clearly important to come to a better understanding of it.

She describes Golden Rule Christianity as an attitude to the Christian life characterised by caring for those who are ill or in some other kind of need, practicing Christian values within the workplace, home, and school, and being involved with a church community that provides aid and support for people in need. Ammerman says that Golden Rule Christianity is also explicitly nonideological, 'that is, it is not driven by beliefs, orthodox or otherwise … [but] is based in practice and experience.'[107] The central focus is on practice and the everyday virtue of seeking to do good. There is an emphasis on caring and relationships, particularly caring for one's family and especially children, providing friendly help within the community which is sometimes expressed as practicing 'random acts of kindness,'[108] and seeking ways of making the world a better place. Golden Rule Christians are relatively disinterested in doctrinal orthodoxy, seeing their Christianity as more of a moral outlook on

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[104] Ammerman, Scientific Study, p.31.

[105] Matthew 7:12: 'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets,' and Luke 6:31: 'Do to others as you would have them do to you.' From the Holy Bible New Revised Standard Version.

[106] Ammerman, Scientific Study, p.24.

[107] Hall, Lived Religion, p.211.

[108] Ammerman, Scientific Study, p.24.

life. Yet Ammerman argues that they are not totally irreligious, and that Golden Rule Christians still seem to wish to retain some connection with classical Christianity. They continue to identify with religious institutions, and to retain some sense of transcendence, finding themselves fairly frequently in the presence of what they might refer to as "something bigger" or similar, and that most of them are quite willing to call 'God.' Ammerman writes that Golden Rule Christians want their faith to be 'grounded in the Bible, but certainly not in a literal reading of it.' She continues:

> Just because they do not accept traditional definitions of inspiration or inerrancy does not mean that they have no use for Scripture. Like the rest of their religious life, their use of Scripture is defined more by choice and practice than by doctrine … [and while] their knowledge of Scripture may not be very deep … they have at least some sense that the Bible is a book worth taking seriously, especially as a tool for making one's own life and the life of the world better.[109]

Therefore, despite its lack of what some may see as a coherent theology, Ammerman writes that for Golden Rule Christians, 'no matter what you say you believe or how often you attend religious services, what matters is how you live your life … the proof is in the pudding.'[110] As such, Ammerman states that sociologists cannot afford to dismiss such a form of Lived Religion simply because it appears to lack an orthodox theological undergirding.

Ammerman concludes that by recognising the extent and character of the Golden Rule mode of religiosity it may also be possible to recognise that religion has a more pervasive effect in modern society than might have been thought. She says that in a society that can be so resolutely materialist, the existence of such an Ethical spirituality that seeks the well-being of others both inside and outside traditional religious communities is 'non-ordinary.'[111] But she also sees such a phenomenon as part of a wider trend that recognises that the relationship between religion and spirituality is more nuanced then some have thought. She says that there are more common than uncommon spiritual practices and beliefs between those who say they are religious and those who do not. Ammerman writes:

> The world most of our participants inhabit is, in fact, both spiritual and religious at the same time … For a large majority, spirituality is defined by and interchangeable

[109] Hall, Lived Religion, pp.201-202.

[110] Ammerman, Sacred Stories, p.2.

[111] Ammerman, Scientific Study, p.24.

> with the experiences their religious communities have offered them and taught them how to interpret. For most of those who were actively involved in a congregation there was no necessary conflict between "religion" and "spirituality."[112]

Finally, Ammerman states if there is such an overlap between religion and spirituality, then what is also required is to widen, or even redraw, our understanding of what religion means so that it takes into account the sorts of insights given by phenomena such as Golden Rule Christianity. It is here that Lived Religion can make a valuable contribution in helping to do this by demonstrating that an everyday religion *includes* a spiritual domain alongside more institutional approaches to religion. As she writes, a redrawn and extended concept of religion includes the idea that

> … something becomes religious because it is understood to be so by those who observe and participate in it … Religious activity is recognised as such because it has something to do with things that are sacred, transcendent, and beyond the ordinary … Whenever people talk about and orient their lives in ways that go beyond everyday modern rationality, when they enchant their lives by drawing on spiritual language and concepts and experiences, they are engaging in religious activity.[113]

For Ammerman, a Lived Religion means looking for religious aspects as they occur in everyday life as people themselves explain them. This may be on the margins between orthodox prescription and inventive experience, and combine elements from multiple religious sources, but equally it may not; Ammerman also notes that worship practices of all kinds 'may happen in unpredictable places.'[114] But it will certainly encompass a broad array of religious groupings and traditions, a patchwork of diverse expressions and practices. As Ammerman writes:

> Finding religion in everyday life means looking wherever and however we find people invoking a sacred presence … [It] weaves in and out of the language and symbols and interactions of public spaces and bureaucratized institutions … It may be easily measured because its forms are widely recognised, or it may present itself to the observer as a question or puzzle whose meaning must be negotiated … No single powerful institution or culture defines the available range of religious beliefs and practices in the modern world.[115]

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[112] Ammerman, Scientific Study, p.26.

[113] Ammerman, Everyday Religion, pp.224-225.

[114] Ammerman, Everyday Religion, p.9.

[115] Ammerman, Sociology of Religion, pp.190, 196; also, Ammerman, Everyday Religion, pp.9, 14.

Therefore, a fuller understanding of religion requires that researchers pay attention to the multiple ways in which people experience a connection with transcendence. For Ammerman, the study of Lived Religion is a much more complex, and more interesting, matter than some imagine. Yet her insights provide further encouragement to explore various areas of inquiry and illustrate how rewarding this can be.

3.5.3 Meredith McGuire

The sociologist Meredith McGuire has also extensively explored Lived Religion over many years, with her book Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life [116] having become a key work on the subject. Like Ammerman, McGuire also wishes to challenge the kinds of boundaries that have been historically constructed between the sacred and the profane and to encourage people to reconsider where the sacred is located, as well as the nature of divine power, the focus of individual religious expression, and the ways we think about the authority of religious tradition and identity. McGuire contends that the commonly held distinctions between what is considered "properly" religious and what is not are social constructions that resulted from human struggles connected with cultural resources and power. She traces this to what she calls the 'Long Reformation.'[117] Prior to this, McGuire writes that the character of medieval religion was far from the cohesive picture that some may have imagined, for although notionally most people were part of a single church, that membership was in fact a minor part of what she calls 'their religion-as-lived.'[118] As Albertz also discovered, ordinary people's actual religion was much more localised, often family-oriented, highly diverse in expression, and much more rooted in their day to day lives than in purely "official" devotional activities. McGuire connects this with what she terms 'embodied practices,'[119] by which she means the ritual and expressive ways in which human

[116] Meredith B. McGuire, Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) [hereafter, McGuire, Lived Religion].

[117] The precise length of this period is debated, some scholars dating it from as early as 1300 and as late as 1800. See, for instance, Nicholas Tyacke, England's Long Reformation (Abingdon: Routledge, 1998) and Jeffrey R. Watt, The Long Reformation (New Delhi: Cengage Learning, 2004).

[118] McGuire, Lived Religion, p.25.

[119] McGuire discusses the notion of embodied practices as they relate to Lived Religion in Chapter 6 of Lived Religion, pp.119-158, and in her chapter on 'Embodied Practices: Negotiation and Resistance,' in Ammerman, Everyday Religion, pp.187-200.

beings can use their bodies and senses to communicate spiritual meanings and understandings. She continues:

> Such embodied practices were important because they were the means by which people had linked the spiritual realm with their pragmatic, quotidian needs – such as healing, fertility, protection from adverse fortune, and obtaining desired material goods. After the definitional boundaries around religion were recast, the dominant religious groups in Europe and the Americas came to privilege belief over practice. This definitional bias is now so taken for granted that people commonly refer to religions as "creeds" or "faiths."[120]

Yet McGuire is firm in asserting the continuing importance of such embodied practices, paying particular attention to the role of bodies in Lived Religion. Throughout her study she reiterates that bodies *matter*; and she writes: 'I argue … that spirituality fully involves people's material bodies, not just their minds or spirits … and not just bodies in the abstract.'[121] She declares that Lived Religion is embodied, happening in and through human bodies in varying bodily states, such as healthy, pregnant, disabled, or suffering, as well as body postures and movements and body practices such as working, eating, singing, and dancing. In particular, McGuire elaborates on the role of embodied spirituality in relation to personal healing and wholeness.[122] She rejects both the institutional differentiation often made between medicine and religion and the further differentiation among medical specialists as attempts to control a body of knowledge and its application.[123] In contrast, McGuire argues for an holistic understanding of bodies that seeks to integrate understandings of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being rather than to separate them. She points out the significance of differing embodied spiritual practices that can commonly occur within people's everyday lives, such as the laying on of hands, expressive dance, communal singing, yoga and meditation, and other ways that individuals use to express the interconnectedness of mind-body-spirit, with others, with nature, and with the universe as a whole.[124] The use of such practices as part of Lived Religion makes clear, as one of

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[120] Meredith McGuire, 'Embodies Practices: Negotiation and Resistance,' in Ammerman, Everyday Religion, p.189 [hereafter, McGuire, in Ammerman, Everyday Religion].

[121] McGuire, Lived Religion, pp. 133-137.

[122] See Chapter 6 of McGuire, Lived Religion, pp.119-158.

[123] McGuire, Lived Religion, p.97.

[124] For further information on this, see McGuire, Lived Religion, pp.138-142.

McGuire's interviewees put it, that 'wholeness and holiness were just two ways of thinking about the same thing.'[125] McGuire writes of those who take such a holistic approach to health and healing and who find it beneficial:

> Although their individual Lived Religions were very diverse and complex, each involved core beliefs and practices that simultaneously addressed bodily, mental and spiritual well-being. In effect, practicing their religion was the same as practicing healing. So central to their lives were their understandings of how emotions, bodies, social relationships, and spiritual lives are interrelated that holism shaped their key criteria for evaluating and selecting options for health care and religious affiliation. In these women's experiences, holistic approaches to health and healing really worked and were effective on many levels, with implications for all areas of their lives.[126]

In addition, the idea of sacred space was seen as almost ubiquitous and accessible to everyone, shown in varying community spaces where people might feel in touch with the divine, such as a holy well, a standing stone or cairn, a votive shrine at a crossroads, or a home altar, and McGuire writes because these were more accessible to people they were often more important in people's religiosity than the church building and its surroundings. Yet come the 'Long Reformation,' the contested nature of what was important among Catholics and Protestants regarding how "religion" was to be defined led to a 'strong negative evaluation of most people's everyday religious practices – especially those that involved their bodies and their emotions.'[127] McGuire writes that rather than accepting the sacred/profane dichotomy as an inevitable feature of religion, we actually need to challenge it:

> What would we understand about individuals' religious lives – now, as well as four centuries ago – if we considered the possibility that some, perhaps many, religious persons experience the sacred as arising *within* the profane world …? Do people sometimes experience the sacred as part of their work-a-day lives and mundane domestic existence? … [It is worth remembering] that magic and miracle were once completely interwoven with religion … [and that] the definitional boundaries [used in relation to] religion and religiosity [are contested ones].[128]

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[125] McGuire, Lived Religion, p.140.

[126] McGuire, Lived Religion, p.145.

[127] McGuire, in Ammerman, Everyday Religion, p.189.

[128] McGuire, Lived Religion, pp. 32, 38, 43.

McGuire argues that there is merit in returning to the study of what has sometimes been maligned as "popular religion," also variously referred to as "unofficial," "folk," or "vernacular" religion,[129] and also as "the people's religion." Therefore, in order to understand individuals' Lived Religions, it is necessary to take such religion seriously, because people's religious practice is often informed by popular religion as well as church tradition. She adds, however, that researchers and scholars should not be dismissive of these popular expressions, but neither should we expect to find this as part of a coherent package, or as part of traditional religion, but as something much more ambivalent, complex, and confusing.[130] She writes:

> [Today] it is likely that many genuinely devout church members do not distinguish among [the] multiple resources of their religious practices … and may have creatively adapted, combined, invented, and transformed inherited popular traditions … [Therefore] we would understand people's Lived Religion better if we simply allowed that individuals can and do draw on both popular and official religious traditions as possible resources for elements of their personal practice.[131]

McGuire adds that those who do this may actually be creating new forms of religious expression that enable them to live as religious people within 'the context of cosmopolitan cities and globalized communication.'[132] Therefore, to understand more fully people's Lived Religions it is necessary to reclaim from history those aspects of popular religious life that became invisible in the West, but then also to go beyond this and to comprehend all the cultural resources - 'including religious resources put forward by official religious leaders and traditions' – that people might draw upon to 'remember, celebrate, transform, distil,

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[129] For further information on each of these topics, see David Clark, Between Pulpit and Pew: Folk Religion in a North Yorkshire Fishing Village (Cambridge: University Press, 1982); Christopher March, Popular Religion in Sixteenth Century England (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998; David Burnett, World of the Spirits: A Christian Perspective on Traditional and Folk Religion (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2000); Owen Davies, Popular Magic: Cunning Folk in English History (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2003); and Marion Bowman and Ulo Valk (eds), Vernacular Religion in Everyday Life: Expressions of Belief (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).

[130] Indeed, McGuire also writes that: 'I wonder if, perhaps, we are mistaken in our expectation of cognitive consistency between individual's religion, as institutionally framed, and a person's actual religion as lived … I have the impression that only a small and unrepresentative proportion struggle to achieve tight consistency among their wide-ranging beliefs, perceptions, experiences, values, practices, and actions … It may be only intellectuals who care about [such] rational coherence in religious ways.' See McGuire, Lived Religion, pp.15-16.

[131] McGuire, Lived Religion, pp.48, 49.

[132] McGuire, Lived Religion, p.46.

amalgamate, and share [in their Lived Religions]'.[133] Like Ammerman, McGuire does not wish to dismiss the "official" religious resources, but to acknowledge that today people are increasingly adding to them other, equally valid, resources.

With this in mind, McGuire discusses what she regards as one of the salient features of Lived Religion, what she terms religious "eclecticism," "hybridity," "bricolage." or "religious blending."[134] Essentially, this refers to the practice of gathering diverse religious elements from a variety of sources and then blending them together into a meaningful personal synthesis. This is, again, something that McGuire states was found within religion prior to the 'Long Reformation,' seen with regard to 'preventing and healing illness, helping childbearing bodies and dying bodies, and for addressing people's material needs,'[135] and she says that now such eclectic blending appears to have been adopted especially by those who take a holistic attitude to religion, health, and well-being.[136]

As a way of exploring religious blending, McGuire refers to the work of Vincent Miller with the "solidarity community" in Washington, D.C., which also includes the blending of interdenominational and interfaith ideas. Miller describes their religiosity as 'a splendid bricolage of the radical elements of many traditions' where 'unruly syntheses … ground profound practical commitments.'[137] From this, McGuire observes that while religious blending or bricolage may look disparate to the outsider, to the person engaged in such creative synthesis it makes sense and contributes effectively to their world of meaning and experience. She notes that such blending highlights the degree of autonomy that ordinary people feel. While the symbols and metaphors used may already be a familiar part of the 'donor culture,' the actual process of selecting, combining, and then assembling the resulting

[133] McGuire, Lived Religion, p.66.

[134] This is also mentioned by Ammerman as a feature of Lived Religion. See Ammerman, Everyday Religion, pp.7-8.

[135] McGuire, Lived Religion, pp.149-150.

[136] See Chapter 6 of McGuire, Lived Religion, pp. 119-158, especially pp.137-145.

[137] For a fuller description, see Vincent J. Miller, quoted in McGuire, Lived Religion, pp.198-199.

synthesis forms a creative act 'sometimes consciously so but often subconsciously … that people may engage in as they go about their everyday lives.'[138]

McGuire therefore presents Lived Religion as a very creative, diverse way that people enact their religion in the practice of their daily lives. As she demonstrates, this may involve the need to challenge the sacred/profane boundaries so often taken for granted and holds that a closer attention to embodied practices and the role of the body in Lived Religion can assist with this. Linked with this, McGuire believes that the somewhat dismissive approach to "popular" religion also needs to be revisited and the insights this can give taken seriously, and clearly she feels that the phenomenon of religious blending needs to be valued and explored more extensively as a normal aspect of Lived Religion. Above all, she sees the vital role of practice in Lived Religion, as people actively participate in finding concrete expressions for their religion in their daily lives. All of these can contribute to an increased understanding of Lived Religion, and the insights that McGuire gives into so many areas makes a valuable contribution to the overall subject. As McGuire comments:

> To understand modern religious lives, we need to try to grasp the complexity, diversity, and fluidity of real individuals' religion-as-practiced, in the context of their daily lives … As messy as these lives may be in practice, individuals' Lived Religions are what really matters to them.[139]

3.5.4. Other Writings on Lived Religion

Researchers such as Hall, Orsi, Ammerman and McGuire have made substantial contributions to the subject of Lived Religion. In this section, I aim to outline the differing ways this subject has been approached by other scholars working in different fields of research in the hope of expanding on the portrait of Lived Religion already emerging.

The writings of Malory Nye on religion are of interest regarding Lived Religion. Nye agrees

[138] McGuire, Lived Religion, p.196.

[139] McGuire, Lived Religion, p.213.

with scholars such as Talal Asad [140] and David Scott,[141] who hold the idea that religion is not something 'out there' to be studied but is located at specific points in history and whose meaning is created and discussed by those from within these contexts. He states that the whole concept of religion requires considerable rethinking and must include the role of practice. Rather than separating religion into 'belief' or doctrine and 'ritual,' a less rigid approach is to view religion as 'a continuity of practice that comes together in particular material locations … [These] are most often people's bodies (through the actions they perform, and the words they speak), but religious manifestations can also be located in objects (such as texts) and places such as religious (or sacred) sites.'[142] Nye proposes that rather than regarding religion as something with an essence that can be defined and explained, we consider instead an idea that he terms *religioning*:

> Religioning is a form of practice, like other cultural practices, that is done and performed by actors with their own agency (rather than being subsumed by their religion) who have their own particular ways and experiences of making their religion manifest.[143]

Nye adds that a focus on religioning also moves away from considering religion in terms of specific religions, such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, etc., but instead emphasises how religious ideas can be used creatively and dynamically to influence other aspects of daily life. He says that by using religioning as a verb rather than a noun signals a concern with the *doing* of religion rather than with naming religion as something with an essence to be talked about. Nye writes that the various cultural, religious, and political expressions which have in differing eras been labelled as 'Christianity' are all 'syncretized and authenticated forms of practice':

> The conceptualizing of religion as religioning … focuses on how these different forms of religioning are indeed different from each other, but also how through certain political discourses and practices have achieved the valuable status of

[140] See Asad's first chapter, 'The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category,' in Talal Asad, Genealogies of Religion: Disciplines and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp.27-54.

[141] David Scott, 'Conversion and Demonism: Colonial Christian Discourse and Religion in Sri Lanka.' Comparative Studies in Society and History, Volume 34, Issue 2, 1992, pp.331-365.

[142] Malory Nye, 'Religion, Post-Religion, and Religioning: Religious Studies and Contemporary Cultural Debates.' Method and Theory in the Study of Religion, Volume 12, 2000, pp.447-476 [hereafter, Nye, Religioning].

[143] Nye, Religioning, p.467.

> legitimacy as the same 'thing' (i.e. Christianity) … [Therefore] religioning … is intended to focus scholarly attention on the way in which religious identities, manifestations, and power relations are produced through practice and through performance.[144]

The notion of religioning clearly resonates with the subject of Lived Religion, and it is an idea that has been employed by Alison Robertson in her study of BDSM as a religious practice using Lived Religion.[145] Robertson also explores how religion might be defined, and states her intention not to tie the study of religion to 'a conceptual bundle of beliefs, practices texts, doctrines, etc., as endowed by a named institution'[146] and to move away from the idea that people have 'a religion' and towards a more abstract, less concrete concept of 'religion' or 'the religious' as an element which is shaped to and by individual lives and that in this sense religion is 'dynamic and fluid, a constant process of exploration and creation.'[147] In viewing religioning as an active term grounded in practice, Robertson writes that this provides a useful frame for exploring how 'the religious' might be made known through practices which may not have been seen as religious in the past.

With this in mind Robertson seeks to draw a parallel between BDSM and religion by stating that both are 'umbrella' terms which can include different kinds of disparate and varied practices and behaviour under their parameters. Writing of BDSM, she describes the diversity of understanding of its purpose, the activities that can be involved and how far practitioners reflect or not upon these, where activities take place and what equipment may be used, how some people follow patterns of behaviour while others do not, and the emphasis some place on the notion of community within this. Then Robertson writes:

> In short, when the breadth and variety of things which people choose to place under the umbrella is combined there seems little to unite them into a single category beyond the fact that someone, somewhere has placed it into the bracket. At this point it occurs to me that all that I have just said is also true of the umbrella term of 'religion,' which is a complex and multivalent concept, but which is often discussed as an obvious and clearly delineated category with clear and impermeable edges. I

[144] Nye, Religioning, pp.468-469.

[145] BDSM is an abbreviation of Bondage, Domination, Submission, and Masochism.

[146] Alison Robertson, 'Beating the Boundaries: An Exploration of BDSM as Religioning.' Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, The Open University, 2017, p.13 [hereafter, Robertson, Boundaries]

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[147] Robertson, Boundaries, p.13.

> am doubtful whether any such pristine categories exist in relation to human activities, but whether they do or not, neither religion nor BDSM offers us an example of one.[148]

She adds that if it is the case that both are 'fuzzy categories' that can be used in different ways by the people who identify with them, then 'the possibility both of overlap and fusion between the two clearly exists … [and] it also seems likely that the tools useful for studying one may be similarly useful in understanding the other.'[149] Yet rather than seeking a complete and unambiguous definition, Robertson writes that religioning offers itself as a category for all 'human activity which is valued beyond its functionality or end results, that contributes to understandings of the self and others (or Other),'[150] and that demonstrates how the religious influences people's understandings and practices in new and creative ways. She summarises religioning as

> Anything that is greater, or other, than the sum of its parts … and of more significance to the individual than any single idea could explain, can be viewed as contributing to that individual's personal processes of religioning.[151]

As such, this broadens an understanding of the religious and makes possible the inclusion of practices and activities not generally associated with traditional religion as potential contributions to people's understandings of religioning. Within this broadened understanding Robertson cites the potential to regard BDSM as a contemporary religious practice using Lived Religion. She states that it is at the point when a given activity, practice, or experience becomes more than just entertainment, leisure, gratification, etc., that it becomes part of religioning. With McGuire, Robertson also concentrates on the importance of what people actually do religiously and how they understand this, viewing this as religion being '*made* by real people in real situations.' She adds, however, that this 'does not need to be explicitly named 'religion' to do the things that religion does,'[152] but are embedded in the actual, material situations from which people's religioning arises and to which it

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[148] Alison Robertson, 'Sacred Kink? Exploring BDSM as Lived Religion.' A Paper delivered at the Sociology of Religion Study Group (SocRel) Annual Conference, 2015, pp.1-2 [hereafter, Robertson, Sacred Kink].

[149] Robertson, Sacred Kink, p.2.

[150] Robertson, Boundaries, p.15.

[151] Robertson, Boundaries, p.16.

[152] Robertson, Sacred Kink, p.2.

responds. This, Robertson states, is at the heart of Lived Religion, 'an active project through which people address their deepest concerns,'[153] and she suggests that BDSM offers a means of pursuing such a project wherever individual practitioners establish themselves in relation to terms such as 'religious,' 'spiritual,' or 'secular.' Robertson concludes that although Lived Religion can be used for studying the activity of traditional religious groups, it also enables the recognition that apparently secular activities can form an aspect of personal spirituality. Expressed in the broader understanding of religioning, Robertson's research indicates the influence that 'the religious' can have in many spheres of contemporary life, in ways that would not have been considered as such in the past.

Another scholar, Kristin Aune, has explored Lived Religion in relation to feminist spirituality in the United Kingdom. Aune explains that part of the appeal of Lived Religion as an approach is due to its concern to depart from the religion/spirituality dichotomy often found in some contemporary writings, and to be concerned with both religion *and* spirituality, as overlapping and connected, not distinct and distinguishable. She writes that like Lived Religion scholars, 'I use "spirituality," "religion," and "religio-spiritual" interchangeably when discussing feminist approaches [as] I believe distinguishing religion from spirituality is unhelpful analytically, and does not reflect the narrative of the feminists interviewed for this study.'[154] Aune then outlines three possible approaches to religion by feminists. The first is to see religion in opposition to feminism, and to focus far more on secularism and secularisation. This approach was a popular one as women's and gender studies developed from the 1970s onwards. Later in the 1980s, there began what Aune describes as 'the feminist turn to spirituality,' especially alternative and holistic spiritualities. Finally, there is religiously based feminism, studies which 'show feminists using religious resources to negotiate and challenge gender inequalities with their religious tradition,

[153] Robertson, Sacred Kink, p.3.

[154] Kristin Aune, 'Feminist Spirituality as Lived Religion: How UK Feminists Forge Religio-Spiritual Lives.' Gender and Society, Volume 29, Issue 1, 2015, pp.122-145 [hereafter, Aune, Feminist Spirituality].

personal lives, and societies.'[155] Aune also builds on results of an earlier survey she carried out concerning UK feminists' religious and spiritual views.[156]

Yet Aune's main findings among a group of thirty feminists in the UK are that their religio-spiritual approaches have three main characteristics: they are *de-churched*; they are *relational*; and they *emphasise practice.*[157] Aune concludes that for these UK feminists, religion and spirituality are more complex than the dichotomy so often employed allows for. Yet the role of practice is essential for them, and therefore 'the study's key finding is that feminist spirituality *is* Lived Religion.' Aune writes:

> The full feminist experience includes … a blend of elements often categorized as *either* "spirituality" or "religion"; it includes a recourse to religious traditions (Islamic, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist), such as the singing of Christian hymns or recitation of Islamic prayers, alongside detachment from religious institutions … The feminist experience prioritises relationships as the context for religio-spiritual formation, while foregrounding, as alternative spiritualities do, the need to nourish the self … [These] approaches are socially located and tied to social practice, social interaction, and the wider context of their biographies and their lives … That these feminists forge religio-spiritual lives in ways that are de-churched, relational, and oriented towards practice provides further endorsement for the concept of Lived Religion.[158]

Like many scholars of Lived Religion, Aune eschews the religion/spirituality divide in favour of a more holistic approach, but as with McGuire this approach clearly involves the blending of ideas, experiences, and practices. Aune's work demonstrates how a Lived Religious approach can be aligned to a set of life principles and political convictions that in the past might have been seen as incompatible.

Some scholars have also approached Lived Religion within the field of history. For instance, Sarah Williams studied the religiosity of ordinary people from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries living in the London Borough of Southwark. Although favouring the

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[155] Aune, Feminist Spirituality, p.128.

[156] See Kristin Aune, 'Much Less Religion, a Little More Spiritual: The Religious and Spiritual Views of Third-Wave Feminists in the UK.' Feminist Review, Volume 97, 2011, pp.32-55.

[157] For a fuller account of Aune's findings, see Aune, Feminist Spirituality, pp.124-129.

[158] Aune, Feminist Spirituality, pp.149, 150, 151.

term 'popular religion' rather than Lived Religion, in her book Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark, c.1880 – 1939,[159] Williams challenges the often held notion of the institutional church's domination of nineteenth-century religious history by giving the criteria of the participants a central place in defining the parameters of what might be considered 'religion.' She explores the nature and expression of religious ideas outside of the sphere of the church but within the wider arena of popular culture in Southwark. Williams found that although certain patterns of behaviour from beyond this context were frequently dismissed as alien to the individual and to the urban environment, this was far from the case in practice. She writes:

> [In nineteenth-century Southwark,] folk beliefs continued to combine with more official dimensions of religiosity and overlapped to form a distinct pattern of religious expression. The complexity of religious ideas within popular culture cannot be understood without appreciating the coalescence of these types or languages of beliefs and without extending the parameters of our questioning to include popular culture as a setting for religious expression alongside the church.[160]

Williams writes that the multidimensional character of religious experience was especially revealed when accounts given of participants' beliefs were considered alongside institutional descriptions. She cites as one example people's involvement in church rituals, which were performed for both the social benefits these conferred as well as the spiritual or magical benefits: 'Both the social sentiment and the spiritual formed part of a single religious expression which was too closely interwoven to be separated..[161] Williams found that the juxtaposition often made between orthodox and folk religion could not be made because the intermingling between them was so extensive: 'Folk elements of belief operated … as part of unofficial aspects of doctrine, theology, and worship, found within the church as well as outside it, while church-based religion in turn was appropriated into the symbolic structure of popular culture.'[162] As these two types of religiosity are so symbiotic, Williams writes what religion includes is a combination of folk and officially-sanctioned ideas and practices

[159] Sarah C. Williams, Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark, c.1880 – 1939 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999) [hereafter, Williams, Popular Culture].

[160] Williams, Popular Culture, p.6.

[161] Williams, Popular Culture, p.10.

[162] Williams, Popular Culture, p.10.

operating within a fairly loosely-bound sense of community. Despite numerous attempts at demarcation, Williams' study shows that historically religion has always included diverse and seemingly incompatible elements as it is practiced by ordinary religious people, in an attempt to encompass all that their religion means to them. She concludes:

> By letting go of the instinct to view official and unofficial religion as monolithic and immutable entities and considering instead the inter-related character of different patterns of belief, it is possible to escape from the often repeated misconceptions that popular religion is always rural, primitive, and traditional as opposed to urban, civilised, and modern. Instead, the dynamic role of popular forms of devotion which encompassed both official and non-official religion, can be appreciated.[163]

Finally, the historian Alana Harris has studied the English Catholic community over the period 1945 to 1982 from a Lived Religion perspective. In part, her book Faith in the Family: a Lived Religious History of English Catholicism, 1945-82 seeks to assess the impact of the Second Vatican Council[164] on ordinary believers, who Harris refers to as 'the household of faith.'[165] In addressing this, she concentrates on the practices of popular religiosity as a barometer of change and continuity, focussing on three areas of enquiry: Christology, expressed in the Mass and the Eucharist; Mariology, as practiced through saying the Rosary[166] and devotion to the Holy Family; and the cult of the saints exemplified through particular devotion to St Therese of Lisieux, St Bernadette Soubirous, and the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. Harris identifies these as 'the Lived Religious landscape of Catholics in England'[167] and she explores how ordinary believers receive, practice, and understand the meaning of these key areas of the landscape and how these have shifted over time. At the same time Harris makes clear her belief that the central question about change and the Council can only be fully answered by contextualizing Catholic experience within the larger framework of social, cultural, and gender shifts taking place in post-war Britain. Therefore, she states, to study change and continuities in the meaning of the religious landscape is also to explore the shifts in areas such as marriage, family life, sexual morality, friendship, and

[163] Williams, Popular Culture, p.13.

[164] The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), or Vatican II, addressed relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the modern world.

[165] Harris, p.ix.

[166] The Rosary is a form of devotional prayer that recalls events in the lives of Jesus and Mary, normally using a repeated pattern of prayer and using Rosary beads as an aid to following these prayers in sequence.

[167] Harris, p.262.

secularisation. Harris also argues that here is where the Lived Religious approach is shown to advantage in dealing with such contextual issues, and she demonstrates how attitudes both continue and change across three generations of Catholic believers.

Harris also calls for a reconsideration of the framework within which much twentieth-century Catholic history in England has been set, and to move beyond the narratives of 'ghettoes' and 'glory ages' that have often been created, or where Vatican II is viewed as a 'rupture' and the post-conciliar era as one where Catholics lost their sacramental and devotional compasses. Instead, Harris prefers to present recent English Catholic history as a narrative in which the community's religious practices and beliefs are lived and expressed as fluid and overlapping, a narrative of constant, if gradual, negotiation. As Harris writes:

> 'Development' and re-interpretation of 'tradition' have been a constant (if little appreciated) feature of popular Catholicism across two millennia … What changed in the twenty-five years after the Second World War was the degree to which this development … was self-consciously acknowledged, and yet related to elements of continuity and consistency. An intensely incarnational, experiential, and familial-focused religiosity runs through this period of profound transition and experimentation. This is a form of Christian language, expressed through an English Catholic 'dialect' that has continued to be used by individuals and communities from the middle of the twentieth-century onwards to articulate a form of cultural identity within the changed context of an increasingly ethically, religiously, socially, and morally plural Britain.[168]

Finally, Harris identifies that for many ordinary Catholics there has been a considerable move away from a preoccupation with forms of devotion and practice, and with the implications of change for personal religiosity, and towards an approach that considers the religious experiences and attitudes that these forms and practices sought to make manifest. She holds that the adoption of a Lived Religious approach has allowed her to present a much more layered and textured portrayal of recent English Catholic history that moves beyond the binary terms in which it is often seen. Harris ends by stating that her study highlights the importance of 'the complexities encountered in dealing with the relationship between belief, institutional affiliation, and religious practice.'[169] Reflecting on the lived experience of English Catholics as expressed over this time period, she adds:

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[168] Harris, pp.261-262.

[169] Harris, p.267.

> English Catholics' conceptions of themselves within society, and their expectations in relation to their religious beliefs and identities, have … been transformed … [a] greater self-consciousness, and self-confidence, mirrored by the broader social priority on personality, self-realisation, and self-expression, has led many to reprioritise the insights of experience and the demands of conscience, which in many instances has required an interrogation of the relationship between the believer, church hierarchies, and papal authority … [Yet] a sense of distinctive Catholic culture … albeit reconceived in wider and much more flexible terms, persists.[170]

The above scholars represent just some of the research that has taken place relating to Lived Religion. Other contributions could have been explored, in areas such as vicarious religion,[171] material culture and Lived Religion,[172] Lived Religion and anthropology,[173] trauma and Lived Religion,[174] Lived Religion among Polish migrant workers, [175] multiple religious belonging,[176] and relating to faiths other than Christianity.[177] But my hope is that these examples indicate that Lived Religion is a burgeoning field of enquiry and the manifold ways the subject can be approached to gather information about contemporary religious practices and patterns.

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[170] Harris, p.268.

[171] See, for instance, Grace Davie, 'Vicarious Religion: A Methodological Challenge,' in Ammerman, Everyday Religion, pp.21-35.

[172] See, for instance, David Morgan, 'The Material Culture of Lived Religion: Visuality and Embodiment.' Mind and Matter: Selected Papers of Nordic Conference 2009. Studies in Art History, Volume 41, 2010, pp.15-31.

[173] See Samuli Schielke and Lisa Debevec (eds), Ordinary Lives and Grand Schemes: An Anthropology of Everyday Religion (New York: Bergahr, 2012.

[174] See Srdjan Sremac and R. Ruard Ganzevoort (eds), Trauma and Lived Religion: Transcending the Ordinary (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[175] See Kerry Gallagher and Marta Trzebiatowska, 'Becoming a 'real' Catholic: Polish migrants and lived religiosity in the UK and Ireland.' Journal of Contemporary Religion, Volume 32, Issue 3, 2017, pp.431-445.

[176] See, for instance, Catherine Cornille (ed), Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2010); Daan F. Oostveen, 'Multiple Religious Belonging: Hermeneutical Challenges for Theology of Religions.' Open Theology, Volume 3, Issue 1, October 2017, pp.38-47, and 'Multiple Religious Belonging and the 'Deconstruction' of Religion.' Exchange, Volume 47, 2018, pp.39-52; and Rajkumar Peniel Jesudason Rufus, Many Yet One? Multiple Religious Belonging (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2016).

[177] See, for instance, Nathal M. Dessing, Nadia Jeldtoft, Jorgen S. Nielsen and Linda Woodhead (eds), Everyday Islam in Europe (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2013).

3.6. A Description of Lived Religion

To conclude this chapter, based upon the above findings, a Lived Religion might include the following features:

- Lived Religion concerns looking at religion from the perspective of ordinary religious people in their daily lives, rather than specialists or professional religious figures.
- It is more concerned with the practice of religion than with texts, doctrines, or credal statements, and with how religion 'works' rather than what it means.
- Lived Religion calls for a broader understanding of all that religion can involve, seeking to rethink traditional binary approaches like 'great' and 'little' traditions, official and unofficial, and to consider all forms of religiosity and practice as holding validity. Similarly, it questions the dichotomy often made between religion and spirituality, regarding both religion and spirituality as part of a Lived Religion.
- Lived Religion can include an interpretative role for those who are involved in it, as opposed to passively receiving understandings placed on actions by others. The contexts of people's daily lives are also important in helping people to discern and describe what they hold to be part of religion.
- Lived Religion often holds a key place for embodied practices, meaning the ways people act out and communicate through their bodies and senses the spiritual understandings and meanings that matter to them. This also has implications for areas such as spirituality and gender.
- Lived Religion can often involve the blending together of diverse elements, some of which may not have been considered as religious in the past, into a creative and holistic expression of religion. Yet this is not to dismiss the traditional, institutional elements of religion, but to hold that other elements may also be useful and legitimately included within the parameters of Lived Religion. This also means that Lived Religion can be rich and complex or less complex, as witnessed, for example, by the idea of 'Golden Rule Christianity.'

The first three chapters serve as an introduction to Lived Religion as an area of research. The next two chapters concern the field work undertaken with the Episcopalian participants, beginning with an exploration of the physical, social, and ecclesial context

inhabited by the participants (Chapter 4) before moving to an outline of the findings received from the Research Questionnaire (Chapter 5) and the Research Interviews (Chapter 6).

CHAPTER 4

THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I begin to address Research Goal 1 concerning how Lived Religion is understood at an institutional level by the Church, and in particular by the Scottish Episcopal Church. Given that all participants in this research are Episcopalians who inhabit one of three villages in an area in rural Scotland, it is necessary to provide a brief analysis of this context by providing some pertinent social data about the area where the three churches where the participants worship regularly are located, and then exploring briefly the background of Episcopalianism in Scotland and describing the pattern of religious life and worship of each of the congregations. To preserve confidentiality, I shall refer to the churches as Church A, B, and C. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to provide a pertinent description of the social and ecclesial context in which the research takes place.

4.2 The Physical and Social Context of the Participants

Although the three churches attended by the participants are in three different villages, which for purposes of confidentiality I shall refer to as Villages 1, 2, and 3, I shall describe here the physical and social features shared by the villages in general, while also outlining any distinctive features that may be pertinent to this study.

The three villages are in rural Aberdeenshire and fall within one of the six Administrative Areas of Aberdeenshire Council.[178] In 2011, the total population in this Area was 37,088 out of a total population in Scotland of around five million people,[179] of which 18,333 were male and 18,755 were female, and with a majority (57.3%) aged between 20-64 years and defined ethnically as White Scottish (76.9%), compared to an overall percentage of 62% of people in Scotland who defined themselves as 'Scottish Only'.[180] In terms of this study,

[178] See www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/7443/supplementarypolicy1-contextandprofile.pdf.

[179] Source: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/11893/marrcensus2011profile.pdf.

[180] See www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/7443/supplememental y policy1-contextandprofile.pdf.

significant figures include the high percentage (9.6%) of people over the age of 75, the notable percentage (15.8%) of retired people, the high level (74.2%) of those in employment and especially within a profession (39.2%)[181] and the high level (68.5%) of home owners.[182] This also accurately reflects the social and economic composition of most members of the Episcopalian congregations here as revealed by the Research Questionnaire.[183]

In the 2011 Census for Scotland, 53.8% of the population stated their religion as Christian, a decrease of 11% since the 2001 Census, whilst 36.7% said that they had no religion, an increase of 9% since 2001.[184] Of those who claimed their religion as Christian, 32.4% were Church of Scotland and 15.9% were Roman Catholic. The remaining 5.5% represent other forms of Christianity, and although less than 1% are estimated as Episcopalians, the Scottish Episcopal Church is nonetheless the third largest Christian denomination in Scotland, with over 30,900 members.[185]

Although there are some people who were born and have stayed in these villages, in general those living in them have actively chosen to do so. This is either because of employment, retirement, or because each village is regarded as a desirable location in which to live, being essentially quiet places with little crime. Also, as with most rural contexts, and although some villagers will mainly use their village as a place to live and shop in, others will become more involved in social and community activities, of which there are a considerable number in each village. Finally, given their rural location, there is generally more of a willingness by villagers to travel to places outside of their village for some of the things they may need,

[181] This includes health and social work, scientific and technical activities, management, education, the arts, public administration, and defence. See www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/7443/supplememetary_policy1-contextandprofile.pdf.

[182] See www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/7443/supplememetary_policy1-contextandprofile.pdf.

[183] This will be discussed more fully in 6.1a.

[184] However, in the 2016 Scottish Social attitudes Survey, this figure had further increased to 52% - see www.scotcen.org.uk. In addition, the 2011 Census also revealed that in Scotland Judaism had 0.1% of adherents, Sikhism 0.2%, Buddhism 0.2%, Hinduism 0.3%, other religions such as the Baha'i faith and Neopagan groups 0.3%, and Islam 1.4%. See Table KS209SCa at www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk.

[185] Source: 35th Annual Report and Accounts, SEC, 13th November 2018.

with each of the village's relative closeness to larger towns and a major city being regarded as a welcome aspect of this.

The villages were all founded and have been part of the local geographic area for several centuries. Tourism is a major source of income for each village due to their locations and closeness to attractions concerned with walking, mountaineering, cycling, and fishing. There are a significant number of second homes in each village, and Village 1 is very much a commuter village due to its relative closeness to Aberdeen, while Village 2 has long been regarded as a desirable location to retire to. Yet each village also has some social housing, sometimes populated by young families and single people. Each village has a number of local businesses, and each has a primary school; Village 1 also has an Academy whose facilities are used as a leisure centre by the local community, and recently Village 3 has converted a redundant building into an arts and performance venue, which has created wide interest and provides revenue for the village. There are also a considerable number of community organisations in each village based around the arts, music, sport, and well-being. All three villages hold an annual Highland Games each summer, which is a significant feature of the yearly calendar for most residents. Finally, in addition to the Episcopal Church each village also has a Church of Scotland church. As the Established Church in Scotland, the 'Kirk' as it is known is regarded as the main church in each of the villages and the place where major village services are held, such as on Remembrance Sunday. Each village also has a Roman Catholic church, and there is a non-denominational Christian fellowship in Village 1 and a small Pentecostal fellowship in Village 2.

This provides a brief picture of the participants' physical and social context. In the next section I shall explore the participants' ecclesial context, beginning with a short history of the Scottish Episcopal Church, then how the church sees its role as an institution today, and then exploring the local context of each of the three Episcopalian churches where the participants worship.

4.3 The Ecclesial Context

4.3.1 Episcopalianism in Scotland

Despite being erroneously referred to by many Scottish people as the 'High English Kirk,' the Scottish Episcopal Church has, in fact, a distinctive history within Scotland and within worldwide Anglicanism. The roots of Christianity in Scotland can be traced back to the early days of the Celtic saints and missionaries, yet the churches in Scotland as we know them now did not emerge as distinct bodies until the years following the Reformation and are bound up with both the monarchy and the power politics of Scotland and Church governance during various periods of its history. Following the Reformation Parliament of 1560, links between the Scottish Church and Rome were severed, and the relative fortunes of Episcopalians and Presbyterians swung from one to another over the next 130 years as the two ecclesiastical traditions competed. The complete picture of this period of Scottish history is extremely complex,[186] but in broad terms it might be said that the Lowland south moved towards Presbyterian church governance and reformed theology, while the Highlands, the Hebrides and, significantly for this study, the north-east of Scotland, generally retained Episcopal church governance. The aftermath of the Union of the Crowns in 1603 brought further tensions, most famously in 1637 when Charles I attempted to introduce a revision of the English Book of Common Prayer into Scotland, written by a group of Scottish prelates. Then in 1689 when James VII and II fled to France and the crown was offered to William of Orange and Mary, the Scottish bishops refused to swear allegiance on the grounds that James still lived and had not abdicated. This was the start of the Episcopal Church's connection with Jacobitism, but the immediate result was that the Scottish Parliament passed an act banning episcopacy, and the Episcopal Church entered a period of suppression which remains a defining moment in its history. Although Episcopalian worship was once more permitted from 1712, because of the church's close

[186] For a much more detailed history, see George Grub, An Ecclesiastical History of Scotland from the Introduction of Christianity to the Present Day (1861) (Leicester: Forgotten Books, 2015). Also David Bertie, Scottish Episcopal Clergy, 1689-2000 (Oxford: University Press, 2002; Callum G. Brown, The Social History of Religion in Scotland since 1730 (London and New York: Methuen, 1987); Frederick Goldie, A Short History of the Episcopal Church in Scotland (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1976); James Porter (ed), After Columba – After Calvin: Community and Identity in the Religious Tradition of North-East Scotland (Aberdeen: Elphinstone Institute Publications, 2000); Gerald Stranraer-Mull, A Church For Scotland (Edinburgh: General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church, 2000); Rowan Strong, Episcopalianism in Nineteenth Century Scotland (Oxford: University Press, 2002); and Gavin White, The Scottish Episcopal Church: A New History (Edinburgh: General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church, 1998).

association with the Jacobite cause in 1715 and 1745 there were further restrictions on permission. Eventually in the 1790s the penal laws began to be repealed and the suspicion with which Episcopalianism was viewed slowly started to recede. One key event in the Episcopal Church's history occurred in 1784, when Samuel Seabury was consecrated as bishop in Aberdeen by the bishops of Aberdeen and Moray. He became the first bishop of the American Episcopal Church, and the link between the two churches remains a strong and valued one.

In the years following, and especially during the nineteenth century, much church building took place; and so today the Scottish Episcopal Church is one of the mainline churches in Scotland, with approximately 310 congregations.[187] In addition, the Episcopal Church has long been committed to synodical government; its General Synod first met in 1982. A further distinctive feature is the value the Episcopal Church has always placed on formal liturgy and the place of ritual in its worship, in contrast to the affective spirituality and extempore prayer favoured by other denominations in Scotland. The Scottish Communion Office was first produced around 1717, based upon the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637 and the First Prayer Book of Edward VI of 1549, as well as contact with the liturgical practices of Eastern Orthodoxy.[188] Throughout its history, the Episcopal Church has usually taken a high view of sacramental doctrine, but since the advent of the Oxford Movement the wearing of vestments and the use of ritual became more commonplace, and meant that Episcopalianism grew closer in doctrine and temperament to the 'high church' wing of the Church of England and away from the Protestant inclinations of Presbyterianism.[189]

This brief journey through its history and ethos outlines some of the features that have shaped the distinctive character of Episcopalianism in Scotland. In the following section I shall

[187] See the 35th Annual Report and Accounts of the SEC, 13th November 2018.

[188] This was updated in both 1746 and 1764. See Anthony Mitchell, Scotland's Church (Dundee: David Winter and Son, 1933), pp.110-112. The main feature of the Scottish Communion Office was the long Canon based on Eastern Orthodox models, consisting of both the Eucharistic Prayer and the Prayer of the Church. Also included was an epiclesis in the Prayer of Consecration. See also Bryan D. Spinks, Sacraments, Ceremonies and the Stuart Divines: Sacramental theology and liturgy in England and Scotland, 1603-1662 (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2002).

[189] During the nineteenth century, this fact created problems for the influx of Irish Episcopalians into Scotland, who had traditionally aligned themselves with a strongly Protestant tradition and found it difficult to come to terms with the pro-Catholic tendencies of their Scottish cousins.

describe the modern Episcopal Church's self-understanding and its continuing role in Scottish society.

4.3.2 The Scottish Episcopal Church Today

The Scottish Episcopal Church continues to regard itself as a distinctive presence among the Christian churches and other faith communities in Scotland. In addition to taking seriously its role in the social issues affecting modern society,[190] this sense of distinctiveness is displayed as certain characteristic features, described in a publication by the church's Doctrine Committee, The Shape of Our Church.[191] Firstly, the church is *disestablished* rather than 'non-conformist,' as the Episcopal Church regards itself as being in lineal descent from the bishops, clergy, and congregations who were dispossessed by the Act of Parliament in 1688/9, when the Presbyterian Church was established in its place.[192] Secondly, it is *Scottish*, a church with a distinctive presence throughout Scotland and with liturgies in both English and Gaelic. Thirdly, although based in Scotland, it is an *Anglican* church, and sees itself as a sister church to the Church of England. This may be evidenced by the fact that bishops from the Episcopal Church were invited to the first Lambeth Conference in 1867. Given these three characteristics, it might also be said that although not a 'national' church, the Episcopal Church is 'a local [but distinctive] Anglican church with "national spread"'[193] throughout Scotland.

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[190] See 'Issue in Society' at www.scotland.anglican.org, where details of the Episcopal Church's concern with areas as diverse as charity law, the care of the environment, end of life assistance, rural communities, social justice and poverty, and welfare reforms are outlined. See also the Committee for Relations With People of Other Faiths and the Doctrine Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, The Inter-Faith Encounter (Grosvenor Essay No.3) (Edinburgh General Synod Office, 2006); the Doctrine Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Marriage and Human Intimacy: Perspectives on Same-Sex Relationships and the Life of the Church (Grosvenor Essay No. 8) (Edinburgh General Synod Office, 2012); and the Doctrine Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, The Church and Scottish Identity (Grosvenor Essay No.10) (Edinburgh General Synod Office, 2014).

[191] The Doctrine Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, The Shape of Our Church: An Essay in Descriptive Ecclesiology (Edinburgh: General Synod Office, 2007) [hereafter, Doctrine Committee, Shape].

[192] In fact, during the first part of the eighteenth century there were some Episcopalians who continued to regard themselves as the 'establishment in waiting,' since they expected to be reinstated when the exiled Stuart royal family returned to power. Resolution of this issue finally occurred in the latter part of the twentieth century, when the 'Repeal of the Scottish Episcopalian Relief Act of 1792' was passed in 1977. See Doctrine Committee, Shape, p.4.

[193] Doctrine Committee, Shape, p.22.

Also, in line with its non-established status the Episcopal Church also prides itself on being collegial and democratic, rather than centralised and directive, in its church government. As mentioned in 4.3.1, the church has exercised a synodical form of government since 1982, with the General Synod acting as its legislative and deliberative body.[194] A further aspect of the church's legal framework is adherence to a Code of Canons, described as 'a living document' and the acceptance that 'Canons can be edited, added, or removed annually at the General Synod.'[195] This acceptance of the possible revision of Canons can lead to some controversial decisions, such as when the General Synod of June 2017 voted to alter the church's Canon on Marriage to allow Equal Marriage,[196] a decision that resulted in a number of sanctions being applied by the Anglican Communion.[197] While the Code of Canons possess an agreed status within the Episcopal Church and are intended to be enforced by its clergy, the interpretations of the Canons and precisely how they are to be enforced is very rarely made explicit. This is in line with the Episcopal Church's perception of itself as 'a thinking church … [that] values dialogue alongside dogma' and of the Code of Canons as 'a living document' that may at some time require changes.[198]

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[194] The General Synod meets once a year to vote on two broad types of motion, on formal changes to Canon Law or internal church policy, or on wider issues of national and international concern. During the year, the work of the General Synod is carried out by its boards and committees, and by the officers working in the General Synod Office. In addition, the seven bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church meet as a College of Bishops, with one of their number being elected as Primus in a conscious return to ancient Scottish precedent. See 'General Synod' at www.scotland.anglican.org.

[195] See 'General Synod' at www.scotland.anglican.org. See also the Code of Canons of the Scottish Episcopal Church (Edinburgh: General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church, 2018).

[196] See 'General Synod' at www.scotland.anglican.org and the Code of Canons of the Scottish Episcopal Church (Edinburgh: General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church, 2018), Canon 31 and Resolution, pp. 81-82.

[197] These mainly involve exclusion from debate on Doctrine and from chairing Anglican Communion committees. However, as the Doctrine Committee indicates, there is a slight anomaly in such an action, in that the Scottish Episcopal Church is a self-governing province within the Anglican Communion, because essentially 'Anglican identity is not global but local … As Rowan Williams [has said} … 'Institutionally speaking, the Anglican Communion is an association of local churches' … Anglican identity therefore [involves] an association with place and with churches-in-places and it is from deliberation and debate and worship and diverse places, rather than from a central authority, that Anglican identity and authority derive.' See Doctrine Committee, Shape, p.21.

[198] See 'General Synod' at www.scotland.anglican.org,

One further characteristic that the Episcopal Church is keen to highlight is its particular approach to worship. Along with the Code of Canons there are forms of services that have been authorised for usage by the General Synod.[199] The Doctrine Committee has written that 'most people's attachment to the SEC was due to its manner of worship,' and that Episcopalians continue to value 'the experience of 'participation' in worship and the ordered and settled wording of our liturgies.'[200] The Committee further writes that it is through looking at the church's authorised liturgical texts that the foundations of its faith and teachings are revealed:

> Embedded in the canonical provision of our church is [the] fundamental Anglican perspective … that it is the common prayer of God's people which best enshrines and so also sustains our common belief. This is entirely consonant with the experience of ordinary Episcopalian worshippers in our Scottish context, where it remains clear that our liturgical style marks us as being distinct from the dominant reformed tradition of the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church: people may not be much concerned with different emphases in belief, but they remain highly sensitive to differences in worship.[201]

This also coheres with what the Episcopal Church's website states about its understanding of liturgy and of itself as a liturgical church. It speaks of liturgy as 'the Church's corporate worship, its common prayer … the structured and shared worship that Christians engage in when they are together.'[202] It speaks of how the rhythm of liturgy – 'repentance, instruction, prayer, self-offering, and thankful sharing' – follows the shape of Jesus' own life and teachings, and sets the weekly remembrance of this within the context of the liturgical seasons focused around Christmas and Easter. It sums up its understanding of the importance of this liturgical framework in these words:

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[199] Specifically, the Scottish Book of Common Prayer (1929), Scottish Liturgy 1970, Scottish Liturgy 1982, Scottish Ordinal 1984, Communion from the Reserved Sacrament 1987, Holy Baptism 2006 and Affirmation of Baptism 2006, Marriage Liturgy 2007, A Service of The Word 2015, and various forms of Funeral Liturgy and Daily Prayer. See 'Liturgies' at www.scotland.anglican.org,

[200] Doctrine Committee, Shape, p.11.

[201] Doctrine Committee, Shape, pp.25-26. In another publication, the Doctrine Committee has also written: 'The Scottish Episcopal Church prizes its liturgy, not just as a badge of identity … but as a central way that it expresses beliefs. Apart from the historic creeds, we have no Confession of Faith. This has allowed for a breadth of theology as well as a reliance on worship to hold us all together. It is also why Episcopalians will tend to argue passionately about liturgy, rather than propositional theology. It is where we think.' See the Doctrine Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, The Church and Scottish Identity (Grosvenor Essay No. 10) (Edinburgh: General Synod Office, 2014), p.31.

[202] See 'What is Liturgy?' at www.scotland.anglican.org.

> Liturgy is simply our common response of praise and thanksgiving to all that God is doing to us through Jesus … When people gather for worship, they are praising God and celebrating his love for each and every one of them … In the tradition of the Scottish Episcopal Church, much of our worship follows a common framework … In this way words become familiar, and part of who we are.[203]

This notion of the assimilation over time of ideas and beliefs as words become more familiar is an important one and reflects a church which sees itself as undogmatic but clear about the convictions and tenets it wishes to encourage without being prescriptive. This can also be seen in the Episcopal Church's approach to the Eucharist. Given the influence of the Oxford Movement in its history,[204] it is unsurprising that the Episcopal Church holds a special place for the Eucharist in its common life. Although neither the Code of Canons nor the authorised services enjoin a particular form of belief about the Eucharist, both clearly indicate that it is central to the church's life. The church's website notes how much of Episcopalian worship is sacramental, 'the signs and symbols, in ordinary things … of what God is doing in Christ,'[205] and often in modern times is Eucharistic. It explains how it interprets the service as a journey, involving asking for God's forgiveness for personal and communal shortcomings, hearing and reflecting on Scripture, praying for the needs of the world, and '[acknowledging] each other as a community in the peace of Christ.' Then it continues:

> The second stage [of the Eucharist] takes us to the heart of the sacred meal, both historically and in the here and now. We celebrate the glory of God our Creator, the sacrifice of his Son Jesus Christ, and the life-giving power of the Spirit … Through the taking, blessing, and sharing of bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ, we celebrate the saving acts of God, rejoice in the presence of the risen Christ among us, and look forward to the coming kingdom of God.[206]

This brief exploration is included here to explain the kind of approach, and the sort of themes, that underlie this approach, that many Episcopalians will experience as they worship week by week.

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[203] See 'Liturgy' at www.scotland.anglican.org.

[204] See 4.3.1.

[205] See 'Holy Communion' at www.scotland.anglican.org.

[206] See 'Holy Communion' at www.scotland.anglican.org.

Finally, the Doctrine Committee offers what it terms 'A Note of Caution' regarding the modern Episcopal Church. It writes that in attempting to become a more open, diverse, and inclusive church, Episcopalians may lose a part of their identity that is intrinsically valuable. In searching for 'an ecclesiology which is informed by secular, religious models such as democracy … [there is a] danger of obscuring what must always lie at the heart of any Church – the inner life of spirituality and prayer, which form the foundational dynamic of what it is to be the Church as an instrument of transformation *within* culture.'[207] The Committee writes of how the Episcopal Church has often shone where priest and people together have sought to be a Christ-centred, sacramental expression 'of the Body of Christ, blessed and broken in and for the world,'[208] and are concerned that this aspect of its life may have become diminished. Yet the Committee end their 'Note' with some words that serve as both inspiration and challenge:

> We can and must live with our Church's fragility, and maybe even rejoice in the paradoxical strength of that fragility. Above all, we should never lose sight, in the midst of change and conflicting aspirations, of the idea that we are a community, gathered around abiding divine realities … [As] the shape of [our] Anglican worship around Word and Sacrament [shows] …we have a sense as Episcopalians that we are not in essence a voluntary association, but rather a divinely constituted community.'[209]

In the next section I shall describe how the Episcopal Church operate at the local level within the churches attended by the participants.

4.3.3 The Local Episcopal Churches

a. Church A

The congregation of Church A has been described as 'a diverse group of Episcopalian Christians dedicated to doing God's work in this part of Aberdeenshire.'[210] Consecrated in the early twentieth century, the weekly regular attendance is about forty people. Most of the congregation are over the age of fifty-five, but there are a few younger people with families who attend regularly.

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[207] Doctrine Committee, Shape, p.36.

[208] Doctrine Committee, Shape, p.36.

[209] Doctrine Committee, Shape, pp.21, 36.

[210] See www.aberdeen.anglican.org/churches-directory.

In terms of its worship, Church A's range of services reflects the diversity of its congregation, but generally adheres to the established services of the Episcopal Church. These are a combination of the traditional and the contemporary, ranging from the Service of Matins using the Scottish Prayer Book, traditional-language and modern-language versions of the Eucharist, occasional services of Choral Evensong, again from the Scottish Prayer Book, and a monthly non-Eucharistic Family Service of all-age worship. The church is usually full for services on special occasions such as Harvest and a yearly ecumenical service of Nine Lessons and Carols, all of which are occasions when the local community enjoys coming to Church A. There is also a monthly Bible study group, and other more recent developments include an informal children's church that provides an opportunity for children and families to spend time together in church, have fun, and learn about the Christian faith.

In recent years the worship at Church A has also been enriched using music and liturgical material from the Taizé and Iona Communities. A small number of people are also keen on involvement in Advent and Lent study groups, mainly held on an evening. Similarly, a few members value a mid-week Eucharist during these seasons. In common with many congregations, it has a preponderance of older people,[211] a smaller group of middle-aged people, and a small number of children, but very few – if any – teenagers and young people below the age of 35. Church A endeavours to meet the worshipping needs of a disparate group of people, all of whom have somehow found a place within the congregation. As a church member has commented: 'Throughout its century [our church] has remained a constant welcoming haven of peace and tranquillity [for many]. It is as much needed now as it was a hundred years ago.'[212]

b. Church B

Consecrated in 1907, Church B replaces an earlier building opened for Episcopalian worship in Village 2 in 1897, and since its earliest days its members have included both famous and

[211] As I will explain in 6.1a, in all three congregations there are some over the age of 81, a substantial group aged 71 to 80 and a similar group aged 61 to 70, a much smaller group aged 51 to 60, very few between the ages of 18 to 50, and a small group of mainly primary school age children.

[212] Jane Kruuk, From a booklet celebrating the church's Centenary Year, 2009.

wealthy members of local society. Today, several members of the local aristocracy and local landowners continue to regard Church B as 'their' church, indicating the kind of congregation the church continues to attract.

Today the congregation mainly consists of people in their middle to late seventies, with a few younger people and some children. The average weekly attendance is 25-30 people. As at Church A, the worship at Church B is mainly a combination of the traditional-language 1970 Scottish Liturgy and the modern-language 1982 Scottish Liturgy services; but curiously, a few years ago the congregation decided to abandon their monthly non-Eucharistic Family Service in favour of a service of Matins from the Scottish Prayer Book, which indicates a movement within the congregation towards meeting the desires of an older age-range. Yet paradoxically, at around the same time it was decided to launch a children's Sunday Club each month. Other activities which the church is involved in include a highly successful ecumenical children's Summer Club, mid-week services, and study groups in Advent and Lent. Church B has also had a succession of Lay Readers and currently has two who work across both Village 1 and Village 2 when needed. For many years a Prayer Group has met each Friday morning to pray for the needs of the church and its members and for wider issues in the world. Most of the congregation are quite traditional in their style of worship and spirituality, and they are a faithful and welcoming community dedicated to serving their village to the best of their ability.

c. Church C

Church C has been described as 'a small faithful congregation which increases with regular visitors.'[213] Its history is somewhat typical of churches in this part of Scotland. It was used as a private chapel from 1898 to 1959, although it became a property of the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney in 1899. The chapel can accommodate up to forty people, and while the present congregation is small – rarely more than seven people, most of whom are over sixty-five years old - those who come regularly are faithful and dedicated in their Christian worship and service. Although the Diocesan Bishop has nominal charge of the chapel, its regular services are mainly led by a Lay Reader. The worship is traditional in style, with the

[213] https://aoepiscopal.scot// .

1970 Scottish Liturgy alternating with Matins from the Scottish Prayer Book, with occasional services of Prayer Book Evensong. Although a small congregation, it includes people who are keen to explore their faith and spirituality and to become involved in the different opportunities offered in other villages. However, its unique location does provide Church C with differing sorts of opportunities for outreach. In recent years, for instance, there was a service of Evensong where the regular congregational numbers were boosted by the presence of over thirty voices, who transpired to be the members of the chorus of the Welsh National Opera on tour; and on another occasion when there was no organist, two visitors agreed to lead the music at Evensong on the oboe and the violin, who were from the R.T.O.[214] Like many places in the Highlands, Church C is the sort of place where unexpected things happen, which all adds to the richness of congregational life.

4.4 Summary

As these brief pen portraits of the three congregations show, most of the members of each church are aged fifty-five or over, though Churches A and B do have some younger people which is reflected in the provision of all age services and monthly children's activities. It is also to be noted that the regular Sunday worship is supplemented by a weekly Prayer Meeting at Church B, a monthly Bible study group at Church A, and seasonal mid-week Eucharists and study courses in both Churches A and B which some members of Church C also attend.

However, given the general age profile of the congregations, it is understandable that the regular worship favoured by the congregations is of a more traditional variety. Church A is the least traditional congregation, with three out of a possible five Sundays in a month using modern-language liturgy, while Church C is the most traditional, only using traditional-language liturgy; Church B has the possibility of two modern-language services and three traditional-language services in a five-week month. Yet whether traditional or modern language is used, the most striking feature of all the worship appears to be the clear importance for the congregations of structured forms of liturgy. There is no desire to abandon this, even if the structure is of a slightly 'freer' kind on some Sundays than on

[214] R.T.O stands for the Really Terrible Orchestra, a group formed by the author Alexander McCall Smith in Edinburgh in 1995. Their by-line is 'The Cream of Edinburgh's Musically Disadvantaged.'

others. This reflects the Scottish Episcopal Church's understanding of liturgy as a common framework, 'the structured and shared worship that Christians engage in when they are together … [using] distinct forms of proclamation and response.'[215] The Episcopal Church's website expresses further its understanding of the role of liturgical worship:

> Liturgy expresses the rhythms of all human life: rest and renewal, death and birth, sadness and joy. It can be celebrated simply or elaborately, in speech or song, using traditional words or contemporary ones … Liturgy can help Christians to feel themselves part of a community linked across the world and through the centuries in worshipping God and gaining a renewed sense of themselves and their place in God's world … We pray with our bodies; through movement and song the power of God's Word becomes part of us … Liturgy changes things, is transformative. It is the power of God for bringing about the kingdom of God.[216]

But just as structured liturgical worship is important to Episcopal congregations, it is also clear that it is Eucharistic worship in particular that has a central role in this. Again, the Episcopal Church's website states that the Eucharist is 'the most common worship service in our Church' that 'recalls and celebrates Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples the evening before his death on the Cross, and encourages us as a Christian family today … [as] a channel of God's love and grace in our lives.'[217] The Eucharist is often the principal act of worship in many Christian churches, especially since the advent of the Parish Communion movement,[218] and is now regarded as a major source of renewal and encouragement for Christian people as they sustain and deepen their relationship with Christ as a community of believers.[219] The fact that in both traditional and modern forms this is seen as the most regular, if not weekly, act of worship points to its importance in the lives of these communities. This general point is worth noting here, in the hope that a fuller understanding of the Eucharist by the participants will be revealed later in this study.

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[215] See https://scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/publications/liturgies/what-is-liturgy [hereafter, SEC, What is Liturgy?].

[216] SEC, What is Liturgy? See also the Doctrine Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Prayer and Spirituality (Edinburgh: General Synod Office, 2012), especially pp.35-44, 'Hand in Hand: Public Worship and Personal Prayer.

[217] See www.scotland.anglican.org/spirituality/worshi/holy-communion.

[218] See Donald Gray, Earth and Altar: Evolution of the Parish Communion in the Church of England to 1945 (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1986).

[219] See Thomas O'Loughlin, The Eucharist: Origins and Contemporary Understandings (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

At this stage, these observations regarding the villages and churches provide an indication of the social and ecclesial world in which the participants live and operate. They also show how Albertz's institutional and local levels of religion can operate and their role in pointing towards the kinds of spiritualities that this, in part at least, encourages in the participants, which may be revealed in the Research Interviews.

In the next chapter, the results of the Research Questionnaire are described in detail.

CHAPTER 5

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

5.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the field work results and begins to address Research Goal 2, the investigation of the participants' Lived Religion, beginning here with the findings from the Research Questionnaire and moving on to explore in depth the Research Interviews with the participants from across the three Episcopalian congregations in Chapter 6. I have based questions around the themes that have emerged in the explorations of contemporary and personal spirituality, such as where people find personal meaning and the presence of God, what helps to nurture their spirituality and belief, how they define spirituality, in what ways could spirituality be personal for them, and their views about the relationship between spirituality and religion. In addition, in the Research Interview questions I have asked about the participants' religious backgrounds, their personal faith now, and as all the participants are Episcopalian Christians whether their involvement with the Scottish Episcopal Church contributes to their spirituality. One final question invites the participants to raise any other issues they would like to. In outlining the results of the Questionnaire and the Research Interviews I thereby seek to address Research Goal 2 by building up an in-depth picture of the Lived Religion of this group of people within their usual context

I presented the Research Questionnaire, Exploring Religion and Spirituality,[220] to the members of three Episcopalian congregations on the Sunday before Lent in February 2013 during the morning services. In all, 47 people present in the churches on that day agreed to participate in this study by receiving a questionnaire. Of the 47 questionnaires distributed, 39 were returned (83%), of which 17 were from Church A, 17 from Church B, and 5 from Church C.

[220] See Appendix II.

5.2 The Findings from the Questionnaire

The questions have already been discussed in 2.4. What follows are the findings from the Questionnaire and an analysis of these findings. These will be grouped under the headings developed in 2.4:

- Question 1: Factual Data
- Question 2: General Impressions
- Question 3: Finding God
- Question 4: Relationship with God
- Question 5: Definitions of Spirituality
- Question 6: Further Comments
- Question 7: Further Participation
- Conclusions

5.2.1 Factual Data

Of the 39 people who completed the Questionnaire, 13 were male, 18 were female, and 8 declined to give their gender. This was fairly typical of the demographic makeup of the congregations.

There were no people below the age of 51 present in the churches and this again was broadly typical of the congregations' membership, where there was a preponderance of those of an older age range. In detail, of the 39 participants 5 were aged between 51 and 60, 15 were aged between 61 and 70, 13 were aged between 71 and 80, and 4 were over the age of 81; 2 participants declined to give their age.

In terms of education, all had some form of educational qualification. In all, 15 participants had Intermediates, O Levels or similar and 10 had Highers, Advanced Highers, A Levels or similar. A preponderance of the participants are graduates, with 21 having studied to degree level and 3 to higher degree level, while 17 participants held other post-school qualifications from fields such as nursing, engineering, and other professions. Only 2 participants declined to mention what, if any, qualifications they possessed. This data accurately reflects the nature of this context, where many people came to live in the area for employment in sectors like the oil industry or higher education while others retired here.

Finally, regarding present or last employment the categories offered were no employment, manual, semi-skilled, clerical, administrative and technical, professional, and higher managerial or similar. Of the 39 participants one described themselves as having worked in a semi-skilled capacity while 7 described themselves as within the clerical, administrative, or technical sector. A majority of participants, 21 in all, described themselves as having been employed in some professional capacity, with 7 claiming they had been employed in the higher managerial sector or similar. One participant stated that they had no employment, and one person declined to comment. Once again, these replies accurately reflect this socio-economic context, where the employment record is fairly high and where the majority of residents are relatively wealthy or comfortably retired.[221]

5.2.2 General Impressions

The aim of this question was to help gain some impression of what the participants' spiritualities might be like by suggesting possible areas of emphasis and asking participants whether they agreed, disagreed, or were neutral regarding a series of statements. So, for instance, 15 participants agreed and 22 strongly agreed 'that life has meaning [and] purpose,' with the same number believing 'that my personal beliefs help give meaning to my life.' Both responses suggest that most of the participants held a positive attitude to life in general and an awareness of having a role to play in life, with some ability to create meaning and affect order rather than being simply observers.

Other suggested responses were aimed at discerning what participants considered to be priorities. So, 18 participants agreed, 12 neither agreed nor disagreed, 3 disagreed, one strongly disagreed, and 5 participants gave no response 'That spiritual and personal growth is one of the chief goals in life.' This suggests that for many participants personal spiritual growth was not regarded as a primary concern. However, with two other statements – 'That people demonstrate what they believe by what they do' and 'That it is important to be part of a religious community' – the responses were predominantly positive, with 28 out of 39 participants seeing a strong connection between internal beliefs and external behaviour, and 20 participants (strongly agreed) and 12 participants (agreed) that a sense of belonging to a worshipping community was important. Yet it was also the case that 2 participants strongly

[221] See 3.3 for further information on this.

disagreed, and 9 were neutral, regarding beliefs and action, while 2 strongly disagreed, 2 disagreed, and 4 were neutral regarding the need for community; in fact, one participant stated that 'Beliefs should always be seen as an entirely personal matter' (Female, age 61-70, Church B).

Therefore, there was substantial agreement in these responses. However, I was interested to see what the responses would be to a further statement, 'That all spiritual truths come from within the self, and it is not necessary to be involved in organized religion to know these truths' This was one of the more potentially controversial statements in the questionnaire and the results given reflect this, with opinions being fairly evenly divided on whether all spiritual truth comes from within the self and whether involvement in organized religion is necessary. In all, 6 participants strongly disagreed, and 7 participants disagreed with this statement, a total of 13. This indicates that these participants felt that there was such a thing as external spiritual truth in addition to inner truth, and that there is a need for involvement with organized religion in order to know such truth. Yet in contrast, 19 participants (14 and 5) agreed or strongly agreed that spiritual truth was exclusively, or at least predominantly, an interior concern, and by implication it was therefore not strictly necessary to be involved in organized religion in order to have access to such truth. Clearly, both replies raise questions about the nature of spiritual truth, as well as perceptions about the role of organized religion in relation to this. Finally, 7 of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed about this, possibly indicating that both acquiring spiritual truth and involvement in organized religion were not of primary importance to them.

Two further responses were also suggested. The first was 'That it is possible to have a close meaningful relationship with God,' and most participants agreed with this – 23 agreed and 8 strongly agreed. This suggests that some kind of relationship with God provides these participants with a sense of connection and significance and lies at the heart of their spiritualities. There were, however, 6 participants who gave a neutral reply while one disagreed and one strongly disagreed, perhaps indicating a rather different understanding of God. The second statement, 'That there is a sacred presence in nature,' was intended as an open one, allowing the participants to interpret this as widely or narrowly as they wished.

In response, 13 agreed and 16 strongly agreed with the statement, while 7 held no strong convictions, 2 gave no response, and one participant strongly disagreed.

5.2.3 Finding God

This question was aimed at helping participants to consider whether there are particular circumstances when they feel they are especially in contact with God, situations where they are aware of God's presence and where they believe they might experience a closeness to God through their presence in such places or involvement in certain activities. The suggested responses were purposefully a combination of more contemplative possibilities with more active ones, as I took the view that the choice of either type of response might say something further about the participant's conception of God.

In the responses, it was clear, firstly, that attendance at religious services and other church events was an important factor for many of the participants, with 22 stating that such things were fairly important and 12 that they were very important. From this, it might be conjectured that for these participants such attendance and involvement is their primary religious and spiritual activity, and that it is through participating in these that they experience God most directly. This might also be evidence of a fairly conventional spirituality, but which is deeply rooted in the experience of worship with others, whereby these participants consciously take the time to come and gather with other people in order to take part in such an activity and to receive a sense of support. Of the other participants, one claimed that attendance was not very important, which might suggest that while not adverse to attending religious services this does not play the most important role in their spirituality, while another participant felt this to be neither important nor unimportant – what could be described as a fairly neutral response. Three participants gave no reply.

Secondly, the statement regarding feeling close to God among creation might be said to be in a similar vein to the notion of belief in a sacred presence in nature mentioned in Question 2, but from the experience of being among creation. Of the participants, 3 gave no response, 7 found this neither important nor unimportant, and 2 found this very unimportant. Yet 27 participants -18 held it as fairly important and 9 as very important - stated that they found God most fully while walking in the hills and being among creation. Therefore, it might be

said that for these participants their spirituality is a somewhat sensual experience, which values physicality and vision as ways that somehow touch their spirits and helps to connect them with God. This might also suggest a belief in a God who is essentially to be found outside of the individual and whose presence is sensed and found in the physical world. It would seem that for most of the participants being among creation is a positive experience which in some way contributes to their relationship with God.

The statement regarding whether God is found 'When helping other people' was designed to discover whether hospitality and action towards others was a feature of the participants' spiritualities. The results reveal that a majority believed this to be so. In all, 26 participants stated that helping others was either fairly important (16) or very important (10), indicating that within the encounters with other people and through a practical expression of concern the participants also found God in some way. This would also seem to echo the conviction found in the New Testament, in the Letter of James concerning faith and works.[222] For these 26 participants, it would seem that spirituality and care go together, with the care of others being the outward expression of an inner spiritual truth. Within the interaction of faith and action, these participants find an awareness of God. However, 5 other participants gave no response, 7 regarded helping others as neither important nor unimportant, and one participant felt that this was fairly unimportant in relation to finding God. This may indicate that helping others is not important to these participants, or that caring for people is not seen in spiritual terms but simply as a basic human response.

However, while the previous statement sought to look outwards to others and explore the ways in which participants might express their spirituality towards them, the statement 'When I seek the deeper things in myself' focuses on a contrasting approach in searching for God. Twelve participants felt that seeking these deeper things was fairly important and 11 that this was very important. This suggests that, at least to an extent, there is something of a 'Turn to the Self' here, an attempt by individuals to find within themselves the resources needed for a close relationship with God, however this is interpreted. Some participants

[222] 'What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say that you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill.' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith, if it has no works, is dead.' James 2: 14-17. The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha (Oxford: University Press, 1995) [Hereafter, Holy Bible, NRSV].

explained this in terms of 'getting in touch with the divine spark within me' (Female, age 61-70, Church A), 'communing with the 'God-part' of me' (Male, 51-60, Church A), and 'my internal conversation with God – maybe you'd call that my conscience'(Female, 51-60, Church A), all of which are replies that might be said to fall within the faith tradition expressed in the Book of Genesis: 'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'[223] It would therefore seem that those participants who responded in a positive manner hold some notion of their own connection with the divine. As for those who responded to it in a less positive way, 6 participants felt that seeking the deeper things in the self was not very important, 2 participants felt that this was fairly unimportant, and 6 participants expressed no strong feelings either way. This may suggest that these respondents are unaccustomed to, or overly concerned about, having a reflective attitude to personal faith, and that this could take the focus away from its legitimate one on an all-knowing God. Whether they agreed or disagreed with this statement, it was clearly one that provoked a strong reaction from most participants.

Finally, two of the participants indicated that there were other factors that were either not covered by the above statements or were of importance to them in finding closeness to God. Unfortunately, one participant gave no further details, but the other participant wrote:

> I find God most fully in quiet times of prayer and Bible reading every morning on my own at home. This affects and directs how I live each day (Female, age 81+, Church B).

In both evangelical and catholic Christian circles, the tradition of a 'Quiet Time' or space for reflection has been of long-standing, a regular or daily individual session of private prayer, meditation, and Bible study also involving an open-minded listening and waiting for God's guidance. The purpose of the Quiet Time is to receive encouragement, strengthening, and fresh insight for the continuance of an individual's daily walk with God. Clearly, this rather disciplined practice is an important and fulfilling part of this participant's relationship with God which helps to sustain and nourish them through life.

[223] Genesis 1: 27, Holy Bible, NRSV.

5.2.4 Relationship with God

This question tried to discover the 'flavour' of the participants' spiritualities by asking whether their relationship with God included any of these features:

i. Help to be a better person and to lead a good life

ii. Help to make life decisions, especially when difficult

iii. Help to look outward and to be concerned for other people

iv. Help to look inward and to find personal resources for happiness

v. Help provide a feeling of reassurance and security; and

vi. To be a relationship full of adventure and opportunities, both outwardly and inwardly.

The replies will be explored in turn.

i. Help to be a better person and to lead a good life

The participants' responses showed that a high proportion held that their relationship with God was important in helping them to be better people and lead a good life – 10 participants that this was fairly important, 12 very important, and 7 extremely important. While the hope of being 'a better person' and of leading 'a good life' are non-specific, such general ideas clearly held a meaning for many participants, as did the sense of needing divine help in aspiring to these. Of the other participants, 7 felt that the notions of being a better person and leading a good life were neither important nor unimportant for their relationship with God and one participant that this was not very important. This might be taken as indicating that such participants see little connection between their personal relationship with God and the rest of their lives, faith being for them a fundamentally private domain which does not significantly, if at all, affect personal behaviour, or that the relationship between belief and daily life is a neutral one, neither aspect impinging to any great extent on the other. In general, however, their relationship with God did play a key role in how these particular participants lived their lives and to the attitude and convictions they brought to them.

ii. Help to make life decisions, especially when difficult

This statement was designed to discover whether participants considered that divine guidance was in any way involved in their decision-making, particularly when life was difficult for them. Only 2 participants claimed that God's help in making decisions was not

very important and one that it was neither important nor unimportant, while 5 participants offered no response at all. In general, however, there was once again a largely positive response to this idea, with 10 participants stating that their relationship with God was extremely important in making life-decisions, 13 that this was very important, and 8 that this was fairly important. In all, therefore, 31 participants would say that to some extent they sought the will of God in making decisions, which once again speaks of a deep sense of reliance on God as a firm feature of these participants' spiritualities and a consequent perception of God as able to assist the participants in an effective way with the decisions they have to make.

iii. Help to look outward and to be concerned for other people

In some respects, this statement is similar to the practical one of people demonstrating their belief explored in Question 2, but here the focus is on the relationship with God as providing the motivation to look outward and be concerned for others. From the 33 Participants who stated that this was part of their relationship with God, 13 thought that this was fairly important, 12 very important, and 8 extremely important. Of the other participants, 3 offered no response, 2 claimed that this was of little consequence either way, and one participant that looking outward and being concerned for other people was not very important to them. These latter participants might hold quite a private kind of spirituality, regarding their relationship with God as a matter for themselves alone. For the other 33 participants, however, their ongoing relationship with God encourages them to engage with other people and to share their concerns. Looking outward and engaging with others may even come to be regarded as a Gospel imperative, something incumbent upon all who would seek to be followers of Jesus. With these participants, this does seem to be a primary motivation for both spirituality and action.

iv. Help to look inward and to find personal resources for happiness

This statement is similar to the statement in Question 3, but here the emphasis is on the participant sensing that somehow God is helping them to look inward and to find within themselves the resources for happiness, as opposed to this being the action of the participants themselves. Once again, there were varied results, from those who held that this was of very little importance for their relationship with God (4 people), to those who held it to be

extremely important (3 people); in the middle, there were 2 participants who felt this to be fairly unimportant to them, 3 participants who were neutral about this, 7 who felt it to be fairly important, and 15 that God's help to look inward was very important. Five participants did not offer a response. For the participants who held this to be relatively unimportant, this may indicate that the focus of their relationship with God lies elsewhere and has never expressed itself in having a concern with the self and finding the inner resources for personal happiness. One participant remarked that

> Our age seems obsessed with the individual and what seems to be called 'personal fulfilment,' and it's not right! What's wrong with serving God through serving others, like Jesus and the disciples did? (Male, age 61-70, Church A).

However, there were 25 participants who were convinced that through their relationship with God they were enabled to focus attention within themselves and to then find the inner resources that led to increased happiness. This idea has resonances with the Christian contemplative tradition, whereby through searching for God within we open ourselves up to the life of God and receive an inner transformation, bringing an awareness of our interconnectedness with the whole of creation and of God as the vibrant loving source of all things, with the ultimate goal being a sense of complete union or communion with God. Such a tradition draws on the spirituality and writings of figures like St Augustine of Hippo, who famously wrote: 'You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.'[224] Therefore, whether consciously or unconsciously, it might be said that the participants who are in agreement with this statement fall within the ancient tradition of contemplative prayer and awareness, with the conviction that it is God who has created the urge to seek the divine things within, that there are such things to be found within the self, and that only then will a true sense of happiness be found. To have participants with such diverse views and opinions also reveals the richness of the whole stream of spirituality.

v. Help provide a feeling of reassurance and security

This statement might be said to envisage God as a reassuring parent or a steadfast companion, a source of strength, comfort and guidance whatever the circumstances. This would be in line with certain parts of the biblical tradition such as that found in the Book of

[224] St Augustine of Hippo (354-430), Confessions (London: Penguin Classics, 1st edition, 2002), 1.1.

Psalms, where God is frequently referred to in these sorts of terms, as the following example makes clear:

> The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,
> my God, my rock in whom I take refuge,
> my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold
> … And who is a rock besides our God? –
> the God who girded me with strength,
> and made my way safe.[225]

Such thoughts are also in line with the kind of intimacy implied in Jesus' instruction to his followers to refer to God as Father in Matthew 6: 9 and Luke 11: 1, and especially in the form that he himself uses it in St Mark's Gospel as 'Abba' (14: 36), often translated in the colloquial form as 'Daddy,' which reinforces the sort of intimacy intended.[226] In all, 9 participants responded to this statement with fairly negative views, ranging from no response (1 participant), to no strong opinion (4 participants), and through fairly unimportant (1 participant) and not very important (3 participants). Such a lack of response reveals that these respondents may place a high value on the notion of self-reliance and responsibility for oneself, and therefore that their relationship with God does not include the need for reassurance or security. Yet these respondents are in marked contrast to the majority of the participants, 30 of whom felt that their relationship with God most certainly included a sense of reassurance and security, with 8 believing this to be fairly important, 11 very important, and 11 extremely important. This suggests that for these participants God is very much seen as a source of protection and strength that people can rely on in times of need and when other sources fail. This also speaks of an underlying conviction of a God who cares and is concerned for people; and this would seem to be a major theme in many participants' spirituality.

vi. To be a relationship full of adventure and opportunities, both outwardly and inwardly

[225] Psalm 18: 2, 31. Holy Bible, NRSV. Other examples include Psalm 27: 1, Psalm 31: 21, 23, and Psalm 89: 1-2.

[226] See also Romans 8: 15 and Galatians 4: 6. Holy Bible, NRSV. It is the case, however, that this understanding has been challenged, for instance, by James Barr and Geza Vermes.

This final statement might be regarded as a bit of a 'wild card,' an attempt to discern whether the participants expect their spirituality to provide them with opportunities for faith to be in some way an internal and external adventure. In all, 9 participants gave no response, 3 participants that this was not very important and one that this was fairly unimportant to their relationship with God, while 8 said that it was neither important nor unimportant. Then 8 participants stated that it was fairly important, 7 that it was very important, and 3 that it was extremely important. These results suggest that some participants might see their relationship with God as somewhat passive, equipping them with certain things they perceive as necessary for living their lives but that does not in general include a sense of challenge. Yet for others, it seems that there is this element of adventure and challenge on differing levels. Faith and spirituality may be regarded as more complex, a continuing relationship with God that can change and develop as life goes on, and that does call for some kind of personal response from the participants. It would be illuminating to ask these participants for further details about what they understand by this and to see the sorts of words they elect to use. However, the fact that certain participants see their spirituality as containing these elements indicates a belief in a relationship with God that is an evolving and continuing one – in essence, a pilgrimage.

5.2.5 Definitions of Spirituality

Up to this point, the questions included in this Questionnaire were designed to discover the differing elements that each participant felt were part of their spirituality by offering suggestions about what these might include. This question invited participants to attempt their own definition of what they believed spirituality to mean, with the aim of paying attention to the kinds of words, ideas and themes that emerged from these attempts at definition – what might be termed the overall 'flavour' of each participants' spirituality. The responses given reveal that participants offered definitions that might in broad terms be grouped under five categories:

i. Definitions that used traditional kinds of religious language and ideas;
ii. Definitions that focused on the relationship with God;
iii. Definitions that focused on the interior life of the participants;
iv. Definitions in terms of giving life meaning; and
v. Other definitions not covered by the other categories.

i. Definitions that used traditional kinds of religious language and ideas

> [Spirituality involves] devotion to prayer and praise of the Almighty by devoutly religious people (Male, age 61-70, Church C).

Participants offering these kinds of definitions clearly felt that there was a strong link between religion and spirituality and found traditional language a useful and accessible means of trying to express themselves. The above definition would seem to include a whole host of underlying understandings. Spirituality is directly linked to certain sorts of practices, expressed here as 'devotion' to God, the 'Almighty,' a phrase which in turn indicates a firm belief in an omnipotent Creator. As part of this devotion, acts of 'prayer and praise' are highlighted as important, and with all of this carried out by 'devoutly religious people,' who dedicate themselves to God and the pursuit of these practices. It is a very clear, traditional view of what spirituality might involve, grounded in a religious understanding of faith and life.

Some of these understanding were Trinitarian in emphasis and provided participants with a framework that helped to shape their understanding and its expression, as these statements show:

> [Spirituality concerns] my relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Female, age 51-60, Church A).

> The belief that God exists in the form of three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Female, age 61-70, Church A).

> Believing in God – Resurrection – Life Everlasting. Living life as [God] would have us live it as close as we possibly can. Putting others before ourselves (Female, age 81+, Church C).

Other definitions, while equally traditional in the ideas expressed, were also concerned to place their understanding within a Christocentric framework:

> A belief in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – following Christ's teachings according to the Bible (Unspecified Person, age 61-70, Church A).

> Spirituality means believing in God, the Resurrection, and eternal life. It means attempting to live one's life as Jesus lived his, sharing one's talents that are God-given – helping people and the furtherance of his gospel (Male, age 71-80, Church C).

> Christian spirituality involves the relationship between a person and a holy God who revealed himself in the person of his Son Jesus Christ (Female, age 71-80, Church B).

These definitions might also be said to hark back to ideas found in the Bible where, for instance, in the Letter to the Hebrews mention is made of 'looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.'[227] These sorts of definitions indicate that the participants regard Christianity as essential to their understanding of spirituality. However, one participant's reply, while being clear about their own position, was more reflective:

> The term "spirituality" is not one that I have ever considered or used in relation to my personal faith in Christ. I hear the word used in relation to faith, Christian and other, and also in non-faith contexts … I think I would define my personal "spirituality" as seeking "a closer walk with God, based on my faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour" (Female, age 81+, Church B).

Such a response acknowledges that 'spirituality' can be used in a variety of ways, but for this participant it could only be understood as rooted in their personal faith in Christ. All of these participants used familiar, religion-based ideas to communicate their own understanding of spirituality and might have struggled to refer to it in any other terms.

ii. Definitions that focused on the relationship with God

The participants in this category mainly focused on having a relationship with God of some intimacy which also had an effect on how they felt about themselves. One participant offered a fairly simple definition of spirituality as 'Being close to God' (Female, age 81+, Church C) while others said things like:

> [Spirituality is about] my relationship with God – God *in* me' (Male, age unspecified, Church A).

> [It involves] a feeling of oneness with self and God (Female, age 61-70, Church A).

These replies seem to point to an underlying understanding of immanence and unity in the participants' relationship with God, and a belief that this relationship was distinct from any other they may be involved in. Yet two of the participants offered fuller and more intriguing responses. One participant wrote that they saw spirituality as

> Being interactive with God in everything we do (Male, age 51-60, Church A).

[227] Hebrews 12: 2. Holy Bible, NRSV.

This includes the idea of somehow co-operating in the work of God and having a participating role in the life of creation. This may speak of an understanding of spirituality that seeks to look outward to the world and to respond to its challenges from a position of faith, and which calls upon God to work through them in this task. Here is a spirituality rooted in the idea of a reciprocal relationship with God, acknowledging indebtedness for all that God has done and thereby requiring a personal response by the participant.

The other participant's definition contained a similar set of ideas, but was phrased somewhat differently, stating that

> [Spirituality involves] a continuing conversation and journey with God which is put into practice in daily life (Male, age 61-70, Church B).

This reply captures the notion of a continual dialogue with and an attempt to listen to God in the process of daily living, and the concept of life as a journey or pilgrimage in faith was an important one for this participant. As with earlier replies in the Questionnaire, the participant seems more comfortable with the idea of their spirituality as something that evolves and changes at differing times, and therefore of a relationship with God that is not static or immutable. Their spirituality is an essential strand in their journey with God, and which may sometimes involve an unexpected turn as part of the relationship.

With all the participants here, there is a feeling of connection with God in their understanding of spirituality. For some, this may mean an awareness of the need for a steadfast companion, while others acknowledge the reality of God at a somewhat deeper level within themselves, and then others are inspired by their relationship to endeavour to look outward and to regard life as a spiritual pilgrimage. This shows the variety of perspectives to be found even within a relatively small body of participants.

iii. Definitions that focused on the interior life of the participants

The responses within this category ranged from relatively short ones to more fulsome replies as the participants sought to find the words to give expression to their understanding of spirituality. These shorter responses included replies like '[concerned with] the essence of my being' (Male, unspecified age, Church B), 'an acknowledgement of the inner soul and its connection with God' (Unspecified person, age 61-70, Church B), 'within us' (Female,

age 61-70, Church A), and ‘deep within me’ (Female, age 71-80, Church C). There seems to be an element of wrestling and struggle in such responses, as the participants seek to communicate something that is important to them, but which they cannot quite find the words to express. Other participants spoke about ideas like negating the self and the sense of there being ‘something more’ as regards their spirituality. The following were typical of responses expressing these sorts of themes:

> [Spirituality] gives meaning to life and involves the emotions. It rises above trivialities (Female, unspecified age, Church A).
>
> Concern for others, love of music, poetry, nature – the wonder of the universe (Male, 81+, Church C).
>
> The loss of self – feeling that there is more than you see and are – conscience, telling you something is wrong – being lost in nature, music, whatever – an emptiness and openness for something within yourself that is not vacant or unpleasant but ready for whatever will come (Female, age 61-70, Church B).
>
> A faith in something outside self which guides me but also strengthens me internally, both of which help me to make decisions about how I want to live my life and affect my relationships with others and the world (Unspecified person, age 51-60, Church A).
>
> Spirituality is for me a state of mind, brought about by a Communion Service or beautiful music … I think it is a personal state and everyone will have their own definition of it (Female, age 61-70, Church A).
>
> Contact with and reflection on the spiritual helps me reach hidden parts of myself. Immersion in a communal experience of worship helps me set myself among my fellow humans. Awareness of the multiple means of worship across cultures and millennia helps both (Unspecified person, age 61-70, Church C).

Wonder; immersion in communal experience; openness for something within; a personal state of mind; the hidden parts of the self; something outside which strengthens internally – all these are ideas that speak of there being something within spirituality which adds more to everyday life, a certain quality which these participants recognize they need. Therefore, all of these participants considered their spirituality primarily in terms of something interior, somewhere within themselves – sometimes, deep within themselves – where they might find and commune with God and find the resources they needed to continue their spiritual journeys.

iv. Definitions in terms of giving life meaning.

The participants who offered definitions in this category were mainly concerned with the idea that their spirituality helped to give their lives meaning and that there was a dimension to living and faith beyond the simply material one. So, for example, some participants offered replies such as '[an] awareness that there is more to existence than the world around us' (Male, age 80+, Church B), 'having to do with the human spirit as opposed to temporal/material things' (Female, age 71-80, Church C), and that spirituality involved 'placing more importance on God than on material things' (Female, age 71-80, Church A). But there were a cluster of other responses, including the following:

> [Spirituality involves] a feeling that there is another world apart from this material world, sometimes glimpsed through nature, music, a special person or event etc., which is impossible to fully understand or grasp, linked to a God of love helping to steer and guide us (Female, age 61-70, Church A).

> I would define 'spirituality' as giving meaning to one's life … by knowing and being dedicated to God and trusting in him for guidance in everything I do. I pray for guidance for greater understanding (Female, age 51-60, Church B).

> The belief that we have *not* just evolved from amoeba – there is an outside force – God – from whom somehow this earth, its creatures, nature, and ourselves have emerged. There must be a reason for being here … and maybe try and leave things, or something, better than we found them – in [being] creative in whatever form one chooses and is able (Male, age 61-70, Church C).

The chief concern for these participants might be said to be in the tradition of St Anselm of Canterbury's famous dictum of 'faith seeking understanding,'[228] an attempt to apply reason, logic, and the intellect to the area of spirituality, while acknowledging that a complete answer will never be given. Spirituality is seen here as an abstract, metaphysical concept outside of human sense perception, but which it is believed is relevant and valuable to the participant's relationship with God. This might also be to view spirituality as a journey but an intellectual one rather than an emotional one, and that changes over time as further knowledge is discovered and assimilated. Perhaps this is a type of spirituality that appeals to those of a more cerebral temperament than those who engage with their spirituality on a more emotional level.

[228] St Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109). From Proslogion in Brian Davies and G.R. Evans, Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works (Oxford: University Press, 1998), p.83.

v. Other definitions not covered by the other categories

The responses of a small group of participants could not be classified under any of the above categories, but all expressed how difficult they found the attempt to define spirituality, with one participant candidly writing that 'I *don't* attempt to!' (Female, age 71-80, Church C). Yet the replies of three participants are of especial interest. One participant stated that spirituality was

> A rare quality I hardly ever see in lay people. It's an ability to be completely unfazed by the complexities of life but to hold fast to one's unselfish beliefs in all circumstances, drawing strength from prayer and meditation (Male, age 81+, Church B).

This participant appears to see spirituality as belonging chiefly to the domain of the 'professionally religious,' and involving a rather otherworldly attitude to life in general while 'drawing strength from prayer and meditation' so as to remain focused on 'one's unselfish beliefs in all circumstances,' whatever 'complexities' life may hold. It is an understanding of spirituality as something esoteric and removed from the ordinary things of daily living, perhaps confining spirituality to certain personal activities and practices. This could be said to be an understanding quite often found in the past, but increasingly less in this age; yet clearly, such an approach retains meaning for this participant.

Another participant spoke of spirituality as

> An indefinable quality – surely one of the most difficult words to define. Inwardly, Godlike; in Ireland, we might say "fey" (Female, age 71-80, Church B).

This use of the word "fey" again suggests that spirituality is regarded as something otherworldly, and therefore also substantially confined to certain 'special' types of people. This impression is reinforced when the participant continues:

> It's easier to give examples of people who have, in my opinion, that quality:
> 1) Nelson Mandela (I don't know if he's a Christian) [229]
> 2) Mother Teresa – she had to struggle with her faith
> 3) The Burmese leader most of all – a Buddhist
> From the Bible:
> 4) All the Marys
> 5) Joseph – must have had that quality of goodness
> Of the disciples:
> 6) John (Female, age 71-80, Church B)

[229] The Questionnaire was completed prior to the death of Nelson Mandela on 5th December 2013.

For this participant, spirituality is a 'quality' which incorporates ideas such as goodness, struggle, triumphing over difficulty and times of persecution, openness to God and to being used for God's purposes, and a deep and abiding love for Christ and his message, even if the participant does not know whether one of the persons deemed to have this quality is 'a Christian.' Like the previous participant, the participant shares a sense of spirituality as both distinctive and quite unlike so much in everyday life, but which is a hallmark of a true relationship with God.

With the definition offered by the final participant here, spirituality is once more seen in somewhat mystical terms, but this is combined with a concerted attempt to try to capture words that adequately describe and make sense of particular experiences:

> I am not exactly sure [what spirituality is, but] … well, I have had a few moments in life where things have happened, things I can't explain but they've left an impression … moments when it's felt like God was close, and it was so peaceful … not sure what these meant (Female, age 61-70, Church A).

Despite the struggle to find an appropriate language to help describe what the participant understands as spiritual, this response does show an awareness of spirituality as something that can be shared and incorporate the unusual, and then to somehow try to relate this to God.

These three final participants are all in agreement that attempting to define spirituality is a challenge, yet each has endeavoured to give an honest response that goes some way to expressing what they, and so many others, ultimately find inexpressible, while at the same time acknowledging that it is an important facet of life which in some way helps them to feel a connection with God.

5.2.6 Further Comments

Out of the total of 39 participants, only two people took the opportunity in this section to make further comments. One participant wrote that

> Questionnaires are always difficult to complete, as they are never straight-forward and inevitably don't cover all the issues or opinions involved, and I acknowledge the difficulties of the compiler, trying to focus on the main issue of the research. My main difficulty is that there is no mention of the Christian faith, or of prayer – private or corporate – nor of the Scriptures. Without these, the quest for "spirituality" can

> become self-centred, even self-indulgent, seeking sensations for oneself, rather than focussing on God and worshipping Him (Female, age 81+, Church B).

Clearly, this participant felt that the questionnaire was insufficiently Christocentric in its emphasis and left out some areas, such as prayer and Scripture, which were key elements in their faith, and that without these elements there was the danger of spirituality being too focussed on the individual and their needs and not on their relationship with God.

A similar point was made by the participant who wrote that

> In today's usage, spirituality connotes a blend of humanistic psychology with mystical and esoteric traditions and Eastern religions aimed at personal wellbeing and personal development without any recognition of God, linked to the New Age Movement. This is a travesty of what true spirituality involves – the journeying with God (Unspecified person, age 71-80, Church B).

The concern here seems to be that this kind of approach is overly syncretistic and is therefore insufficiently distinctive, and both participants clearly wish spirituality to be seen mainly in terms of *Christian* spirituality.

5.2.7 Further Participation

As noted, 39 people from the three congregations returned the questionnaire. Of these, 7 people from Church A, 7 from Church B, and 3 from Church C also agreed to take part in a subsequent Research Interview about religion and spirituality, giving a pool of 17 potential participants.

5.3. Summary of Questionnaire Findings

Although completed by a relatively small sample of 39 participants, the replies received to this Questionnaire have revealed an extremely rich and varied understanding of religion and spirituality by people from the Episcopalian tradition living in this rural context, both in terms of what elements are of importance to its nurture and expression and how people define this term.

In general, participants held that life does have meaning and purpose, and that their personal opinions and convictions helped in giving meaning to life. Demonstrating belief in action was also seen as important, as was the need to be part of some kind of religious or

worshipping community and to be in a personal relationship with God, however this was to be interpreted, and which for a majority of participants included an understanding of some kind of sacred presence in nature. Yet personal and spiritual growth was not regarded as one of the chief goals in life, nor did a majority of participants feel that all spiritual truth came from within the individual, and there was some disagreement regarding the necessity of involvement in organised religion in order to access spiritual truths.

When it came to where participants felt closest to God, a broad range of responses was offered and highlighted as important to participants, and included attendance at religious services, being among creation, and helping others. Interestingly, quite a number of participants also felt that they found God most fully when they sought the deeper things in themselves, however participants understood this inner quest. One participant also emphasised the vital place of a daily 'Quiet Time' as where they found God most fully on a regular basis.

In seeking to understand how the participants believed that their relationship with God was of benefit to them and how this was nourished, many of the participants stated how important this relationship was in how they lived their lives and in helping them to be somehow 'better people.' Many participants also wrote of how this relationship provided them with feelings of security and reassurance, helped them to make difficult life-decisions, and encouraged them to be more concerned with helping other people. There was, however, slightly less agreement from the participants regarding whether their relationship with God helped them to look inward and to find their resources for personal happiness, with some finding that the focus of their relationship lay elsewhere. Similarly, opinion was fairly evenly divided as to whether the participants' relationship with God included a sense of providing adventure and opportunities for them, with some seeing this as needful while others seemed content with a more passive understanding. As for those participants who offered more negative responses, either in terms of active disagreement or of a more neutral attitude, it might be said that their responses are mainly significant regarding action towards others, seeking inner truth, and the need for involvement in organized religion where the disagreement figures are highest. In addition, consistently throughout the responses there was one participant who seemed to disagree or regard as very unimportant virtually all possible responses.

As an overall picture, these responses help to make clear the contrast there can be between people whose religion and spirituality is more inclined to be outwardly-focused and to include interaction with others and those who are in general more inwardly-focused, seeing their personal relationship with God as their primary concern; although there will, inevitably, be degrees of variation in this over-arching picture. All of this is, however, a necessary undergirding for all that the participants then go on to state about their spirituality.

However, the most fascinating part of this Research Questionnaire concerned seeing the sorts of words and ideas that the participants used to describe their spirituality, and then the attempt to interpret and analyse these definitions. As outlined above, the definitions included those containing traditional religious ideas and coached in traditional language, mainly of a Christian nature; definitions that centred on the participant's individual relationship with God; those who saw spirituality mainly in terms of depth and their inner life; and those definitions which focused on the idea of spirituality as providing a sense of meaning, as well as a few definitions which were fairly distinct. In broad terms, these definitions reveal:

- the utilization of orthodox religious language and concepts to communicate understandings;
- a concern with ideas of immanence, oneness and unity, with God and sometimes with other people;
- a personal dialogue with God and somehow participating in the work of God and to respond to the challenges of life in the world;
- the working of the human spirit – and the Holy Spirit – within the deeper life of the person; and
- an over-riding conviction that spirituality in some way has a place in helping life to have more meaning.

The extent to which so many of the participants sought to express themselves with integrity was impressive, and often clearly involved a struggle to find the words that really communicated the essence of their experience or belief. This indicates the complex but dynamic nature of spirituality for these participants, that spirituality is expressed in many different ways, but it reveals a real concern for a relationship with God that is profoundly deep, often evolving, and that meets people's personal needs as they live as Christians in this part of Scotland.

Having gained a general picture of how the respondents to the Questionnaire see spirituality, in Chapter 6 I will outline the results of the Research Interviews. I will use material from the Questionnaire as a basis for some of the questions, particularly as regards how the participants define spirituality, their attitude to the idea of a personal spirituality and the relationship they see between religion and spirituality, and how their spiritualities are nurtured and sustained. In addition, I will investigate the participants' religious backgrounds, how they see their faith now, in what ways their involvement with the Scottish Episcopal Church may influence their spiritualities, and any further information the participants may wish to offer. My aim here is to further address Research Goal 2, to investigate the personal Lived Religion of twelve Episcopalian Christians from these churches.

CHAPTER 6

THE RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter I describe and analyse the results of the twelve one-to-one Research Interviews with participants. These have been selected from the seventeen people who initially expressed a willingness to take part. Initially, I had hoped to include four participants from each of the three congregations. However, some people later decided not to be involved and for some a convenient time for a conversation could not be found, but twelve people from across the churches were willing and able to participate. Of these, four participants worshipped at Church A, six at Church B, and two at Church C; the slight preponderance of participants from Church B was due to the above factors of willingness and availability. However, in terms of the numbers and ages these might be said to be broadly representative of each of the congregations,[230] with Church B consisting generally of professional retired people over the age of 70, Church A consisting of a slightly younger and more socially mixed age group, and the small congregation at Church C consisting of a group of people ranging from their mid-forties to their mid-eighties.

The twelve Research Interviews took place over a period of just over a year, and apart from one were mostly held in the participants' own homes as this was felt to be an environment where they could be most relaxed. The participants were each given the Participant Information Sheet and a copy of the Research Interview questions in advance of the Interview, and the Consent Form was read and signed at the start of each one. For the purposes of confidentiality, I refer to

[230] See 3.4a, 3,4b, 3.4c, 3.4d, 3.4e, and 3.4f.

each participant in terms of their gender and the church they attend according to the order in which the Interview took place. The Interviews took place on the following dates:

- Female 1, Church A – Saturday 15th June 2013
- Female 2, Church B – Tuesday 30th July 2013
- Male 1, Church C – Wednesday 14th August 2013
- Male 2, Church B – Monday 26th August 2013
- Female 3, Church A – Wednesday 11th September 2013
- Male 3, Church B – Tuesday 20th October 2013
- Male 4, Church A – Saturday 11th January 2014
- Female 4, Church B – Tuesday 10th February 2014
- Male 5, Church B – Saturday 1st March 2014
- Female 5, Church A – Saturday 12th April 2014
- Male 6, Church B – Thursday 15th May 2014
- Female 6, Church C - Sunday 29th June 2014

The questions used in each of the Research Interviews were the same each time and are included as Appendix V. I have arranged the responses to questions thematically, using the headings developed in 2.6 as the structure for each section. These are:

- Religious Background
- Faith Now
- Spirituality
  - i. Definition
  - ii. Personal Spirituality
  - iii. Religion and Spirituality
- Religious and Spiritual Nurture
- The Scottish Episcopal Church
- Other Comments

In their responses, the participants shared a great deal of material with me, so for the purposes of manageability I have chosen to select quotations germane to my purpose of discerning the participants' Lived Religion and to collate and analyse these quotations around the above headings. This requires me to be judicious in my selection; and given that during the research process it has been pointed out to me that I have an unconscious tendency to privilege some of the participants' voices over others, and acknowledging the impropriety of doing so, I will seek to address this by being as generous as possible in my selection and to include responses from all the participants as far as possible and as appropriate to the aims of this research, in order to present as full a picture as possible of the participants' Lived Religion. Clearly this will involve bearing in mind the material on Lived Religion outlined in Chapter 3 and will also involve separating out what the participants have said from my reflection and analysis of this, in the light of my overall purpose. Therefore, as part of the above structure each section will be subdivided into two parts. The first part will consider the results of my findings as described in the participants' responses, and as appropriate will be categorised under further subheadings to aid clarification. This is intended as a record of the participants' words with minimal commentary, selected in view of their appropriateness regarding the subject matter of the Research Interview questions. The second part will include further reflection and analysis of these responses, where possible with reference to Albertz's institutional and local levels of religion and the personal level as I use this term to discern the differing ways in which the participants' religiosity is influenced and expressed. Also, as noted in the Introduction to this thesis analysis will be supplemented by researcher field notes where appropriate. The overall aim with both is to provide material for the final chapter, where based upon this I shall present the characteristics of an Episcopalian Lived Religion.

6.2 Religious Background

As explained in 2.5.4.2, this question was designed to give participants the opportunity to reflect on what they saw as significant in their religious background, such as important figures, formative places and experiences, and other aspects they saw as relevant. These could be of a positive or negative kind, and the aim is to discern how the elements identified may influence their Lived Religion now.

6.2.1 Results

The participants' responses can be categorised under two headings: a) early experiences and influences; and b) involvement in other churches.

a. Early Experiences and Influences

Several participants spoke about things from their earlier life that helped them to learn about religion, and what they describe might be seen as a typical religious upbringing for children of their generation:

> I was active in an Episcopal Church … and it was a lovely time – Sunday school, picnics, Youth Group, and so on … all my family were involved.[231]
>
> I attended Sunday school at a local church each week … We always had a special Christmas party, with presents … and a picnic in the summer, with games and races … it was all great fun.[232]
>
> I was born into a Church of Scotland family and told about Jesus from an early age, then attended Sunday school and the Youth Fellowship.[233]
>
> We all went to the children's services … I got to know traditional hymns and Bible stories … a lovely background [that] provided a sound basis for my later faith.[234]
>
> I was brought up in the Church of England, but also went to a Gospel Hall Sunday school and a Methodist Guide Company … There was singing and stories, and a sticker with a Bible verse on that you collected each week and put in a book.[235]
>
> I joined the Scouts and we had a church parade every month – our Scout Master was a staunch Methodist.[236]
>
> I was confirmed at the age of nine at a high Anglican Church ... I then became a server very quickly! Then when I was at secondary school a local church, which had cathedral-

[231] Female 1, Church A.

[232] Male 1, Church C.

[233] Female 2, Church B.

[234] Female 3, Church A.

[235] Female 5, Church A.

[236] Male 6, Church B.

> style worship, wanted boys for the choir. I brought a group of boys there, was asked to stay, and did so for the next thirty-five years![237]

Others also mention involvement with the church choir and serving at the Eucharist. Some participants also spoke of the role of members of their families in their religious background:

> I was … baptized in the Church of Ireland, and we were a very religious family – church twice every Sunday, involved in the choir, and I taught in the Sunday school … It was a big village church … we were always involved, as were most people in the village. It encouraged in me a great interest in, and love for, the Christian faith and the role of the Church. This has never wavered.[238]

> My mother used to kneel with us by our beds every night to say our prayers. She told us that this was the best way to end the day.[239]

> At the age of eight I joined the choir at our local church, where my aunt was the organist, my father the lead tenor, and my brother was in the choir too. We had two services every Sunday and two choir practices each week.[240]

> At University … our Hall of Residence had its own chapel, and I attended on a very regular basis, sometimes attending daily services.[241]

> I … started going to church in my late teens, and this was in the Prayer Book Catholic tradition.[242]

Two participants spoke of the important role of religion within their education:

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[237] Male 5, Church B.

[238] Female 4, Church B.

[239] Female 5, Church A.

[240] Male 3, Church B.

[241] Male 1, Church C.

[242] Male 6, Church B. The meaning of this phrase has been described by Fr. Steven Shaver, an Episcopal priest in Santa Rosa, California: 'What does it mean to be a "Prayer Book Catholic"? It means following a way of being a Christian that is grounded in scripture and in the theology of the earliest centuries of the church. It means loving the sacraments, the liturgical year, and the daily rhythm of prayer. It means practicing the liturgical life of the Book of Common Prayer as fully as possible. It means being a Christian in a way that is catholic and reformed, progressive and orthodox, ancient and modern, all at the same time. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, [some] Anglicans who sought a richer, deeper, sacramental life under the influence of the Oxford Movement … looked to specifically Anglican ways of doing things, believing that the Prayer Book was fully capable of supporting a rich catholic liturgical life …. Many of this strand called themselves "Prayer Book Catholics."' See www.prayerbookcatholic.org 'What's a Prayer Book Catholic? 'February 19, 2018.

> In my early years I was taught to say my prayers by my mother … [At my public school] we had prayers at the beginning of each school day from the Book of Common Prayer and using the Authorised Version of the Bible … On Sundays there was always a service in the chapel, as well as Evensong at the Cathedral … Then at University, I became involved in the Christian Union and with a local church … There was a lot of emphasis on extempore prayer and giving your life to Christ. [243]

> My introduction to the Church was through the Church of Ireland … My father and his mother were very committed Christians, and my grandfather quietly so. One of my earliest memories is of my father praying at night, kneeling by his bed … I attended a church primary school, and … there was a close link between the church and the school … faith was very important … [At boarding school] every day our lessons were preceded by a service in the school chapel, and religious education was very firmly on the curriculum … This was all part and parcel of growing up.[244]

Some participants also talked of how they had 'lapsed' from involvement in church life, but some explained that they retained a link with the church:

> When I was about sixteen, the usual thing happened – I rebelled and lapsed … But I got married [in the church] and both my children were baptized there.[245]

> I slightly lapsed from church for a few years as I had to work at weekends. But I'd sometimes try to get to a service during the week.[246]

> In my late teens I just drifted off, although [the church] left a deep impression on me … [and this] had quite an effect later.[247]

> During my secondary education, I attended Sunday school less regularly than previously … [and during my] National Service church attendance wasn't a significant factor.[248]

> When I was eighteen, I went to college and had a complete break from church. This wasn't a falling out, but more like other things were more interesting and immediate.[249]

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[243] Male 2, Church B.

[244] Male 4, Church A.

[245] Female 1, Church A.

[246] Female 5, Church A.

[247] Female 2, Church B.

[248] Male 1, Church C.

[249] Female 6, Church C.

Yet one participant's experience was more complex. She said:

> I … started to tail off from church for a while [in my early teens]. But when I was fifteen, I had an evangelical conversion experience … and I was very 'into' religion for a number of years ... Then it all vanished ... There was too much emotion, and the whole thing went ... I went from feeling myself at the centre of my faith and Christian life, and that God really loved me, to having this huge, unfillable vacuum ... a horrible experience that absolutely terrified me … I sat fairly lightly to [church attendance] for many years, though I tried to go at Easter and maybe a few other occasions, but … too much had happened to me with religion to really feel comfortable with it.[250]

Apart from the last participant, these responses all point to the positive role for the participants of the Church in its institutional sense, as a place of learning, community, leisure, and celebration. Some also cited how influential their school education had been, and some spoke of the lasting impression made on them by the religious practices of members of their family. Finally, some also mentioned how they did not attend church for a time and the meaning they gave to this.

b. Involvement in Other Churches

Another feature of all the participants' religious background is that each of them had also been involved in different churches at one time or another. For instance, eight participants had been part of the Church of England, two of the Church of Ireland, and five had been active members of the Church of Scotland. One participant also retained strong links with the Methodist Church, and two of the participants had also been involved in churches in parts of the West Indies and Africa. Again, the words the participants used to describe their involvement were varied:

> Life in Ireland really centred on the church … [and] faith was so much a part of life.[251]

> The services in the Episcopal Church are closest to what I was used to in the Church of England, and I find this useful.[252]

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[250] Female 3, Church A.

[251] Female 4, Church B.

[252] Male 5, Church B.

> I was involved in a local Anglican church, teaching in the Pathfinders' Group and the Bible class, helping people to learn more about God and discover his relevance for today in ways that were interesting … It felt right to be doing that.'[253]

Some Anglican participants said that when they first came to live in Scotland they decided to worship with the Church of Scotland, often referred to as 'the Kirk.' For some, this was because it was the nearest local church but more often because it was the Established Church and some participants assumed it would be like the Church of England. They found that it was not. One participant said:

> When I moved here, I thought I'd see what the Church of Scotland was like, thinking it would be like the Anglican Church. But it was so different – in fact, too different, in its style of worship and the message that was preached. Then I found the Episcopal Church, and that was much more like I had been used to.[254]

Other participants expressed their experience of the Church of Scotland in different ways:

> As an Englishman who came to live in Scotland, I thought I should attend the local Church of Scotland church, but I wasn't very happy with the services. They seemed to lack something, with little participation from anyone apart from the Minister … The worship in the Episcopal Church was closest to the tradition I had been brought up in, and so I came to worship here.[255]

> I don't find worship in the Church of Scotland very satisfying. Their services can send you away feeling a bit depressed.[256]

> I got involved in the Church of Scotland because my new husband went there … but the Kirk services could be a bit 'wishy-washy' – good, but a bit 'surface,' and didn't really feed me in the way Episcopal worship does.[257]

> At services in the Church of Scotland … the Minister generally did whatever he or she felt like![258]

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[253] Male 2, Church B.

[254] Female 3, Church B.

[255] Male 1, Church C.

[256] Male 3, Church B.

[257] Female 1, Church A.

[258] Female 5, Church A.

> I attended the local Kirk, but I was really put off. There was no participation … and it was all a bit joyless![259]

The participant who had been part of the Methodist Church as a child later returned to the church in her late twenties, feeling that this was 'natural' to do:

> It suited me … [offering] a social group of like-minded people of around my age … and having a social justice focus [that] also struck a chord, grounding Christian truths in everyday life. I was known, welcomed, and nurtured … in the right place at the right time.'[260]

The two participants who had worshipped in churches in other parts of the world described their experiences:

> Worship in places like Trinidad and Barbados felt very real, very sincere … I suppose I've been searching for that ever since, but I haven't really found it again.[261]

> In Africa we attended churches which were more Catholic in style, and I loved this. The people there took their religion seriously, and the services were always conducted in a dignified manner, which I think is appropriate.[262]

In addition, there were some participants who had been indirectly influenced by other religious traditions, such as the participant who mentioned her Welsh Congregationalist mother's approach to churchgoing ('To me, churchgoing is very important … I suppose I follow my mother's ideas in this')[263] and the participant who had discussions 'with a Plymouth Brethren brother and a member of the Calvinistic Methodist Church'[264] about differing issues that helped the participant to formulate his religious views.

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[259] Male 4, Church A.

[260] Female 6, Church C.

[261] Female 2, Church B.

[262] Male 6, Church B.

[263] Female 5, Church A.

[264] Male 2, Church B. The Calvinistic Methodist Church is a Protestant Christian denomination closely allied to Presbyterianism. It originated in Wales in 1735-1736 with the evangelistic preaching of Howell Harris, Daniel Rowlands, and others. In Wales it is considered to be the only denomination that is distinctly Welsh in origin and has developed into one of the most important Welsh nonconformist churches. The Methodist societies that evolved under the Welsh revivalists were so organised as to prevent any break with the Established Church. They were for

In sum, the participants spoke of their involvement in other Christian denominations in both positive and negative terms, emphasising the church as a community focus, the role of participation, and the need for worship they found inspiring, as well as some valuing the familiarity in Episcopalian worship with services they had known elsewhere.

6.2.2 Analysis

The comments made by several participants would seem to point to the major impact of forms of structured religious development for many children in previous generations and shows engagement on Albertz's local level of religion. The participants' responses make clear the lasting impression that such involvement made on them, with the role of the Sunday school as especially noteworthy. Originally created to encourage the basic education of poor children, as day schools became mainstream during the nineteenth century, and particularly after the Elementary Education Act of 1870 and the establishment of board schools,[265] the focus of Sunday schools moved solely to religious education. Essentially, the teaching in Sunday schools emphasised Biblical doctrine, religious observance, and the development of moral character. Studies have shown that these were widely attended and that in the early to mid-twentieth century the vast majority of children in Britain attended Sunday school at some point.[266]

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a time associated with the Methodist societies in England; for six years from about 1742, George Whitefield was the leader of the Welsh Calvinists. Those in England who accepted his views, as opposed to the Arminian doctrines taught by John Wesley, either remained within the Church of England, joined the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, or in time became affiliated with the Congregationalists or Independents. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, however, held their own vigorously and grew in numbers. Thomas Charles of Bala, who joined them in 1784, was a leader of wide influence in religious and educational work. In 1811 they formally separated from the Established Church and set up a new church. which was Presbyterian in polity, and in 1823 a confession of faith was adopted; later theological schools were founded at Bala and Trevecca. The church was formally guaranteed autonomy in 1933. See David Ceri Jones, Boyd Stanley Schlenther and Eryn Mant White, The Elect Methodists: Calvinistic Methodism in England and Wales, 1735-1811 (Lampeter: University of Wales Press, 2012).

[265] See Thomas Preston, The Elementary Education Act, 1870 (Sydney: Wentworth Press, 2019).

[266] See Lorraine A. Cook, 'The contribution of nonconformity to elementary education in Swansea from the mid-Victorian era.' History of Education, 26, no.1, March 1997, pp.41-53. Also, Naomi Thompson writes about the changes that have taken place in relation to Sunday schools: 'I and several researchers have noted that Sunday school attendance peaked in the early 20th century: Doreen Rosen estimated that three-quarters of school age children in England were on Sunday school registers … [while] the Congregational minister H. A. Hamilton suggested that, in the mid-20th century, 80 per cent of those attending were from non-churchgoing families. My own research, however, found a rapid and long-term decline during the 1960s; by the early 1970s, Sunday schools were primarily used by church families only … [Today] what started as an outreach movement

Therefore, at least in its origins if not in its later practice, the ethos of the Sunday school might be said to have encouraged an approach not unlike Lived Religion and in their responses both here and to other questions many participants allude to the importance of the emphases encouraged in Sunday schools, especially regarding religious observance and the place of the Bible.[267]

For other participants, it was the personal level of religion that was most influential and demonstrated in particular through the example of family members, shown as they recall, for instance, seeing parents or being with them as they knelt praying by the bed at night[268] or joining the church choir where other members of the family were involved. The role of the family in religious socialization has been explored by a number of scholars, who in general support the belief that parents provide a positive influence on the beliefs and practices of their children to differing extents.[269] In reflecting on these responses, I recorded my impressions of what I had been told in a field note:

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is now, at worst, little more than childcare provision. At best, it offers children the chance to engage with the Christian faith, but rarely for those outside the church community.' See Naomi Thompson, 'From grass-roots education to Sunday child-minding,' Church Times, 12 January 2018. See also Philip B. Cliff, The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England, 1780-1980 (Nutfield: National Christian Education Publications, 1986); Stephen Orchard and John H. Y. Briggs (eds), The Sunday School Movement: Studies in the Growth and Development of Sunday Schools (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2007); Naomi Thompson, Young People and Church since 1900: Engagement and Exclusion (London: Routledge, 2017), especially Chapter 2, 'From Raikes revolution to rigid institution: Sunday schools in twentieth century England.'

[267] This will also be explored in 6.5 regarding the participants' religious and spiritual nurture.

[268] Female 5, Church A, and Male 4, Church A.

[269] See, for instance, Marie Cornwall, 'The Influence of Three Agents of Religious Socialization: Family, Church, and Peers,' in Darwin L. Thomas (ed.), The Religion and Family Connection: Social Science Perspectives (Provo: Religious Studies Centre, Brigham Young University, 1988), pp.207-231; Simone A. de Roos, 'Young Children's God Concepts: Influences of Attachment and Religious Socialization in a Family and School Context.' Religious Education, Volume 101, Issue 1, 2006, pp.84-103; Bernadette C. Hayes and Yvonne Pittelkow, 'Religious Belief, Transmission, and the Family: An Australian Study.' Journal of Marriage and Family, Volume 55, Number 3, 1993, pp.755-766; Jan Horwath, Janet Lees, and Peter Sidebotham, 'The Influence of Religion on Adolescent Family Life in England: An Explanatory Study of the Views of Young People and Parents.' Social Compass, Volume 59, Issue 2, 2012, pp.257-275; and Janet Lees and Jan Horwath, '" Religious Parents … Just Want the Best for Their Kids": Young People's Perspectives on the Influence of Religion on Parenting.' Children and Society, Volume 23, Issue 3, 2009, pp.162-175. See also Marianne Holm Pedersen, 'Islam in the Family: The Religious Socialization of Children in a Danish Provincial Town,' in Mark Sedgwick (ed). Making European Muslims: Religious Socialization among Young Muslims in Scandinavia and Western Europe (Abingdon: Routledge: 2015), pp.21-38

> Many of the participants speak of the important role both of what they had been encouraged to do and what they had observed others doing. Whether it was seeing a father 'kneeling by his bed' or told that to do so was 'the best way to end the day,' or to join in with church music because so many other family members were involved, or to be part of a routine of daily prayer with others, or discovering the benefits of regular, sustained worship for oneself, these early experiences in life can leave profound and lasting impression. More than anything, I found myself thinking that the seriousness with which others approached and treated religious practices and convictions surely helped to make these come alive for others, and to become key elements in their developing personal religiosity and its subsequent growth into Lived Religion. [270]

Sometimes, however, differing levels of religion come together in the participants' experiences, in ways that it is difficult and undesirable to separate and treat as distinct. For example, two participants highlighted the link between the church and their school education. Here is an example of two institutions intermingling, resulting in influences on the participants on the local and personal levels of religion. The participants recall daily chapel services as 'all part and parcel of growing up,'[271] and the use of the Book of Common Prayer and the Authorised Version of the Bible in these services,[272] making clear the influential role of the church and its worship within their educational experiences. The role of the established church in public school education from the early nineteenth century has been explored by several scholars,[273] and the nature of the kind of religious outlook that was encouraged within English public schools well into the twentieth century is described by Robert Freathy in his comments on Thomas Arnold, Headmaster of Rugby School from 1827 to 1842:

> [For] Arnold … the aim of education [was] to inculcate religion and moral principles, gentlemanly conduct, and intellectual ability … He called for religion to rise above being a *subject of teaching* and instead become a *way of living* through which pupils learn to

[270] Field Note, July 2015.

[271] Male 4, Church A.

[272] Male 2, Church B.

[273] See, for instance, John Chandos, Boys Together: English Public Schools, 1800-1864 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007 and Trevor May, The Victorian Public School (London: Bloomsbury, 2010); see also Howard J. Worsley (ed), Anglican Church School Education: Beyond the First Two Hundred Years (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

> know and love God and goodness … Arnold was determined to produce gentlemen who were manly-minded, conscious of duty, morally thoughtful, and good.[274]

Freathy states that Arnold's ideas pervaded the public-school system by associating Christian education with citizenship and character training. When this became combined with an emphasis on team sports, fitness and 'manliness,' the idea of what has been termed 'Muscular Christianity' gained in popularity. Essentially, the notion of Muscular Christianity exhorted British boys to develop their manhood and their piety simultaneously by emphasising that as one's body is primarily a gift from God, then there is the responsibility to maintain it in prime shape through exercise and athletic competition, but that this lead not only to physical health but to strong morals and the proper overall orientation of one's life. Muscular Christianity sought to address the concerns of boys directly, not abstractedly, in order that they could apply religion to their lives.[275] As such and adopting Arnold's emphasis on religion as 'a way of living,' Muscular Christianity can be regarded as a type of Lived Religion. As the participants' comments indicate, at least the vestige of this idea could still be found within their experience of education in the last decades of the twentieth century. However, for one participant the lasting influence of this can particularly be seen. For instance, he talked about some medical treatment he needed to have and then spoke in a way that directly related to his religious outlook. He said:

> Following my treatment … I really appreciate that by the good will of God I'm still able to do things, like my running and taking part in sport, to use my physical body. Being able to be active is certainly a gift. But I also recognise that it's a gift that will disappear

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[274] See Robert J. K. Freathy, 'Three Perspectives on Religious education for Citizenship in English Schools, 1934-1944: Cyril Norwood, Ernest Simon, and William Temple.' British Journal of Religious Education, 30 (2), March 2008, pp.103-112, p.2. See also Norman Atkinson, Irish Education: A History of Educational Institutions (Dublin: Allen Figgis, 1969); Lesley Whiteside, A History of the King's Hospital (Dublin: The King's Hospital, 1975); and Sheelagh Drudy and Kathleen Lynch, Schools and Society in Ireland (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1993).

[275] One of the first descriptions of Muscular Christianity was expressed by the novelist Thomas Hughes (1822-1896), who wrote: '[It] is a good thing to have strong and well-exercised bodies … The least of the muscular Christians has hold of the old chivalrous and Christian belief that a man's body is given him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men.' See Thomas Hughes, Tom Brown at Oxford (New York: Macmillan and Co.,1895), p.113. For further studies on Muscular Christianity, see also James A. Mangan and James Walvin, Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987); Donald E. Hall (ed), Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Malcolm Tozer, Education in Manliness: The Legacy of Thring's Uppingham (London: Routledge, 2018).

> if I don't use it … I see those who are unable to do things, and think: 'There but *for* the grace of God …' I try to keep this in the forefront of my mind and be aware of how much I must give thanks for.[276]

This suggests that, as someone who has always enjoyed physical activities, a recent experience of illness and treatment has meant that the participant appreciates anew the fact that he can continue to use his body in physical ways and interprets this as a sign of God's goodness and faithfulness. This deep gratitude for his physical strength is combined with the belief in a responsibility to keep that gift in a suitably fit condition, or to risk it being no longer available. This might also seem to echo St Paul's words in his Letters to the Corinthians,[277] of our human bodies as containers for God's Holy Spirit., ideas which in turn might be said to hark back to this participant's Irish Protestant heritage, where the notion of the human body as having the indwelling Holy Spirit within it was probably expressed quite prominently and carrying with it a commensurate responsibility of care. What is significant for him is that in the light of his own experience, this idea is now far more than a theoretical idea to be obeyed, but something he holds it is right to give God thanks for because of his experience and out of gratitude for its continuation. Also, in later speaking of what he felt he gained from being involved in the Scottish Episcopal Church, this participant's words again show the abiding influence of his earlier teaching:

> Involvement in the Scottish Episcopal Church presents me with … the opportunity for leadership – stepping up to the mark when you feel there's a need for action, and the opportunity to apply one's skills in a variety of ways.[278]

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[276] Male 4, Church A.

[277] 'Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys god's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple' (1 Corinthians 3:16-17); 'Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body' (1 Corinthians 6: 19-20); 'For we are the temple of the living God' (2 Corinthians 6:16b). Holy Bible, NRSV.

[278] Male 4, Church A.

The phrases 'opportunity for leadership' and 'stepping up to the mark' belongs within the ethos of Muscular Christianity and their usage strongly indicates how firmly this participant's religious background effected his practice of Lived Religion throughout his later life.

As also noted, several participants also spoke of having 'lapsed' from churchgoing for a time. This phenomenon relates especially to the personal level of religion as I have used this term, whereby participants begin to reconsider and question the approach to religion they had been encouraged to adopt. This could be regarded as a normal part of growth, development, and exploration for young people, summarized by the participant who said that there had been 'no falling out [with the church] but more like other things were more immediate and interesting.'[279] This was not the case, however, for the participant who had a traumatic teenage conversion experience. Following the interview with her, I made a field note to try to understand what had been shared with me:

> Clearly, this participant had been through a traumatic time in relation to her conversion experience. Her need to recover from this, her wariness of religion especially of the emotional variety, and her discomfort with religion for many years, was understandable. She needed to gain a new understanding of religion from the one she had been encouraged to adopt as a teenager, yet like other participants it seems that an underlying, positive link with religion remained, and later she was able to build on this and come to a different, more balanced, understanding of what a relationship with God can involve.[280]

The participant also added some further information about what happened following her experience:

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[279] Female 6, Church C. Some Christians, however, see 'lapsing' as a worrying and growing trend. For instance, the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales has an annual Home Mission Sunday on the third Sunday in September to engage with what one priest has described as 'what should be a deep concern for each of us …[for] it's estimated] that … there are at least four million [people] who rarely or never visit a church … those whom we variously describe as lapsed, resting, or non-practicing. In response to this [our] Bishops … invite all parishes … to recognise this alarming situation and make it a special priority … to make contact, to invite and encourage non-churchgoing Catholics to return to practice.' See Monsignor John Corcoran, in the Parish News Sheet of the Parish of Our Lady of the Valley, Clitheroe, Lancashire, 13th September 2013. See also Philip Richter, 'Gone but not quite out of the frame: the distinctive problem of researching religious disaffiliation,' and Friedrich Schweitzer, 'Religious affiliation and disaffiliation in late adolescence and early adulthood: the impact of a neglected period of life,' in Leslie J. Francis and Yaacov J. Katz (eds), Joining and Leaving Religion: Research Perspectives (Leominster: Gracewing, 2000), pp.21-32 and pp.87-102.

[280] Field Note, September 2013.

> I had six years of psychotherapy, and eventually this was an amazing experience for me. I also read what Carl Jung said about the *content* of religion, of the Self as being the same as Christ in terms of content, and this became very important to me. For a time, I felt that if Christ was within me then there was really no need for things like the Church. I could connect with God by going deeper into myself. [281]

The participant explained that her Jungian therapist helped her to understand all that she had experienced, and especially the importance of archetypes, a term much used in Jungian analysis.[282] In general terms, in the Jungian approach to Christ differentiation is made between Jesus, the historical figure from Nazareth, and the archetypal Christ, the Redeemer.[283] This would also tie-in with her own thoughts, as when she said that 'For a time I felt that if Christ was within me then there was really no need for things like the Church,' which may itself be said to be in tune with a classic Jungian proposition that in order to discover experientially the "Christ within" or the Self, one must withdraw all projections from an historical or external Christ figure, which in Christian terms means Jesus of Nazareth.[284] Later, alongside the psychotherapeutic insights she had received, this participant was also able to recapture certain aspects from her childhood experience of faith, such as what she termed the theological insights from the 'great hymns' and her devotion to the Eucharist, and to incorporate these into her adult

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[281] Female 3, Church A.

[282] In Jungian psychology, archetypes refer to a collectively inherited unconscious idea, pattern of thought, image, and more, and regarded as universally present in individual psyches. The use of dream interpretation, and especially in psychoanalysis, has been a standard technique since the publication of Sigmund Freud's work The Interpretation of Dreams in 1900 (see Sigmund Freud and Stephen Wilson, The Interpretation of Dreams (*Classics of World Literature*) (London: Wordsworth, 1997) and has contributed significantly to the successful treatment of clients. Typically in Jungian analysis, however, the client and the analyst will work through the dreams together, approaching dreams as messengers from the unconscious that contain symbolic meanings of significance to the dreamer. See C. G. Jung Man and his Symbols (New York: Dell Publications, 1968), and Memories, Dreams, Reflections (Waukegan: Fontana Press, 1995); also James Albert Hill Dream Interpretation: A Handbook of Theory and Practice (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1983).

[283] This is explored by Dr Jerry Wright, an American Jungian analyst and Presbyterian minister. See 'Christ, a Symbol of the Self' in C.G. Jung Society of Atlanta Quarterly News, Fall 2001, pp.6-8, at www.jungatlanta.com.

[284] Indeed, Jung himself wrote that "The Self or Christ is present in everybody *a priori*, but as a rule in an *unconscious* condition to begin with. But it is a definite *experience* of later life, when the fact becomes *conscious* ... It is only real when it *happens*, and it can only happen when you withdraw your projections from an *outward* historical or metaphysical Christ and thus *wake up* Christ within." From C.G. Jung, The Symbolic Life: Miscellaneous Writings in The Collected Works of C.G. Jung Volume 18 (Princeton: University Press, 1977), paragraph 1638. For further discussion, see Christopher Bryant, Jung and the Christian Way (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983), and Depth Psychology and Religious Belief (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1987).

religiosity. It might be said that this participant is the first to strongly emphasise the importance of personal experience to her Lived Religion.

Finally, some of the participants spoke about their involvement in other Christian denominations, which again relates to a combination of Albertz's local level with the personal level of religion. Some research has been undertaken on those who switch denomination in the field of congregational studies,[285] but here it can be said that for those participants who had been involved in churches with an episcopal form of government, like the Church of England and the Church of Ireland, the transition of coming to Scotland and joining the Scottish Episcopal Church was a fairly smooth one, due to the similarity in forms of worship and the organisation and exercise of congregational life. Similarly, the participants who had been involved in the Methodist Church and in churches abroad also expressed little difficulty. Yet several participants said that they found worship in the Church of Scotland uncongenial because it was so different from what they had previously experienced. This was expressed in phrases like 'the services … seemed to lack something,'[286] '[not] very satisfying,'[287] 'no participation,'[288] and 'the Minister generally did whatever he or she felt like.'[289] In addition to the recognition of the role of familiarity, such phrases also indicated the implicit importance for these participants of worship as a communal celebration engaged in *by* the community and not as something led by an individual *on behalf of* the community. This is also consistent with the Episcopal Church's

[285]See, for instance, Richard Breen and Bernadette C. Hayes, 'Religious Switching in the UK.' Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A, Volume 59, Issue 3, 1996, pp.493-504; Edward P. Cleary, 'Shopping Around: Questions About Latin American Conversions.' International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Volume 28, Issue 2, 2004, pp.50-54; Philip Richter, 'Denominational Cultures: The Cinderella of Congregational Studies?' in Karin Tusting (ed.), Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a Post-Christian Context (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2004), pp.169-184; Wade Clark Roof, 'Multiple Religious Switching: A Research Note.' Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Volume 28, Number 4, 1989, pp.530-535; and Giselle Vincent, Elizabeth Olson, Peter Hopkins, and Rachel Pain, 'Young People and Performance Christianity in Scotland.' Journal of Contemporary Religion, Volume 27, Issue 2, 2012, pp.275-290.

[286] Male 1, Church C.

[287] Male 3, Church B.

[288] Male 4, Church A.

[289] Female 5, Church A.

view of the importance of participative worship as explored by the church's Doctrine Committee.[290] Reflecting on the insights given here, I wrote:

> It seemed that issues of similarity and dissimilarity were important in helping participants to discern a sense of belonging. This was especially so in relation to worship, where a form of service that is apt to change regularly, as in the Kirk, will 'jar' with those who value rhythm and pattern in their relationship with God, as with these participants. This is also to value elements of people's tradition as found as part of Albertz's institutional level of religion and shares an insight with Lived Religion in emphasising the importance of how religion 'works' for people and fulfils particular needs as outlined by Robert Orsi.[291]

It was clear that the participants' religious background has influenced their Lived Religion in a variety of ways, with some aspects of their background making a deeper impression than others. For a number, this showed itself in a continuing concern for aspects of religion first encouraged in their Sunday school experience and for others in their formal education, especially in relation to the development of values and worldview. Some participants clearly valued the example set to them by family members in their approach to religion. Some participants also spoke of the times when they were not religiously active and what this meant to them, and the experience of one participant was especially formative for her later Lived Religion. Finally, participants described their experience of discerning where they gained a sense of belonging through contact with other Christian traditions, and the positive and negative aspects of these. Yet throughout, it is possible to discern the interweaving of Albertz's institutional and local with the personal levels of religion in varying ways and the contributions these make to the participants' Lived Religion.

6.3. Faith Now

This question has been discussed in 2.5.4.3 and tried to capture the essential 'flavour' of the participants' experiences and practices by encouraging them to describe what they saw as important for their religion and spirituality now, which may include beliefs, practices, and

[290] See 4.3.2.

[291] Field Note, July 2015. See 3.5.1 and 3.6.

possible other elements. As with 6.2, the overall aim was to build up a clearer picture of the participants' Lived Religion.

6.3.1 Results

As with their responses to the question about religious background, the participants' replies might broadly be said to fall under four headings: a) the participants' relationship with God, b) the role of the Church, c) faith and everyday life, and d) other issues. These will be discussed in turn.

a. The participants' relationship with God

It is clear that a relationship with God was a principal concern for all the participants, although each relationship is expressed in different ways. For several participants, the notion of a divine presence with them was emphasised, shown by the use of phrases like 'I know that God is always with me,'[292] 'God is an unseen presence in my life, and I'm always aware of God's love and support,'[293] 'I [have] a deep conviction that the Lord is with me always and cares for me,'[294] and 'I know there's someone up there.'[295] These participants expressed a fairly conventional belief in the existence of a benign higher power who is concerned for human welfare and with whom they sense a connection. Other participants went on to explore their responses more fully:

> The whole time I'm having an internal conversation with God, speaking through different things with him. Internally, I'm changing completely, gaining a different kind of understanding … But I do feel a bit fragile about this … You have to pick who you know you can speak to about religion.[296]

> For me, the important thing is to be *convinced* that God loves you ... In my childhood, God had seemed like a remote, judgemental figure, but I was helped to know a God who is loving and generous. You need to know you're loved and accepted … I think that my

[292] Female 1, Church A.

[293] Female 2, Church B

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[294] Female 4, Church B.

[295] Female 5, Church A.

[296] Female 1, Church A.

> faith is a much *healthier* one now than it was in the past, stronger and based on convictions, more like a celebration of life, in thankfulness for all God has done.[297]
>
> Now, words like 'deep' and 'journey' are important to me, a journey both inside ourselves and as we move through life. We continue to journey with God and one another, and at some points we learn more about what our faith means and what it involves for us.[298]
>
> I have a deep-seated love for Jesus, but I am rubbish at showing this in my life! But I've a big heart and work hard to be able to show my love for others, so I hope this shows that my faith is strong.[299]

Other participants were keen to promote the notion of a transcendent God but expressed this in differing ways. For instance, although she saw this as wrong, one participant said that she could 'make God an everyday thing, whereas he should be set aside, and special.'[300] Another participant expressed his conviction of a God who 'has got, and has had, my life mapped out for me [in] pre-ordained steps.'[301] Other participants said:

> I see faith as dependence on God, on the promises of God … My faith rests on Biblical promises, and this makes the Bible very important to me. Since making my commitment to Christ as a teenager … nothing has seriously shaken my belief that the Bible is the inerrant and inspired Word of God … and I firmly believe in the authority of the Bible in matters of faith and conduct … [and that] it is infallible.[302]
>
> I believe in God, but I'm not sure I'm very good at showing it! Perhaps my religion is more practical than theoretical, more about helping others and getting along with them … But I'm also glad that a large part of worship is about singing … [This] helps take me out of myself and draw closer to … something greater than me.[303]

[297] Female 2, Church B.

[298] Female 3, Church A

[299] Female 6, Church C.

[300] Female 4, Church B.

[301] Male 5, Church B.

[302] Male 2, Church B.

[303] Male 3, Church B.

> I've had no great 'transfiguration moments.' but I've sometimes wondered 'What's it all about?' ... I'm discovering new things, but I've still no clear idea what I'd say to someone about my faith ... probably I'd say that it's about belief and doesn't have to be proven, and about relying on God for any answers, in his time ... Essentially my faith is more about a way of life.[304]

These participants showed that it was possible to have very different relationships with God, and yet each one can be sustained in a variety of ways as people continue their religious and spiritual journeys.

b. The Role of the Church

Most participants also made clear that the church held a continuing role in their religion and spirituality. For some, this concerned the church as a place and what happens within it, the roles people have within the church, and the personal help people can receive there, while for others the concern was more with the ideas and practices that are encouraged by coming to church; inevitably, there was a degree of 'cross-over' between these approaches. For instance, comments such as the following make clear the important role that the church plays as a place for some participants:

> To me, the church is very important ... it feels all wrong if I don't go ... I know you *can* believe without church, but for me this wouldn't be right …[It's] a place to be at peace, to sort out my thoughts, especially when life is difficult … You get the support of others around you … For me, faith and churchgoing go together.[305]

> I don't feel able to pray except in church and specifically at the Mass … My personal faith is tied up with church services and worshipping while surrounded by others.[306]

> What matters to me in church is that bit of quiet, and going through the service, with my own thoughts. Sacraments are making a big difference to my faith ... They're times for contemplation, about why Jesus died and what life is all about ... I leave the Eucharist feeling renewed, with extra energy.[307]

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[304] Male 4, Church A.

[305] Female 5, Church A.

[306] Male 6, Church B.

[307] Female 1, Church A.

> You need to renew your religious faith by frequent churchgoing … You can't do it all on your own, you need to share faith with other people.[308]

For other participants, the roles they held within the church were important to them, whether this was an authorised ministry like a Reader or a Local Preacher or a localised role such as a Sacristan. As often, the significance of the role varied for the participants and focussed on different aspects. Two of the participants who were Lay Readers, and the participant who was a Local Preacher, used phrases like 'a very strong call … an awesome privilege to be part of,'[309] 'a key step in my journey in faith … [that] greatly increased my commitment, belief, and sense of responsibility,'[310] and ''I see Reader ministry as a distinctive, stand-alone ministry … like a 'bridge' between the clergy and the people in the pew.'[311] Each of the participants said that they regarded it as a special honour to be involved in these roles, and this was also so for those participants who served their congregations as Sacristans. Two participants said:

> I like to be useful – to do things, take part, to help … My work as a church Sacristan means a lot to me. It's a privilege to be involved in preparing the altar for communion and serving the chalice at services.[312]

> Taking on the role of Sacristan was both daunting and a privilege ... it's humbling, but I feel I should be doing it … I feel part of the service, part of a worship team … And it's a privilege to be able to administer the chalice at the Eucharist … I feel that I'm serving the community.[313]

Then there were those participants who spoke more directly about the personal aspects of the church that were important to them. One participant said that, in addition to 'my own personal times of prayer,' the church provided him with regular opportunities to worship with others in

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[308] Female 4, Church B.

[309] Female 6, Church C.

[310] Male 1, Church C
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[311] Male 5, Church B.

[312] Female 5, Church A.

[313] Female 1, Church A.

order 'to witness to Christ in the world … Attending the prayer meetings on Friday mornings … and Holy Communion on Sundays – these form the staples of my 'diet' as a Christian.'[314] Another participant, having said earlier that 'I don't feel able to pray except in church and specifically at the Mass' and that his personal faith centred principally on services in church, added that he was aware of how different things could have been for him:

> I was a very devout practicing Christian until we got married and we moved away from centres of activity. Marriage, family life, and increased responsibility at work drew me away from devotion … I felt that's how it had to be … I can also see the attraction of monastic-style life and devotion, with no other distractions. Being able to live like that would make a big difference to me. But you can't do that in the world.[315]

Finally, there is the participant who following a traumatic religious experience needed to reassess the role of the church in her life, and who came to a very different understanding of what this meant. She said:

> [Having] sat fairly lightly to [the church] for many years, slowly things began to change … [and] I needed to bring together the sense of God within me that I had learned in my psychotherapy sessions and the need I gradually sensed to worship along with others … Somehow faith became much more important, but without the emotion I had associated with it when I was younger.[316]

Therefore, in these personal responses to what the church means for them, these participants spoke of the regular opportunities to be equipped for living a daily life of faith, a sense of the church as a crucial vehicle of religious belief, its nurture, and its practice, and a place to integrate the diverse strands that individual faith can involve.

c. Faith and Everyday Life

Other participants expressed their faith now in terms of what their involvement in the church encouraged them to do. One participant said:

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[314] Male 2, Church B.

[315] Male 6, Church B.

[316] Female 3, Church A.

> You need to look to God for guidance in the various decisions in life, and to be open to finding opportunities to witness to Christ as part of everyday life. Interacting with others is important here as it can give you a fresh perspective on things.[317]

This is most strongly seen, however, in relation to the place of community in the participants' religious understanding. As with those participants who emphasised the importance of place, these participants described the church as somewhere where they could belong and explored what this meant in terms of life with others. For instance, one participant emphasised both the significance of place and belonging with others, but also how this could become a basis from which to make use of his own talents and skills in everyday life. He said:

> I think it's vital to be part of a congregation, and to have a distinct place to worship, where the congregation can gather … [to have] the chance to make a commitment to [others], and to … move on together as a community. Then there's the opportunity for leadership – stepping up to the mark when you feel there's a need for action, and the opportunity to apply one's skills in a variety of ways, skills that I've learned and developed through my working life ... These [are] opportunities to do more than just turn up on a Sunday [and give] more meaning to the whole thing. [318]

Two participants emphasised the caring aspect of belonging:

> The church has always been part of my life … It's a way of getting people together, being a community, and helping people to know that they're not completely alone ... We can learn things from one another and show our concern for them … The contacts and friendships you make are a great thing.[319]

> As well as feeding our souls, we've got to [show what we believe by] how we live our lives, how we think and act towards others … We've got the Spirit in our hearts, and that comes out … when we care for others.[320]

Another participant, however, strongly disagreed with such a view, and said:

> I also think it's right to make a distinction between religion and caring for others. Going out and helping people is something else, and in fact you can avoid contact with God by being busy. I think some people might use it as a substitute, as by running around after

[317] Male 2, Church B.

[318] Male 4, Church A.

[319] Male 3, Church B.

[320] Female 1, Church A.

> others they don't have to concentrate on the things going on inside themselves. But in my experience, that's just avoiding the issues that will come back again and need to be dealt with.[321]

Then another participant spoke of how she had re-engaged with the church of her birth in her late twenties, finding there 'a group of like-minded people of around my age' who had a concern for social justice and for 'grounding Christian truths in everyday life.' Encouraged by this, she said:

> I spent two years in a religious community. This involved … meeting the demands of living in community with others … [and] was amazingly important and influential.[322]

Two participants, however, expressed their awareness of the value of community through their current experience of its absence. One said:

> You need the support of other Christians around you … being part of a community is very important, though I wish we could show this more … The bonds of friendship that I knew in [other] churches … are something I really miss.[323]

The other participant expressed this more strongly:

> I said earlier that life in Ireland really centred on the church … but it doesn't seem like that here … [There isn't] the same warmth, the same all-embracing love, which I've known wherever else I've gone, it hasn't the kind of 'glow' I've known in other places … It's more what a small number of people do on a Sunday morning, and I find that sad. We're not a community, and I've never felt an insider, only an outsider.[324]

Therefore, whether positively or negatively expressed by the participants, it does seem that the search for some kind of close association with others was a major concern for many people, and these participants found this to varying extents through their involvement with the church.

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[321] Female 3, Church A.

[322] Female 6, Church C.

[323] Female 2, Church B.

[324] Female 4, Church B.

d. Other Issues

There were, however, a few participants who spoke about their faith now neither in terms of a relationship with God nor of the place of the church but through drawing attention to other elements. For two of the participants, there was the important role of logic and coherence:

> I came to see how important it was for me that faith satisfied me intellectually … that things make sense and hang together coherently.[325]

> I think my faith is much more a matter of logic than belief, and centres on doctrine. So, words and concepts like Creed and the Real Presence are important.[326]

For another participant, it was the notion of diversity that played a key role in their perception of faith, held alongside the importance of community. He said:

> I don't like getting into religious arguments ... Certainly I have my own views, but I respect others' views, too, and their right to hold these, and I wouldn't want to force my views on them. … I don't see why people can't agree to disagree! … Helping people to get along and be comfortable together is what really matters, whether we entirely agree about things or not.[327]

From these responses, it was evident that the participants saw their faith now in varying ways, whether the essence of their religion concerns a relationship with God, the role of the church, or the place of logic or diversity. Yet while each involved differing beliefs, their religious faith clearly mattered to them and involved different practices, something which lies at the heart of Lived Religion.

6.3.2 Analysis

The participants whose responses focussed on their relationship with God relates to the personal level of religion, which can include both received religious ideas and more individualistic ones.

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[325] Male 2, Church B.

[326] Male 6, Church B.

[327] Male 3, Church B. See also Paul Weller, Religious Diversity in the UK: Contours and Issues (New York: Continuum, 2008); Lori G. Beaman, Reasonable Accommodation: Managing Religious Diversity (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013); Elizabeth Arweck (ed.), Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity (Abindon: Routledge, 2017); and Jawad Syel, Alain Klarsfeld, Faith Wambura Ngunjiri, and Charmine E. J. Hartel (eds.), Religious Diversity in the Workplace (Cambridge: University Press, 2018).

Using language possibly first learned in childhood,[328] these first participants expressed a fairly conventional belief in the existence of a benign higher power who is concerned for human welfare and with whom they sense a connection. Yet other important ideas were also implicit in these responses, such as the need for security ('I know that God is always with me,'[329] 'the Lord is with me always and cares for me'[330]), the comfort provided by traditional language and practices ('I find God in traditional things'[331]), a belief in divine love as a primary virtue ('I'm always aware of God's love and support'[332]), and the existence of an eternal guiding presence ('I know there's someone up there'[333]). Other participants attempted to communicate an understanding of a relationship with God that was intimate and fulfilling, had elements of excitement and challenge, and was a strong and healthy relationship which helped sustain them through all that life brings.[334] Such responses correlate with the interpretative role in Lived Religion as people try to describe what they perceive about God in ways that make sense to them, as Orsi and Ammerman have mentioned,[335] and these were honest attempts to communicate ideas that truly mattered to the participants.

One participant combined a regard for the institutional level of religion with her own personal level. When she said that she could 'make God an everyday thing, whereas he should be set

[328] See David Cairns, God Up There? A Study in Divine Transcendence (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1967); Brian P. Meier, David J. Hauser, Michael D. Robinson, Chris Kelland Friesen, and Katie Schjeldahl, 'What's "Up" With God? Vertical Space as a Representative of the Divine.' Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Volume 93, Issue 5, 2007, pp.699-710; and John Hull, 'God Talk with Young Children,' in Anna Strhan, Stephen G. Parker, and Susan B. Ridgeley (eds.), The Bloomsbury Reader in Religion and Childhood (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), pp.117-122.

[329] Female 1, Church A.

[330] Female 4, Church B.

[331] Male 1, Church C.

[332] Female 2, Church B.

[333] Female 5, Church A.

[334] See Female 1, Church A, Female 2, Church B, and Female 3, Church A.

[335] See 3.5.1 and 3.5.2.

aside, and special,' I wondered how she might approach the idea of an incarnated Christ, and she replied that Jesus was 'the only exception ... a very special man *and* God,' adding that 'That's what the Church has always believed and handed down, and I don't find this difficult.'[336] The relationship between divine transcendence and immanence has been a lively issue in Christian theology for centuries,[337] but here the participant seems inclined to rely on the authority of the Church as an institution, to be guided by this authority, and to live within the complexity of such ideas. This is, again, something that Lived Religion shares, as complex and sometimes contradictory ideas coexist within an individual or group's own understanding.

Then there were participants who also focused on the idea of a transcendent God using ideas such as God having 'mapped my life out for me [in] pre-ordained steps,'[338] having 'dependence … on the promises of God [and] … the Bible [as] the inerrant and inspired Word of God,'[339] of being drawn 'closer to … something greater than me,'[340] and about 'relying on God for any answers.'[341] Such replies indicate a belief in a God who is ultimately in control but with the implication that this is in the interests of humankind, and that this gives an awareness of the need to glorify God and to rely on God for help throughout life. The participant with the most conservative theological views asserted his belief in a God of majesty and transcendence to whom he unquestioningly bears allegiance and gives him a religious outlook to live by. Therefore, a belief in a transcendent God is something several of them hold to be a core element of their Lived Religion.

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[336] Female 4, Church B.

[337] See, for instance, John Hick, An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Paul D. Molnar, Faith Freedom, and the Spirit: The Economic Trinity in Barth, Torrance and Contemporary Theology (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015); Thomas V. Morris, The Logic of God Incarnate (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001); and Thomas F. Torrance, The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being, Three Persons (London: Bloomsbury T and T Clark, 2016.

[338] Male 5, Church B.

[339] Male 2, Church B.

[340] Male 3, Church B.

[341] Male 4, Church A

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There were also participants who focussed attention on the role of the church as a special place for them, and in doing so combined both the local level of religion outlined by Albertz with the personal level as I use this term. For some participants, there was a strong emotional attachment to the church building and its architecture and the feelings it evoked in them, as well as to what happens here week by week as people gather to worship and the needs that this helps the participants to meet. This was seen in phrases like 'It's a place to be at peace … when life is difficult,'[342] 'My personal faith is tied up with church services and worshipping … [with] others,'[343] 'What matters to me in church is that bit of quiet … times for contemplation,'[344] and 'frequent churchgoing [is important] … you can't do it all on your own, you need to share faith with others.'[345] It might also be said that within such phrases there lies the notion of the church as in some way a place of sanctuary, away from the pressures of contemporary life.[346] This also coheres with one of the main characteristics of Lived Religion, the importance of the context of people's daily lives and the pursuit of religious meaning within them. As McGuire has written,[347] since earliest times most religious traditions have held a concept of sacred space where believers can encounter the divine in a special and powerful way, and this is something people still see as part of the role of the local church in many communities.[348] Therefore it would be surprising if this were not an element for some participants.

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[342] Female 5, Church A.

[343] Male 6, Church B.

[344] Female 1, Church A.

[345] Female 4, Church B.

[346] For a discussion on the history and the modern role of sanctuary, see Randy K. Lippert and Sean Rehaag (eds.), Sanctuary Practices in International Perspectives (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

[347] See 3.5.3.

[348] See, for instance, Vanessa Burholt and Dawn Naylor, 'The Relationship Between Rural Community Type and Attachment to Place for Older People Living in North Wales.' European Journal of Ageing, Volume 2, Issue 2, 2005, pp.109-119, and Clive Barrett, 'Your Place or Mine? Locality and a Culture of Peace.' Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice, Volume 22, Issue 3, 2010, pp.262-267. See also Philip North (ed.), Sacred Space: House of God, Gate of Heaven (London: Continuum, 2007).

The importance of the church as a sacred space was also indicated by participants who spoke about the personal aspects of the church that were important to them. They expressed this in various ways, such as regular attendance at a prayer meeting, the 'sense of responsibility'[349] and 'a "bridge" between the clergy and the people in the pew,'[350] the 'privilege of preparing the altar for communion'[351] and administering the chalice at the Eucharist, all of which might be summed up by one participant who said: 'I feel that I'm serving the community.'[352] In such actions, the participants identify the importance for them of engaging in activities regarded as somehow 'holy' in a building set aside as a sacred space, and thereby communing with other worshippers and with God. In this sense, they see these roles as 'a privilege.' Another participant, who had a strong early devotional life, spoke of how life events 'drew me away from devotion' but he then spoke rather wistfully of the 'attractions of monastic-style life'[353] that he feels cannot be for him. Yet his words also emphasise the key role of the church in his religiosity, even if he wished it might be a fuller one.

As for those participants whose church life focussed on the idea of community, this often inspired them to express this in action within the local community. Three examples demonstrate this. One participant spoke of his religion as 'a way of life' involving engagement with others, with the implication that the participant endeavours to bring their commitment as a Christian to this engagement with others. This is seen in relation to a conversation I had with this participant on an occasion prior to the Research Interview, following which I made this field note:

> Had a conversation with [X], who told me that he had recently become involved in the local Community Trust.[354] He said: 'I wanted to become more involved in the life of the community, but I also wanted to make sure that a Christian voice was heard at

[349] Male 1, Church C.

[350] Male 5, Church B.

[351] Female 5, Church A.

[352] Female 1, Church A.

[353] Male 6, Church B.

[354] The Community Trust was set up some years ago to develop projects of local benefit and interest, and can include those of a social, health, educational, cultural, or economic nature.

> community meetings, because I think that's important. Don't get me wrong, the people involved are good folk, but I think it's time that Christian people played more of a role in these kinds of organizations, and I'm looking forward to getting involved more fully.' [X] clearly wants to be able to find a forum where he can bring a Christian perspective to local affairs, and the Community Trust provides him with this opportunity. As such, I would say that this is very much an aspect of Lived Religion, the active attempt to engage as a Christian believer in the context in which [X] lives.[355]

Another participant expressed her sense of this in a different way, when she said:

> I like to be useful – to do things, take part, to help … Being on the Vestry[356] and my work as a church sacristan means a lot to me. It's a privilege to be involved in preparing for services and serving the chalice at the Eucharist … But it's good to be able to help people outside the church too, out in the community. That's why my involvement with the Cinnamon Trust is so important to me, because in a little way I'm trying to help people who really need this.[357]

This participant helped others by walking the dogs for several terminally ill people, a fact I discovered during a conversation some years ago. More recently, this participant said:

> I love nature, and I love helping people. That's why I also love being involved in the Cinnamon Trust – it brings the two together. I know some people think it's a bit sentimental to be so concerned about dogs, but sometimes they are the only companions some people have, and it breaks their hearts when their pets die. If I can make people's lives a bit happier just by walking their dogs a few times a week – well, it's little enough to do, isn't it? I don't care what anyone says, as a Christian I think that animals and the natural world *do* matter. They give people so much pleasure – and I'm sure God smiles at this![358]

This participant evidently sought to combine her love for animals and the natural world with her concern to be of use to others, as part of what she believes living as a Christian involves. In this

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[355] Informal conversation, October 2013.

[356] In the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Vestry functions rather like the Parochial Church Council in the Church of England, being responsible in supporting the Rector in relation to the temporal affairs, general management, and administration of each congregation, known as a 'Charge.' Members of the Vestry are elected by the Charge at the Annual General Meeting.

[357] Female 5, Church A. Founded in 1985, the Cinnamon Trust is a national charity for the elderly, the terminally ill, and their pets and seeks to respect and preserve the relationship between owners and their pets, providing practical help when any aspect of day to day care poses a problem. See www.cinnamon.org.uk.

[358] From my field notes, July 2013.

way, her personal religiosity found a practical expression for her care and concern for others. Finally, there is one participant who spoke about how she became involved in volunteering at a local food bank:[359]

> Ever since I returned to church in my mid-twenties, one of my main concerns has been with the social dimension of the Gospel message and of how to link my Christian faith with what happens in daily life. When I heard about the work of the food bank, I realised how important this is and felt that I needed to become involved in it. I also realised just how lucky I am, because I've got everything I need, but so many people are getting caught out and having to suffer because they haven't got enough to eat. So I see it as part of my Christian commitment to do as much as I can to help those who are really struggling, and to try to make their lives a little bit better.[360]

As with these other participants, the motivation for this participant is to live out their religion in action, and in doing so to endeavour to help those somehow in need. These examples demonstrate how a religiosity focussed on community found practical expressions in these participants' everyday living. They were an attempt to show that their religious convictions were more than just stated ideals but take a more concrete form.

These examples all relate to Albertz's local level and the personal level of religion. However, what is also striking about them is that they all concern practices, which is a major emphasis in Lived Religion. Although their practices may be different, it was the physical doing of religious actions which appeared to matter most for these participants, whether this involved praying for others, serving within the church building, taking part in some ritual and ceremonial worship, or getting involved in other organisations. This is an insight shared by Alan Billings, when he writes of Christianity as praxis, 'a way of living [rather] than a set of beliefs.'[361] He writes:

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[359] The participant was referring to the non-profit, charitable organisation that distributes food to those who have difficulty purchasing enough to avoid hunger. In Britain, many of these are organised by the Trussell Trust, who support a nationwide network of food banks that both provide emergency food and help to people locked in poverty and campaign for change to end the need for food banks in the United Kingdom. See www.trusselltrust.org.

[360] Informal conversation, November 2013. From my field notes.

[361] Alan Billings, Secular Lives, Sacred Hearts (London: SPCK, 2004), p.12. Another description of Christian practice states: 'In Liberation Theology, praxis is the continual interplay of action and reflection in our lives, as we reflect upon experience, Scripture, and the way in which we live our lives in community.' See www.oocities.org/Wal4theo/praxis.html.

> For many ordinary worshippers ... Christianity is primarily about the heart and the will; it is an emotional and practical matter before it is something cerebral – if it ever is. It is about going to church, receiving the sacrament, lighting a candle, holding a rosary or a crucifix, reading the Bible, saying prayers, being part of a fellowship. It is about feeling close to God ... *It is their practices rather than beliefs that are central to their lives.* Even if they go to church, their [religion] may include rituals and practices unrelated to churchgoing, such as walks in the countryside, listening to music, lighting incense sticks and meditating at home. It also involves being a loving partner or parent, being a good neighbour and conscientious citizen, giving of one's best as an employee, being honest in business … We could go on. In other words, for very many people, Christianity is about certain rituals and practices and above all an ethical way of living before it is about doctrines or propositions ... Christianity, in other words, is as much a culture as a set of beliefs [my italics].[362]

Finally, there was the participant who following a traumatic religious experience needed to reassess the role of the church in her life, and who came to a very different understanding of what this meant. She said that as her thoughts changed, she sensed a need 'to bring together the sense of God within me that I had learned in … psychotherapy … and the need I gradually sensed to worship along with others.' This expressed the participant's desire for a religiosity that sought integration of aspects of her personality and experience within a church context. She said that she found the concept of a journey helpful here, whereby 'we continue to journey with God and one another, and at some points we learn more about what our faith means and what it involves for us.' [363] Therefore, in these personal responses to what the church means for them, these participants spoke of the regular opportunities to be equipped for living a daily life of faith, a sense of the church as a crucial vehicle of religious belief, its nurture, and its practice, and a place to integrate the diverse strands that Lived Religion can involve.

6.4 Spirituality

This has been explored in 2.5.4.4, but here it is important to make clear that that this was a three-part question inviting the participants to, firstly, give their own definitions of spirituality, then to discuss whether they saw spirituality as 'personal' or not, and finally to discern their views

[362] Alan Billings, Lost Church: Why we must find it again (London: SPCK, 2013), pp.75-76.

[363] Female 3, Church A.

on the relationship between religion and spirituality. The results of this will be described in 6.4.1.1, 6.4.1.2, and 6.4.1.3, and they will be analysed in 6.4.2.1, 6.4.2.2, and 6.4.2.3.

6.4.1 Results

This was a three-part question inviting the participants to a) give their own definitions of spirituality; b) to discuss whether they saw spirituality as 'personal' or not, and c) to discern their views on the relationship between religion and spirituality.

6.4.1.1 Definition

Here the participants were offered the opportunity to define what they understood by spirituality and for the researcher to see how these definitions might cohere with Lived Religion. However, even among a small number of participants, the term 'spirituality' can clearly mean different things. Several participants expressed some hesitancy about attempting a definition, using phrases like 'a difficult term'[364] 'an indefinable quality,'[365] and 'it doesn't go easily into words.'[366] Two participants voiced an active dislike of the term, with one stating that 'it's surely one of the most difficult to define,'[367] while another participant expressed this even more strongly:

> The use of the word "spirituality" ... is something I deplore … [as it] is often regarded as a compartment or box rather than concerned with the whole of life, and to be confined to the mystical or metaphysical rather than to be developed as an outworking of one's relationship with God. … In my view … it is of greater assistance to effective communication to use more specific terms like "the life of faith," "the Christian life" ... "devotional life" ... or "prayer life," and to stress the idea of somehow being close to God.[368]

[364] Female 5, Church A.

[365] Female 4, Church B

[366] Female 3, Church A.

[367] Female 4, Church B.

[368] Male 2, Church B.

Several of the participants coached their definitions using conventional Christian language, as in the following examples:

> I would define 'spirituality' as giving meaning to one's life … For me, [spirituality is about] my relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ... [about] knowing and being dedicated to God and trusting him for guidance.[369]
>
> Spirituality means believing in God, the Resurrection, and Eternal Life … attempting to live one's life as Jesus lived his ... [and] helping people [in] the furtherance of the Gospel.[370]
> [Spirituality involves] a belief that I'm loved by God, and need to be open to God, and in return to respond in the same way.[371]
>
> There's probably something to do with … God's Spirit moving among people and helping them to live better lives.[372]
>
> Knowing Jesus is *the* pinnacle of spirituality.[373]

Other participants' definitions tried to capture some sense of going beyond tangible material concerns and everyday experiences. For instance, one said: 'I would define 'spirituality' as "Believing in something you can't see" … having an awareness of a higher being.'[374] In a similar vein, others defined spirituality having 'something to do with being aware that there is more to existence than the world around us,'[375] and another that spirituality referred to 'something very deep and personal … like an emotion, but not quite … [and] perhaps [it] concerns a sense of "otherness" or something beyond my conscious self.'[376] Three participants also picked up on spirituality as connected with a sense of "otherness:"

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[369] Female 1, Church A.

[370] Male 1, Church C.

[371] Male 5, Church B.

[372] Male 3, Church B.

[373] Female 2, Church B.

[374] Female 2, Church B
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[375] Male 6, Church B.

[376] Female 3, Church A.

> Maybe [spirituality is] about having [a] belief ... that there's a greater being out there looking after us. [377]

> If people in the past have taken such time and effort to create ... amazing places because of their belief in God, then there must be something greater than our human lives.[378]

> Spirituality, to me, is the God bit of the person I am … a very special part, a gifted part, the divine bit.[379]

Several participants linked their definitions with daily life:

> The Holy Spirit lives in everything and can … [give] guidance, comfort and direction in every facet of our lives.[380]

> Spirituality … [is] about having a depth of belief in God, a trust which shows itself by attitudes and how life is lived.[381]

> Spirituality [has] something to do with … God's Spirit moving among people and helping them to live better lives.'[382]

> Spirituality is a continuing conversation and journey with God which is then put into practice in daily life.[383]

Yet paradoxically, three participants clearly sought to separate spirituality from anything connected with daily living:

> It includes ideas like unworldliness, and Godlike … In Ireland we might say 'fey' … otherworldly, something that's rare ... set aside ... [showing] something more, a different kind of reality.[384]

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[377] Male 4, Church A.

[378] Male 3, Church B.

[379] Female 6, Church C.

[380] Female 2, Church B.

[381] Male 1, Church C.

[382] Male 3, Church B.

[383] Male 5, Church B.

[384] Female 4, Church B.

> Spirituality may have something to do with being aware that there is more to existence than the world around us ... But also, unworldliness ... somebody who has beliefs that are not affected or connected with what goes on around them, disconnected from worldly things.[385]
>
> Sometimes it's about magic moments … and of catching the magic, a sense of God … feeling as if we were with God.[386]

The participants' comments show that although some of them found this difficult, each conveyed some impression of their understanding of spirituality. Some were more comfortable using typically Christian religious language to refer to the subject, while others tried to express something of the quality of 'other' that they associated with spirituality. Other participants were concerned to relate their understanding to everyday life, which comes closest to the Lived Religious approach. In contrast, some participants made an active attempt to separate spirituality from their diurnal rhythm. Yet all these definitions endeavour to communicate a sense of the participants' connection to something beyond themselves which is an important aspect of their religious life.

6.4.1.2 Personal Spirituality

Most participants again expressed their thoughts about personal spirituality in religious terms and focussed on the idea of a relationship with both God and others, using phrases like: 'I have a deep conviction that the Lord is with me always and cares for me,'[387]'I know that God is always with me,'[388]'For me, the most important thing is to be convinced that God loves you … [that] you're accepted,'[389] 'It's a belief that I'm loved by God and … I have to respond in the same way,'[390] and 'I have a deep-seated love for Jesus, but I am rubbish at showing it in my

[385] Male 6, Church C.

[386] Female 5, Church A.

[387] Female 4, Church B.

[388] Female 1, Church A.

[389] Female 2, Church B.

[390] Male 5, Church B.

life.'[391] Each of these statements focuses on the idea of a loving God with whom the participants feel an intimate connection, experienced as necessary and helpful in making life decisions and providing a sense of reassurance and security, and who requires a personal response from the participants.

Other participants spoke of personal spirituality in terms of church involvement and the place of community,[392] while others return to the idea of personal spirituality as a journey, with one saying: 'As we move through life … we continue to journey with God and one another,'[393] and another participant saying that his personal spirituality was 'more about belief, and doesn't have to be proven … Essentially, my faith is about a way of life, a journey, and how to interact with everyone and everything around me.' [394] Another participant, however, acknowledged its importance and placed a high value on personal spirituality yet seemed inclined to restrict this to people who are in some way 'special,' with qualities that the participant both admires and aspires to. He says:

> I think spirituality can best be thought about by describing people with certain qualities and attitudes that I feel encouraged to try to live up to ... A very small number of people have great spirituality, but these qualities involve being a very kind, gentle, and caring person ... a good listener, someone who has difficulties seeing anything bad in anybody, who always sees the good in situations ... Spiritual people have a depth of faith that others can see, and the ability to deal with whatever life throws at them, falling back on prayer to deal with present problems and leave them for God to deal with ... It's about having a depth of belief in God, a trust which shows itself by attitudes and how life is lived.[395]

A further participant described their spirituality as 'very personal':

> It is this one-to-one with God … Spirituality is in each of us, whether people believe or have a faith or not. At some stage in some people's lives it's teased out of them, like in

[391] Female 6, Church C.

[392] See 6.3.2.

[393] Female 3, Church A.

[394] Male 4, Church A.

[395] Male 1, Church C.

> situations where they sense this impulse to help others … Something inside them said they had to do that, and for me that's spirituality coming to the surface, a personal response to something that's of God.[396]

But there were also participants who do not regard their spirituality as personal. One participant baldly stated: 'I wouldn't say I *was* spiritual, period! … Twice in my life I've been very aware of the presence of God … this was in my late teens or early twenties, but there's been little awareness since.'[397] Another participant seemed almost affronted at the notion of a personal spirituality, and said:

> It's *not* personal … I don't count myself as personally spiritual ... I have a love for God, a deep conviction that the Lord is with me always and cares for me, and I try to be and to do good - but that isn't spirituality, not in my understanding.[398]

The participants' responses make clear the range of ideas there can be about the notion of a personal spirituality, from an intimate, close relationship with God which is sometimes focussed on the life of the church, to those who spoke of spirituality as a personal journey through life, to those who felt a personal spirituality to be the attribute of a few special people, and those who felt this notion to be inapplicable to them. All have elements that might feed into the subject of Lived Religion, and some of these perspectives come together in the words of another participant, who said: 'Your own spirituality is completely and utterly unique, because it's shaped by the distinctive person that you are. And although through the years it's influenced by external things, it's still in essence – and is *the* essence – of you.'[399]

6.4.1.3 Religion and Spirituality

In both the Introduction and in 1.1, mention was made of the modern tendency to separate religion and spirituality. This question endeavoured to ascertain whether this was so for the participants. It seems that they were fairly evenly divided on this matter, with five participants

[396] Male 5, Church B.

[397] Male 6, Church B

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[398] Female 4, Church B.

[399] Female 6, Church C.

saying that there should be a connection and seven feeling that they should be separated; yet as in other areas of activity, the participants' reasons for and against differed considerably. Of those who saw a clear link between religion and spirituality, the participants used phrases like 'they are the same, or … very closely related, and you need the structure,'[400] 'they are inter-linked … [they] walk hand in hand … I don't think you can have one without the other, otherwise it would die.'[401] 'I see religion as the framework and spirituality as the spiritual reality,'[402] and 'I see spirituality as part of religion as a whole … I wouldn't be happy about separating them too completely.'[403] Another participant admitted that 'I sense there's a connection between the two, but I can't really justify my answer – sorry!'[404] while another was more ambivalent about this, and said: 'They don't necessarily go together … The ideal is that they do, but it doesn't always happen. Some people you can see spirituality in, but they couldn't be described as religious and they certainly don't go to church,'[405]

There were, however, those participants who felt that religion and spirituality were different and should be treated as such. Some people made comments like 'I think they're different. Religion is a structure within which to practice one's faith and play out things, whereas spirituality is more personal,'[406] and 'I don't think they're the same … Maybe spirituality is more about 'you,' and religion is more general.'[407] One participant was convinced that there was 'no essential connection' between religion and spirituality but that they were 'quite different things,' and that 'it's quite possible to be religious but not spiritual … and to have all different kinds of spiritual

[400] Female 1, Church A.

[401] Male 5, Church B.

[402] Male 2, Church B.

[403] Female 3, Church A.

[404] Male 3, Church B.

[405] Male 1, Church C.

[406] Male 4, Church A.

[407] Female 5, Church A.

approaches and understandings,'[408] while another participant was equally strong in asserting that 'They are not the same, for there are so many religions,' that members of other faiths can be spiritual, and that 'a religious person can be a dead bore, or a wonderful, deep-thinking, good person.'[409] One participant said:

> I see these as different – religion can be a bit pharisaic! I wouldn't like to be thought of as 'religious,' as cold and calculating ... If someone is 'religious,' they're probably narrower in their outlook. Spirituality is more all-encompassing, from the heart.[410]

Finally, another said:

> They are absolutely different. You can be a spiritual but not a religious person. Some of the most spiritual people I've come across are not religious, though they might have been in the past. There seems to be a sense of their coming out the other side.[411]

It might therefore be said that these participants are more inclined to see religion as linked to institutions and structures while spirituality is seen as more personal and autonomous. While some participants simply noted the distinction, others seemed to wish to promote one aspect, mainly spirituality, over the other, evidenced by the participant who commented that religious people were 'probably narrower in their outlook' while seeing spirituality as 'from the heart.' Yet other participants saw the strengths in both religion and spirituality and rather than viewing this as a stark dichotomy to regard both as necessary, an insight that a Lived Religious approach also shares. However, all the participants' responses indicate that the continuing debate regarding religion and spirituality has influenced them, to some extent and in varying ways. Whether religion and spirituality are linked or separated, religion and the church retain a central place in the lives of the participants, in contrast to modern understandings of the declining role of both.

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[408] Male 6, Church B.

[409] Female 4, Church B.

[410] Female 2, Church B.

[411] Female 6, Church C.

6.4.2 Analysis

6.4.2.1 Definition

The fact that several of the participants found it difficult to define spirituality indicates how broad and elusive a concept it is,[412] and adds to the case for a description of spirituality rather than a definition;[413] it also shows how unaccustomed even religious people are to considering this subject in any depth. Despite its popularity, there is considerable variation in how the term is used and no clear agreement as to its interpretation. In part, this is intentional, as 'spirituality' can then be utilised in a diverse number of fields for varying purposes. Also, part of my intention in asking the participants for some kind of definition of spirituality was in order to discover how ordinary Christian people might understand this term and use it in relation to their actual religiosity and the variation in definitions mirrors well the contemporary trend relating to spirituality, as Lucy Bregman has written, 'to keep it as loosely-defined as possible … as fuzzy, confusing, and yet widely appealing.'[414]

The participants' responses showed that their definitions expressed similar ideas to many of the respondents to the Research Questionnaire.[415] Some consciously used Christian language and ideas, in part because this may have been their preferred language to describe their understanding, but this also shows the continuing value of their faith tradition for the participants in that they can 'tap into' the rich theological vein of that tradition in exploring something that they found difficult to put into words. Some participants also based their definitions on their relationship with God, sometimes one of intimacy and closeness ('knowing and being dedicated

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[412] For a fuller discussion of this idea, see, for example, Sandra M. Schreider, 'Christian Spirituality: Definition, Method and Types,' and Valerie Lesniak, 'Contemporary Spirituality,' in Philip Sheldrake (ed), The New SCM Dictionary of Christian Spirituality (London: SCM Press, 2005), pp.1-6 and 7-12, and Philip Sheldrake, Spirituality: A Guide for the Perplexed (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp.1-71.

[413] See 3.2.

[414] Lucy Bregman, 'Defining Spirituality: Multiple Uses and Murky Meanings of an Incredibly Popular Term.' Journal of Pastoral Care and Counselling, Volume 38, Number 3, 2004, pp.157-167.

[415] See 5.2.5.

to God,'[416] 'a belief that I'm loved by God,'[417] and 'Knowing Jesus is *the* pinnacle of spirituality'[418]), while others focused on notions of 'an awareness of … more to existence than the world around us,'[419] 'a sense of "otherness" … beyond my conscious self,'[420] 'a greater being,'[421] 'something greater than our human lives,'[422] and ''the God bit of the person I am.'[423] Some participants sought to link their definition with their daily lives ('the Holy Spirit … [giving] guidance … and direction … in our lives,'[424] 'a … belief in God … which shows itself in attitudes and how life is lived,'[425] 'a continuing conversation with God … [practiced] in daily life'[426]), while others sought to keep spirituality distinct from the everyday by associating it with 'unworldliness,'[427] 'a different kind of reality,'[428] and 'magic moments … as if we were with God.'[429] In their responses, all the participants were challenged to consider what they thought God is like and what should be their response to such a God in terms of how they live as religious people. It might therefore be said that, while sometimes couched in traditional ways, the

[416] Female 1, Church A.

[417] Male 5, Church B.

[418] Female 2, Church B.

[419] Male 6, Church B.

[420] Female 3, Church A.

[421] Male 4, Church A.

[422] Male 3, Church B.

[423] Female 6, Church C.

[424] Female 2, Church B.

[425] Male 1, Church C.

[426] Male 5, Church B.

[427] Male 6, Church B.

[428] Female 4, Church B.

[429] Female 5, Church A.

participants seek a fairly broad understanding of what spirituality and religion can involve, which is one of the defining features of a Lived Religious approach.

6.4.2.2 Personal Spirituality

This section deals directly with the personal level of religion by asking the participants their views on the idea of personal spirituality. Again, many participants used Christian language in their replies, yet then emphasised different facets of personal spirituality, with some participants focussing on their relationship with God, others on the practices that were important to them, and others a combination of the two. Therefore, their understandings of personal spirituality included a belief in a divine relationship based on loving acceptance and guidance,[430] a continuing journey,[431] a disciplined life of prayer, worship, morality, and service of others,[432] and involvement with the church and the community.[433] This accords with a Lived Religion approach whereby relationships and practices are synthesized into a new pattern that meets the requirements of these participants in ways that are particular to each of them.

Yet other participants understand personal spirituality differently. One participant would generally restrict personal spirituality to certain gifted or 'special' people, but this is partly on the grounds that he feels his own personal spirituality is inconsistent. He said: 'I don't think my spirituality is constant. I experience different levels in different situations. Worldly things can take over, and I try to deal with things in a worldly way rather than a spiritual one, like praying and referring things to God ... I don't always do this.'[434] After an Interview with this participant, I wrote:

> The participant obviously values personal spirituality, but perhaps feels uncertain of meeting the demands he sees in this. There is a sense of struggle here between what he

[430] Female 1, Church A, Female 2, Church B, Female 4, Church B, Male 5, Church B, and Female 6, Church C.

[431] Female 3, Church A, Male 4, Church A.

[432] Male 2, Church B.

[433] Male 3, Church B, and Female 5, Church A.

[434] Male 1, Church C.

> feels he should do and what he actually does. This is the sort of experience described by St Paul,[435] between inclination and good intention, and action. He aspires to a more spiritually rooted life, which is then demonstrated in practice, but is distracted from this when 'worldly things … take over, and I try to deal with things in a worldly way.' By this, he seems to mean tackling issues immediately and in his own strength, rather than 'praying and referring things to God.' While admiring it, the participant clearly sees personal spirituality as a complex matter, yet nonetheless continues to aspire to it in a deeper sense.[436]

Other participants see spirituality so entirely in terms of 'other' that they eschew any sense of 'personal' spirituality. One participant disclaimed that they were spiritual at all,[437] while another stated that 'I don't count myself as personally spiritual,' but then said:

> I have a love for God, a deep conviction that the Lord is with me always and cares for me, and I try to be and to do good - but that isn't spirituality, not in my understanding.[438]

Others might contend that the things this participant mentions have much to do with spirituality, but not for the participant herself. She also used the phrase 'an indefinable quality' in relation to spirituality, and 'quality' may suggest that, like other participants, she sees spirituality as concerning the possession of certain charisms and gifts that others can readily identify and admire, but that are only to be found in those who can be identified as somehow exceptional. Nevertheless, this is highly descriptive of her religiosity, whatever labels she does or does not use.

It would seem, therefore, that those participants who avow the role of personal spirituality do not make the distinction between the search for personal meaning and need for communal belonging often found in the spiritual milieu, and this is also so within a Lived Religious context,[439] as ideas and practices are creatively blended together, and even those participants

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[435] 'For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.' Romans 7: 19 Holy Bible NRSV.

[436] Field Note, August 2013.

[437] Male 6, Church B.

[438] Female 4, Church B.

[439] See Wade Clark Roof, 'Religion and Spirituality: Toward an Integrated Analysis,' in Michele Dillon (ed.), Handbook of the Sociology of Religion (Cambridge: University Press, 2003), pp.137-149.

who do not see a place for personal spirituality have an inner religiosity that can and does find expression in practice.

6.4.2.3 Religion and Spirituality

This question relates to the institutional level of Albertz's categorization and the personal level as I use this term, as its subject matter is religion and spirituality in general and as they are experienced and practiced by individual religious people. The participants' responses indicated that they were more inclined to see religion as linked to institutions ('a structure within which to … play out things'[440] 'more general'[441] 'it's quite possible to be religious but not spiritual') ,[442] while spirituality is seen as more personal and autonomous ('more about "you"'[443] 'members of [all] faiths can be spiritual'[444] 'it's possible to have all different kinds of spiritual … understandings').[445] While some participants simply noted the distinction, others seemed to wish to promote one aspect, mainly spirituality, over the other, evidenced by the participant who commented that religious people were 'probably narrower in their outlook' while seeing spirituality as 'from the heart.'[446] This viewpoint is discussed by Philip Sheldrake, who wrote:

> The contemporary interest in spirituality is part of a broader process of cultural change that took place during the late twentieth century. For a range of reasons, inherited religious and social identities … were seriously questioned. As a result, many people no longer saw traditional religion as an adequate channel for their spiritual quest and looked for new sources of self-orientation. Thus, 'spirituality' has become an alternative way of exploring the depths of human identity and the ultimate purpose of life. Overall, the spiritual quest has increasingly moved away from outer-directed authority to inner-directed experience which is seen as more reliable.[447]

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[440] Male 4, Church A.

[441] Female 5, Church A.

[442] Male 6, Church B.

[443] Female 5, Church A.

[444] Female 4, Church B.

[445] Male 6, Church B.

[446] Female 2, Church B.

[447] Philip Sheldrake, Spirituality: A Guide for the Perplexed (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p.10.

At its extreme, some in contemporary society interpret religion negatively as something authoritarian, patriarchal, exclusive, rule-bound and irrelevant in its concerns, whereas spirituality is perceived as more free-flowing, inclusive and liberating and where people have the potential to engage in varying subjects in ways that are holistic and life-enhancing.[448] Some participants do seem apt to think in such terms. But such a separation of spirituality and religion is not favoured by everyone. Again, Sheldrake holds that attempts to do so are profoundly mistaken. He writes:

> Such a polarized view is too uncritical. On this reading of contemporary culture, spirituality is in a process of *replacing* religion in a kind of evolutionary development that implies that "spirituality" rather than "religion" is a better fit with contemporary needs. The trouble with this way of describing things is that it depends on old-fashioned post-Enlightenment understandings of human existence as an inevitable crescendo of progress. [Yet] if the study of history teaches us anything at all, it is that making such assumptions about some kind of complete break with the past is an illegitimate move.[449]

However, rather than viewing this as a stark dichotomy, other participants saw the strengths in both religion and spirituality and the necessity of both. Several saw religion and spirituality as providing a 'structure' through which humans can work with the divine. For instance, one participant said that he saw religion and spirituality as 'inter-linked … I don't think you can have one without the other, otherwise it would die.'[450] This participant expressed a mutuality of the two concepts, with each providing the other with something indispensable that they cannot

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[448] See Valerie Lesniak, 'Contemporary Spirituality,' in Philip Sheldrake (ed), The New SCM Dictionary of Christian Spirituality (London: SCM Press, 2005). See also Mike Starkey, God, Sex and Generation X (London: SPCK/Triangle, 1997), p.117; Davie et al, Predicting, pp.161-163; God, Sex and Generation X (London: SPCK/Triangle, 1997), p.117; Davie et al, Predicting, pp.161-163; and David Tacey, The Spirituality Revolution (London: Routledge, 20014), pp.31, 38-39, 86-89. See also Diana Butler Bass, Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening (New York: Harper Collins, 2012); Tina Sacchi, My Spirit is Not Religious: A Guide to Living Your Authentic Life (New York: Morgan James, 2013); Linda A. Mercadente, Belief Without Boundaries: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual But Not Religious (Oxford: University Press, 2014); and Sam Harris, Waking Up: Searching for Spirituality Without Religion (London: Black Swan, 2015).

[449] Philip Sheldrake Explorations in Spirituality: History, Theology and Social Practice (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2010), p.2.

[450] Male 5, Church B.

have on their own. Another participant regarded spirituality in quite open terms while also associating it with religion:

> For me, spirituality is something very deep and personal. It's like an emotion, but not quite, and perhaps concerns a sense of "otherness" or something beyond my conscious self. … In general, I see spirituality as part of religion … They emphasise different things, but I wouldn't be happy about separating them too absolutely.[451]

Another participant admitted that they feel 'a bit confused about this, but I sense that there's a connection between the two … but I can't really justify my answer,' but then continues:

> They may both involve tolerance of other beliefs, as well as thoughtfulness … and probably something to do with God's Spirit moving among people and helping them to live better lives as well.[452]

Such words also expressed the conviction of a mutual relationship whereby religion and spirituality work together to facilitate divine activity and reflection within human life. The responses of each of these participants therefore revealed a belief in some kind of relationship between religion and spirituality, and that this is part of their religiosity. This was most clearly expressed by the participant who said:

> It seems to me that in contemporary understanding religion is seen as an 'add-on' to life, and that spirituality is often regarded as a compartment or box to be confined to the mystical or metaphysical rather than concerned with the whole of life and developed as an outworking of one's relationship with God … In my view, it is of greater assistance to effective communication to use specific terms like "the life of faith," "the Christian life," or, if focussing on particular aspects of life, "devotional life," or better still, "prayer life," and to stress the idea of somehow being closer to God.[453]

This displays a clearly religious approach to spirituality but one that is also concerned for both concepts to be demonstrated in daily life, an approach which clearly resonates with the idea of Lived Religion.

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[451] Female 3, Church A.

[452] Male 3, Church B.

[453] Male 2, Church B.

In general, therefore, these replies indicate a belief that religion and spirituality could not survive alone but each is needed to fulfil the parts the other cannot. The participants view religious frameworks such as the church as an appropriate arena within which to explore and express their religious beliefs and practices, and unlike some in our age see little place for an exploration of the spiritual outside of such a framework. This desire to view religion and spirituality holistically is an insight that a Lived Religious approach shares, as Ammerman also noted.[454] Whether religion and spirituality are linked or separated, religion and the church retain a central place in the lives of the participants, in contrast to modern understandings of the declining role of both.

6.5 Religious and Spiritual Nurture

Described in 2.5.4.5, the question sought to discover what helped the participants to continue their spiritual journeys and express their religion in practice. This was also aimed at finding out some of the things that really mattered to the participants and that they regarded as important, and that will add to the growing picture of their religiosity.

6.5.1 Results

Each of the participants spoke about the different things in life that helped to sustain them in the belief and practice of their religion. These can broadly be divided into three categories: a) the importance of creation; b) the role of special places; and c) individual features; often, it was not just one aspect but a combination of these that added to their approach to religion and spirituality.

a. The Importance of Creation

Many of the participants mentioned the role of creation in the nurture of their religion and spirituality. Some expressed this as about personal enjoyment of the environment, while others linked it more directly with their religious outlook:

[454] See 3.5.2.

> Living where we do, nature is very important to me, especially the views – breath-taking![455]
>
> I like being out in the country and being able to see the wonder around us. That's all happened despite human hands.[456]
>
> Creation is important to me … time spent with God in nature, listening to the sounds of the world, and thanking God.[457]
>
> I love the sea, watching the waves, and walking in the hills, away from everything.[458]
>
> Nature is important to me. I do a lot of walking in the hills and mountains … but that's more to do with refreshment and enjoyment, although it can help with one's sense of perspective too.[459]
>
> I can feel quite close to God in the hills, and while walking my dog by the river … there's something about water I find very powerful.[460]
>
> Nature can give an awe-inspiring awareness of creation, wonder, and thankfulness to God. [461]
>
> I could watch an eagle in flight for hours … I just find it mesmerizing.[462]
>
> I've known moments in life, often connected with nature, when you catch the magic, a sense of God … What more beautiful thing could you see than snow on the hills caught by the sun, as if someone's covered them with icing sugar? That's wonderful.[463]

One participant connected her appreciation of creation with her experience of worship:

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[455] Male 5, Church B.

[456] Male 4, Church A.

[457] Female 2, Church B.

[458] Female 1, Church A.

[459] Male 2, Church B.

[460] Female 3, Church A.

[461] Female 4, Church B.

[462] Male 1, Church C.

[463] Female 5, Church A.

> I love singing BCP Evensong at my church, with the hills, the river, the wind in the trees, and the deer … This is a great experience of worship that is right for the place and for the time in which it is set.[464]

Another participant, however, said that: 'Things like nature have little or no effect on me … Things grow or not, as the case may be.'[465] However, in general the participants here sought to communicate something of the sense of wonder they experience from where they live and in some way to indicate its religious and spiritual importance to them.

b. The Role of Special Places

Several participants spoke about the significance of special places for them. One participant spoke of how she felt the need to return to her birthplace:

> Since 1995, I've had the urge to go to Montrose once or twice a year … It's as if I'm being 'pulled' there, and feel agitated until I respond, but can then know peace.[466]

Another participant linked their sense of the importance of place more directly to their religion, and wrote:

> Sometimes it's when I'm somehow in isolation that I feel closest to God, like when I go to the islands, and especially one of the uninhabited ones … I feel that I have to make a pilgrimage there each year … On several occasions while there we've heard that friends have died, and now when I go, I feel I make contact with them and God … I can't explain it, but it's a strong feeling.[467]

Two of the participants expressed the role of place in their Lived Religion by speaking of the importance for them of visiting buildings of architectural merit:

> I think special places are quite important, like York Minster, Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral … You get a feeling of spirituality in the atmosphere, and through the wonderful music and worship, that seems to feed me on all sorts of levels.[468]

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[464] Female 6, Church C.

[465] Male 6, Church B.

[466] Female 1, Church A.

[467] Male 1, Church C.

[468] Female 3, Church A.

> Visiting special places – beautiful churches like Canterbury Cathedral, and some of the churches I visited overseas – has a place for me. I think that if people in the past have taken such time and effort to create these amazing places because of their belief in God, then there must be something greater than our human lives.[469]

Two other participants spoke about places that were important to them because of what happened there. One said:

> For many years I have attended the Keswick Convention each summer, and I find this helps me to think about my faith and life more fully. For instance, I have come to support the Pentecostal view that baptism in and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are still available and happen, and this isn't the same as Christian baptism or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but a special outpouring of the Spirit as on the Day of Pentecost … Since becoming a Christian, nothing has seriously shaken my belief that the Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God.[470]

The other participant said:

> There have been places that have helped me in the past, particularly Greenbelt, and then living on Iona – these have been amazingly important and influential in helping me to make connections between my Christian beliefs and my life in general – basically, how to put into practice the things I *say* I believe![471]

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[469] Male 3, Church B.

[470] Male 2, Church B. The Keswick Convention is an annual Bible convention which has been held in Keswick, Cumbria since 1875. It is organised by Keswick Ministries, the working title of the Keswick Convention Trust, and aims to promote Bible teaching and to encourage holy and biblical lifestyles. In particular, Keswick Ministries is committed to:

- the deepening of the spiritual life in individual and church communities through the careful exposition and application of Scripture;
- seeking to encourage submission to the Lordship of Christ in personal and corporate living; a dependency upon the indwelling and fullness of the Holy Spirit for life transformation and effective living;
- to provoke a strong commitment to the breadth of evangelism and mission in the British Isles and worldwide;
- to stimulate the discipling and training of people of all ages in godliness, service, and sacrificial living; and
- to provide a practical demonstration of evangelical unity.

See www.keswickministries.org.

[471] Female 6, Church C. The Greenbelt Festival is an annual event which takes place each August Bank Holiday weekend. Started in 1974 as an arts festival with roots in the Christian tradition – 'a dream born of the unsettled non-conformist edges of the church' – it now encourages an approach that is inclusive and wide-reaching: 'Engaged with culture, inspired by the arts, sustained by faith, we aspire to be an open, generous community... Greenbelt is a place to learn, to experience, to be. As well as a host of world music, international and home-grown acts from big names to new artists, a selection of varied talks, workshops, and debates is offered exploring contemporary issues, faith. social justice, politics, and more... The thread that has run through our journey so far – that the arts, faith, and justice make a heady mix of creativity and challenge – is now leading Greenbelt into new collaborations

Therefore, some participants found that an association with personally significant places was somehow beneficial to them and helped to nurture their religiosity, whether this was connected to historical significance, personal memory, architectural beauty, or activities associated with particular locations. These ideas will be discussed further in 6.5.2.

c. Individual Features

Included here are descriptions given by participants that do not easily fit into other categories but involve ideas and practices that were especially important to their religious and spiritual nurture. As mentioned earlier, one participant spoke about the importance for him of remaining physically active and another discussed the role that psychotherapy has had in nurturing and sustaining her Lived Religion.[472] Two participants highlighted how helpful they found music and art as spiritual nourishment and as a form of religious practice:

> Things like art and music can bring out all sorts of spiritual feelings, which are those that 'lift' you, take you out of the everyday, and give you an awareness of something more, a different kind of reality.[473]

> Art and music are extremely important to me … I'm glad that a large part of worship is about singing. Hymns and religious music help take me out of myself, and when I'm involved with these, I get a glimpse of something greater than me … caught up in something I can't explain but am sure it has something to do with God.[474]

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and ventures that will happen year-round and all over.' See www.greenbelt.org.uk. This participant also spent two years as a member of the Resident Group at Iona Abbey on the Island of Iona, working on behalf of the Iona Community. The website www.welcometoiona.com states: 'The Iona Community is an ecumenical Christian organisation which was founded in 1938 by George MacLeod, then a Church of Scotland parish minister in Govan, Glasgow. George brought together young ministers in training and unemployed craftsmen to rebuild the ancient monastic buildings of the Benedictine Abbey which had lain in ruins since the Reformation. Through this common task they discovered a common life together. The Iona Community, therefore, was born as a practical response to the needs of people struggling with the challenge of poverty and unemployment in 1930s Glasgow and out of MacLeod's perception that the Church no longer spoke to the reality of their lives. Ever since, the commitment to economic justice and the inclusion of the poorest and the most vulnerable in society have been central to the Iona Community's life and work. Today this is expressed in many ways: through ministry and service in poor communities throughout Britain and across the world; in advocacy for trade justice; in support for refugees and asylum-seekers; and in working with the most vulnerable and marginalised young people on the mainland and in our island centres.' See www.welcometoiona.com/iona-today/iona-community.

[472] See 6.2.2.

[473] Female 4, Church B

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[474] Male 3, Church B.

Other participants mentioned the role that study and discussing faith with others has for them. One participant, who was reading divinity at a local university, said:

> My course is very good. It's a real intellectual challenge, and it stretches me to consider things I hadn't even thought about before. I'm learning new things, about church, life in general, everything.[475]

Two other participants talked about how they found less formal kinds of study helpful:

> Recently the Scripture Union daily bible reading notes have been important to me, a combination of background, explanation, and commentary which I find very helpful. It's great to have the space to do that now. I'm discovering new things, and I'm also enjoying the time to explore and discuss faith with others. You can grow and gain a wider understanding through hearing what others are thinking.[476]

> In the past I have taken part in the Alpha Course and was also involved in a Beta Group, and these were helpful for a time. They gave me a chance to talk about my faith with others in more depth than I had done before. [477]

Another said:

> I find reading, and those intimate conversations with dear friends, very helpful. This is where I form and grow my spirituality.[478]

Another participant spoke of something that was personal to her and that she values as a small but vital element of her Lived Religion:

> I have a daily ritual, where at the start of the day I open my bedroom window, light a candle, and then spend a few minutes just listening to the sounds of the world, and thanking God. It's a form of prayer, in the quietness … I can ask for God's help for others, especially people I love … and I feel something's missing if I don't start the day like this.[479]

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[475] Female 1, Church A.

[476] Male 4, Church A.

[477] Male 1, Church C. The Alpha Course is a 10-11-week course on the basics of Christian belief. Sessions normally include a meal, a talk on some aspect of Christian faith, and time to discuss any issues raised and other questions participants may have. A Beta Group is a 6-week follow-up to the Alpha Course on how to live the Christian life.

[478] Female 6, Church C

.

[479] Female 2, Church B.

Finally, one participant described a phenomenon that matters to her, but she finds difficult to interpret:

> I sometimes have slight premonitions of the need to *do* things, and I know things before being informed … One example was when I knew I had to visit my father-in-law, and a few days later he died. Also, once very early on a May morning I was with my parents when we had a magical moment that I can't really describe but when we all felt the same, we felt we were in a special place and special moment, as if we were with God … These sorts of things have happened sometimes, and they are important to me, but I can't explain them.[480]

All these comments make clear the different ways that the participants received religious and spiritual nourishment for their Lived Religion. The next section will explore what these might mean in more depth.

6.5.2 Analysis

As this first section of the analysis deals with context, it also means that the focus was upon a combination of Albertz's local with the personal level of religion. Living in a rural context, it was unsurprising that several participants stressed the importance of creation in the nurture of their religion and spirituality. Many of them had chosen to live in this context, and it is likely that the natural environment and all it consists of would have been a key factor in their decision-making.[481]

Since the earliest days of Christianity, there have been people who have spoken passionately about the wonder of creation, the need to reverence all that has been created, and the human role as stewards of what God has made,[482] while some have advocated a more intense form of this, known as 'Creation Spirituality,' which essentially focuses on the practice of awe and mystery

[480] Female 5, Church A.

[481] This knowledge was gained over a period through informal conversations with the participants and other congregational members.

[482] See, for instance, Keith Ward, Religion and Creation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Monika K. Hellwig, Guests of God: Stewards of Divine Creation (New York: Paulist Press, 2000); and Mark Clavier, Stewards of God's Delight: Becoming Priests of the New Creation (Eugene: Cavalcade Books, 2015).

at the heart of creation.[483] While these participants may not go to such an extent in their appreciation of nature, the comments they made, such as the 'awe-inspiring awareness of creation,'[484] 'the wonder around us'[485] 'catch the magic, a sense of God,'[486] and the need to thank God for these that is also expressed, indicate the significance that living among creation had for the way they lived their personal religion.

Yet for one participant, the concern goes beyond just enjoyment and appreciation. He became interested in Eco-Congregation Scotland,[487] on the grounds that through living in a beautiful place, and as a committed Christian, he became aware of the need to preserve creation for the future and that this meant encouraging action on environmental issues. The participant then encouraged the congregation he is part of to join the movement. In a conversation, he said:

> As I became aware of the different issues connected to the environment, I wanted to be involved in raising other's awareness of these, too. We can make a positive impact, by recycling, reducing our consumption of natural resources, and so on, and essentially by being more thoughtful about what we do. But also, as a Christian, I wanted to do more about living spiritually by linking my faith with these kinds of issues and encouraging

[483] 'Creation Spirituality [is] a movement that draws on ancient spiritual traditions and contemporary science to awaken authentic mysticism, revitalize Christianity and Western culture, and promote social and ecological justice. Creation Spirituality teaches that God permeates all things and that humanity is created blessed, not tainted by original sin … [It] draws on the earliest traditions of the Hebrew Bible and has been celebrated under various names down the centuries, most notably by … Christian mystics [in] medieval Europe [such as Hildegard of Bingen, Meister Eckhart, and Julian of Norwich]. It is an eclectic tradition that honours women's' wisdom and the cosmologies of indigenous cultures around the planet.' See www.trinitychurchofaustin.org/about/creation-spirituality/. See also Mary Grey, 'Creation Spirituality,' in Philip Sheldrake (ed), The New SCM Dictionary of Christian Spirituality (London: SCM Press, 2005), pp.218-220; Matthew Fox, Creation Spirituality; Liberating Gifts for the People of the Earth (London: HarperCollins, 1991), and Grace Blindell, What is Creation Centred Spirituality? (London: Association for Creation Spirituality, 2001).

[484] Female 4, Church B.

[485] Male 4, Church A.

[486] Female 5, Church A.

[487] Eco-Congregation Scotland 'is a movement of Scottish church congregations, of all denominations and none, committed to addressing environmental issues through their life and mission. We care passionately for God's creation … are a faith-based movement … rooted in local groups of Christians. We work co-operatively with each other and with others who care about the environment … [and] encourage transformational change at individual, community, and national levels. In prayer, worship, and conversation we discover what it means to care for God's creation [and] put that care into action … desiring to live justly in a transformed world … [and committing] ourselves to [campaign] on urgent threats to the web of life in our vulnerable world.' See www.ecocongregationscotland.org.

> people here to join together in practical action. Being involved in Eco-Congregation Scotland has helped me to do this.[488]

As an active attempt to connect his religious and spiritual convictions with wider issues and practices, this is a clear example of Lived Religion.

For other participants, the role of special places was of most significance; therefore, the focus related to Albertz's local level of religion. It has been said that places acquire meaning and generate values when people consider and identify with them, but that can both differ between people and change through time.[489] Both people of faith and those who claim no faith have sensed a similar sort of 'pull' to a particular place and then knew an inner contentment when they arrived there, as experienced by one participant in relation to her birthplace.[490] In addition, the attraction of sacred spaces and special places is well documents throughout history,[491] and a sacred space can be seen as a place where believers can encounter the divine in a special and powerful way. This has also been discussed by Peter Knudson and David Suzuki, who wrote: 'Sacred space is a place where human beings find a manifestation of divine power, where they experience a sense of connectedness to the universe. There, in some special way, spirit is present

[488] Informal conversation with Male 4, Church A, November 2013.

[489] See https://www2.le.ac.uk/department/history/heritage/understanding-the-significance-and-character-of-place, 2016.

[490] See 6.5.1b.

[491] For instance, George MacLeod is credited as describing the Island of Iona as "a thin place …where only tissue paper separates the material from the spiritual" – see Jane Bentley and Neil Paynter, Around A Thin Place (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2011), p.7, and it has become a phrases that is also used of any place where people can sense the divine more readily. See also Jean Holm with John Bowker (eds), Sacred Place (London: Continuum, 1994); Simon Coleman and John Elsner, Pilgrimage: Past and Present in the World Religions (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); Ronald Blythe, Divine Landscapes: A Pilgrimage through Britain's Sacred Places (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2000); Philip Sheldrake, Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory and Identity (London: SCM Press, 2001); Philip Carr-Gomm, Sacred Places: 50 Places of Pilgrimage (London: Quercus Books, 2008); Gary Vikar, From the Holy Land to Graceland: Sacred People, Places, and Things in Our Lives (Chicago: University Press, 2013); Michael Counsell, Every Pilgrim's Guide to England's Holy Places (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2015); Avril Maddrell, Veronica della Dore, Allesandro Scafi and Heather Walton, Christian Pilgrimage, Landscape and Heritage: Journeying to the Sacred (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015); Ian Scott Massie, Places of Pilgrimage (London: SPCK, 2015); Lori Erickson, Holy Rover: Journeys in Search of Mystery, Miracles and God (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017); and Derry Brabbs, Pilgrimage: The Great Pilgrim Routes of Britain and Europe (London: Frances Lincoln Publishers, 2017).

to them.'[492] The participant who now associated the islands he visits with departed friends, and feels he has 'to make a pilgrimage there each year … [to] connect with them and God,'[493] is sensing a strong connection between place and memory. This has been discussed by Philip Sheldrake, who wrote:

> Place is space that has the capacity to be remembered and to evoke what is most precious … Every place has an excess of memory beyond what can be seen or understood at any one time … Because of this, the human sense of place is a critical theological and spiritual issue.[494]

This in turn resonates with some of the Native American wisdom traditions, who see sacred spaces as primarily places set aside from ordinary human presence either as dwelling places of the divine or as set aside for human remembrance.[495] Both of these ideas were combined in this participant's approach, involving somewhere to make a conscious journey to – 'a pilgrimage' – in order to meet more closely with God, and in some way to commune with friends who have died. Although he said that he 'can't explain it', having a special location where this can happen was clearly important for this participant's religiosity.

For two participants, their understanding of special places and Lived Religion concerned visiting buildings of architectural merit. One spoke of 'a feeling of spirituality in the atmosphere,' and of 'wonderful music and worship that … feeds me on all sorts of levels,'[496] suggesting that there

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[492]Peter Knudson and David Suzuki, Wisdom of the Elders (Toronto: Stoddart, 1992), p.123.

[493] Male 1, Church C.

[494] Philip Sheldrake, Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory and Identity (London: SCM Press, 2001), pp.1, 17. See also pp.9-11 'Place and belonging' and pp.16-17 'Place and memory.' See also Crispin Paine, Sacred Places: Spirit and Landscape (London: National Trust Books, 2006); Leonard Hjalmarson, No Home Like Place: A Christian Theology of Place (Portland: Urban Loft Publishers, 2015); Geraldine Perriam, "Sacred spaces, healing places: therapeutic landscapes of spiritual significance." The Journal of Medical Humanities, Vol. 36, 1 (2014), pp.19-33; and John Inge, A Christian Theology of Place (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.

[495] For further information, see David Chidister and Edward T. Lenethal (eds), American Sacred Space (Indiana: University \Press, 1995); Belden C. Lane, Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001; and Matthew Martin, Native Earth Wisdom: Living in Harmony with Mother Earth (North Charleston: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015).

[496] Female 3, Church A.

is something important for her in the whole experience of being within such buildings, combining awe-inspiring architecture and a sense of history with skilfully crafted music and worship that she feels are of benefit to her on a variety of conscious and unconscious levels. This might be regarded as a religiosity that appreciates an aesthetical approach, an area of religion and philosophy that has a considerable history.[497] One scholar who has explored the relationship between art and religion is Judith Couchman, who writes about what messages churches and religious buildings conveyed through their architecture:

> Sacred art of the past guided, inspired, comforted, chastised, terrified, and occasionally entertained its observers. It prompted conversion, gratitude, worship, questions, and debate. But overwhelmingly, this art grew didactic, teaching the spiritually "saved" and "lost" what to believe, how to live, and what to expect in the afterlife.[498]

The other participant also spoke of his appreciation of architectural beauty, but added:

> I think that if people in the past have taken such time and effort to create these amazing places because of their belief in God, then there must be something greater than our human lives.[499]

Such a view coheres with what Philip Bess terms *sacred anticipation*, the idea that spaces and objects may be made sacred when they are offered by human beings to the Sacred in the hope of their sanctification, and that humans could build a sacred place as a response or an offering,[500] and with Douglas Davies, who writes that this

> … also reflects [a] much wider religious phenomenon that believers often focus their cherished beliefs on some particular place. The sacred involves the personal and corporate significance of a place which enshrines and focuses vital beliefs. [501]

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[497] Notable theologians and philosophers who have dealt with this subject include Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Barth, and Hans von Balthasar. See, for example, Frank Burch Brown, Religious Aesthetics: A Theological Study of Making and Meaning (Princeton: University Press, 1989) and The Oxford Handbook of Religion and the Art (Oxford: University Press, 2014).

[498] Judith Couchman, The Art of Faith: A Guide to Understanding Christian Art and Architecture (Orleans: Paraclete Press, 2010), pp.7-8. See also Bart Verschaffel, Loci Sacri: Understanding Sacred Places (Leuven: University Press, 2012).

[499] Male 3, Church B.

[500] See Philip Bess, Till We Have Built Jerusalem – Architecture, Urbanism, and the Sacred (Wilmington: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2006), p.65.

[501] Douglas Davies, in Jean Holm with John Bowker (eds), Sacred Place (London: Continuum, 1994), p.60

In speaking of cathedrals and other 'amazing places,' this participant's comment resonated with the idea of religion finding expression as a spatial object in time, created in order to honour the divine and used for sacred purposes. There may also be an element for the participant of keeping faith with those in the past who created such buildings because of their belief in God and that he feels he wishes to honour in the present. In sum, both participants show a further approach to religiosity based on the importance of place but expressed in a distinctive manner.

One further approach to place by some participants was in terms of what takes place at a particular location, and this also shows a combination of Albertz's local with the personal level of religion. One participant said how his regular attendance at the Keswick Convention helped to nurture his religion and spirituality.[502] Earlier in the Research Interview he had also said that he sees faith 'as dependence on God and resting on Biblical promises.' Yet the participant then said that he also supports 'the Pentecostal view that baptism in and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are still available and happen.' [503] At first sight, this may appear somewhat contradictory to the participant's otherwise conservative position. However, upon further reflection this may be a logical 'springboard' from one of the Keswick Convention's tenets which aims at encouraging 'a dependence upon the indwelling and fullness of the Holy Spirit for life transformation and effective living.'[504] Given the place of the Keswick Convention as a source of inspiration for him where he is helped 'to think about my faith and life more fully,' then there is coherence here with his attempt to live a life of holiness and witness to Christ as Lord. It is a logical movement from such a position towards the acceptance of a classic Pentecostal conviction about the role of the Spirit in the participant's Lived Religion. Following the Research Interview, I made the following field note:

> This participant attempts to hold together in his religion and spirituality things that, in some respects, seem incongruous – and yet, this seems to work for him! Is this so for

[502] For some who attend the Keswick Convention, it could be argued that this serves as the institutional level of religion, as for some evangelicals it represents the pinnacle of their faith and experience and is where they learn the latest worship songs and hear contemporary speakers to equip them for their ongoing journey as Christian disciples.

[503] Male 2, Church B.

[504] See www.keswickministries.org.

> many more people – that they hold a variety of religious and spiritual issues in tension, and have the ability and are content to 'bridge' the kind of barriers created to enable people to 'manage' their spiritual and religious understanding in the past? If so, this may indicate that for most people religion and spirituality are broader, richer, and more complex experiences than it might previously have been thought. Yet this may be exactly where a Lived Religious approach can be useful, in promoting the idea that such complexity is acceptable and natural, even healthier, than an 'either/or' dichotomy.[505]

The religiosity of this participant demonstrates the presence of such complexities, and the attempt through living them out to resolve them.

Lastly here, the participant who had been involved in both the Greenbelt Festival and living on Iona[506] spoke of the role of these places 'in helping me to make connections between my Christian beliefs and my life in general – basically, how to put into practice the things I *say* I believe!'[507] She indicates that these experiences helped to increase her awareness of the challenges of her faith and her need to nourish and demonstrate this through compassion and concern for others. In particular, she said that her time on Iona opened her to new experiences of God in worship and daily life as well as enabling her to learn more about herself and others. This has sometimes been referred to as *engaged spirituality*[508] and its essence is reflected in the statement 'A Vision for the Iona Community's Presence on Iona' agreed by the Iona Committee in January 2012,[509] which highlights the importance of exploring the meaning of Christian life

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[505] From my Field Notes, 26th August 2013

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[506] Again, as for the Keswick Convention, for the more liberal wing of the Church national events and movements like the Greenbelt Festival and Iona may also be viewed on the institutional level for some attendees.

[507] Female 6, Church C.

[508] 'Engaged spirituality refers to religious or spiritual people who actively engage in the world in order to transform it in positive ways while finding nurturance, inspiration and guidance in their spiritual beliefs and practices. Engaged spirituality encompasses people committed to social change from all the major faith traditions as well as people who refer to themselves as 'Spiritual But Not Religious.' See https://en.wikipedia.org/Engaged_Spirituality. See also Janet Parachin, Engaged Spirituality: Ten Lives of Contemplation and Action (St Louis: Chalice Press, 1999) and Joseph Nangle, Engaged Spirituality (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2008).

[509] "The Iona Community's centres on Iona exist today both as a resource and a challenge, not only to ourselves and to all who use them, but also to the wider Church and indeed to people of all faiths and of none. They are: *safe places*, in which to explore the meaning of Christian life together, both within the life of the mainstream churches and also within the many new ways of being church, and how to live a committed Christian life in a multicultural

together, being open to sharing and learning from each other 'what God is saying to and through them,' and aims to be an empowering place 'from which people may go forward on their pilgrimage strengthened and emboldened to make a difference in the world in which they live.'[510] Therefore, both her experience of Greenbelt and Iona enabled the participant to consider what a Lived Religion might involve for her, and at the heart of this is the ability to demonstrate her beliefs in action. It is an example of how the ethos of a place can encourage particular values and practices that are then incorporated into an expression of personal religiosity.

Other participants talked about how studying and discussing their beliefs with others helped in their nurture, speaking of the 'intellectual challenge,' 'learning new things,' '[exploring] faith with others [and gaining] … wider understanding through hearing what others are thinking' and 'the chance to talk about my faith with others in more depth.'[511] As the number of nurture courses available across different denominations designed to help believers explore and to build upon their nascent faith, and the sheer number of books on theologies of varying kinds, makes clear, this is something that many other people find helpful. The need to ask questions about existence and purpose, and to know more about the meaning of one's religion and to be able to see this in the context of others and their beliefs, seems to be a basic impulse for many people.[512] Then one participant spoke about how her relationships were an important place 'where I form and grow my spirituality,[513] suggesting that, like for others, the ability to contrast one's own

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and multifaith world; *places of openness*, where people at different stages on their personal journeys can share and learn from each other what God is saying to and through them, and through the story of the Iona Community and the world-wide church; *empowering places*, from which people may go forward on their pilgrimage strengthened and emboldened to make a difference in the world in which they live." From https://iona.org.uk/organisation/vacancies.

[510] From https://iona.org.uk/organisation/vacancies.

[511] Female 1, Church A, Male 4, Church A, and Male 1, Church C.

[512] See, for instance, John R. Hinnels, 'Why Study Religion?' in John Hinnels, The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion (London: Routledge, 2005), pp.5-20, and Donald Wiebe, '"Why the Academic Study of Religion?" Motive and Method in the Study of Religion,' in Donald Wiebe, The Science of Religion: A Defence (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp.213-229.

[513] Female 6, Church C. This is also shown in Kristin Aune's work with British feminists – see 3.5.4.

ideas with those of others can be useful. Here, these participants join that impulse to learn more about what their religion and spirituality means, and although for one participant this included the academic study of religion, for each of them there was a clear desire to ground the implications of their religion in the practicalities of daily life. This also coheres with approaching Lived Religion from the perspective of ordinary church people who also hold an interpretative role about what their religion entails, which in this case involves the application of the intellect to the practices of everyday religion.

Finally, for some participants there were more individual elements that connected to the idea of the numinous[514] and were incorporated into their religiosity on a personal level. For instance, two participants endeavoured to communicate the ways that art and music helped to nurture their religion and spirituality. They regard them as a means by which they are taken 'out of the everyday, and [given] … an awareness of something more' and somehow transported to 'a different kind of reality' where they can 'glimpse something greater than me' that 'has … to do with God.' The use of terms like 'something greater' and 'something more' has been explored by John Pritchard, who holds that such words are often used because for many contemporary people traditional religious language has become difficult, if not meaningless; and yet many sense that there is 'something more' to discover beyond the daily activities of life. Pritchard writes:

> [Sometimes, there are] times when I lose the clarity of revealed faith and need to approach the mysterious jigsaw [of belief] by a longer, more tentative route. What are the hints and guesses in my own experience that nudge me towards the 'something more' of faith? I think there are probably many faithful churchgoers whose thinking runs along the same lines and who, for preference, would approach the faith more speculatively …

[514] Rudolf Otto (1869-1937) is credited as developing the concept of the numinous to express what he called the "non-rational" aspects of the holy or sacred that he holds are foundational to religious experiences in particular and the lived religious life in general. See Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational (London: Oxford University Press, 1923); see especially Chapters I to VI. Stuart Sarbacker has written that: 'For Otto, the numinous can be understood to be the experience of a mysterious terror and awe (*Mysterium tremendum et fascinans*) and majesty (*Majestas*) in the presence of that which is [wholly] other" …and thus incapable of being expressed directly through human language and other media …Otto argues that understanding the numinous in a satisfying way requires a scholar to draw upon their own experiences of religious sentiment, given its non-discursive and direct nature; this became a point of … contention among later secular scholars of religion.' See Stuart Sarbacker, 'Rudolf Otto and the Concept of the Numinous.' http://religion.oxford.re.com/view/10.1093/acrefore.

> I think that many of us have intimations of 'something more,' something that might even have on it the fingerprint of a divine Source, but how can we admit this or pursue it further? … I write in the belief that "God" keeps leaking into our lives, but we have difficulty finding language to describe the experience … [Yet it is possible to encounter the beyond in the everyday], the 'something more' we are designed ever to seek.[515]

Pritchard indicates that these 'something more' moments of the numinous have been experienced by many people, but they may find it difficult to find the language to adequately communicate the meaning of these moments. Yet alongside the comments mentioned above, two of the participants endeavoured to articulate their experiences of this. One participant described her 'daily ritual' at the start of each day and which is clearly important to her, a 'form of prayer' involving gestures and stillness that helps her to feel closer to God and allows her to begin each day in thanksgiving and commending others to God's care. This is a very simple daily religious practice, but it demonstrates that Lived Religion need not always involve something spectacular or dramatic, but more often involves small but meaningful gestures that signify for the participants more than they display. The participant's 'daily ritual' embodies meanings for her beyond the obvious ones; and as she says: 'I feel something's missing if I don't start the day like this.'

However, the participant who most demonstrably indicated their religiosity involved the numinous was the one who spoke about her experiences of precognition and of 'a magic moment … [when] we felt we were in a special place and special moment, as if we were with God.'[516] The fact that this participant recalled these experiences and regarded them as significant long after they have happened indicates how important they are to her. The way she lives her religion is of a predominantly mainstream Christian kind, but she holds these experiences of the numinous alongside this and she clearly regards them as being of a spiritual nature. She uses the language of wonder in relation to these: 'a magical moment,' 'in a special place and special moment,' 'as if we were with God,' and indicates she is aware that there is something mysterious about her experiences, in the sense of something that excites curiosity and wonder, but is

[515] John Pritchard, Something More: Encountering the beyond in the everyday (London: SPCK, 2016), pp.2, 4, and Back Cover.

[516] Female 5, Church A.

difficult or impossible to explain: ‘These sorts of things have happened to me, and they are important … but I can’t explain them.’ Each adds to the overall picture that she regarded these as numinous experiences and that the participant regarded spirituality as concerning things that are ‘different’ and outside of everyday life and experience but recognised as holding a particular significance. Above all, the participant had come to regard these numinous experiences as something to draw upon in seeking to understand what she has come to believe was at the heart of her Lived Religion, the encounter with the divine. This, in combination with her everyday patterns of Christian observance and practices, help to sustain her on her journey of faith.

This section has demonstrated the diverse elements by which the participants’ Lived Religion was nurtured and sustained, which includes the role of creation, special places and actions connected with them, studying and learning with others, the place of art and music, a short daily ritual of prayer, and a sense of the numinous. It shows that Lived Religion can bring together elements traditionally regarded as religious alongside other practices and concerns that individuals and groups regard as important. This potentially involves a myriad of practices and emphases that combine in distinctive ways to meet the varying needs of modern people seeking to live religious lives. Lived Religion is clearly more than a statement of belief and more a way of being.

6.6 The Scottish Episcopal Church

Here the focus of attention is on the participants’ own experiences of involvement in the Episcopal Church. As explored in 2.5.4.6, the question seeks to explore the influence, if any, of Episcopalianism on the participants’ religion and spirituality, both in terms of their membership of this denomination and the ethos, beliefs, and practices that Episcopalianism encourages.

6.6.1 Results

In part, one of the aspects of being involved in the Scottish Episcopal Church for some participants has already been explored, the opportunities offered for service of others – see 6.2.2, 6.3.1b, and 6.3.2. In this section, other responses can be explored under the headings of a) the

importance of structured liturgy and worship: b) the centrality of the Eucharist, and c) negative experiences.

a. The Importance of Structured Liturgy and Worship

One feature mentioned by several participants was the role of the Episcopal Church's structured liturgy in worship and how they felt this connected them with the Church's tradition and worshippers through history:

> I value the tradition and discipline, and I like the structured nature, of Episcopalian worship, so that you're being quiet and allowing God to speak to you.[517]

> Liturgy matters to me. Having been brought up as an Anglican, I still feel quite at home here … I find the timeless liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer of tremendous benefit. In particular, I think the Collects we use are distinctively Anglican/Episcopalian and I find them valuable.[518]

> The structured and repetitive nature of Episcopalian worship keeps you on the right track … It offers you a good reminder of what you believe. In general, however, I think the liturgy and hymns can be mainly for 'insiders,' those who already have some understanding of faith, not for beginners or seekers. [519]

> I value being part of a church which observes the Church's Year. [This] gives us some kind of grounding as we move through the year … Perhaps I see this as more important than some members of the congregation … Having a given pattern to the services is also very helpful to me. But I also feel that worship isn't just about today, and that the Episcopal Church's structured services help to connect us with the worship of the past … It has a sense of permanence about it, continuity with Christians through the ages, which I value.[520]

> I like the regulated liturgy, particularly the 1982 Communion Service. I find its familiarity a comfort, and if my mind does drift, I know where I am when I start paying attention again![521]

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[517] Female 1, Church A.

[518] Male 2, Church B.

[519] Female 2, Church B

[520] Female 3, Church A.

[521] Female 5, Church A.

> I love the Episcopal Church's beautiful, seasonal, and sparse Scottish Liturgy 1982. It's wonderful, contextual, and transporting – everything that, for me, good liturgy should be … I love the sense it has of continuity with the past, and I feel really connected.[522]

These comments make clear the importance of history and tradition, structure, discipline, being grounded and comforted, and seasonality in helping the participants to engage in the church's worship.

b. The Centrality of the Eucharist

Although not mentioned by all the participants, several of them highlighted the primary place of the Eucharist in their religiosity as this is celebrated in the Episcopalian tradition:

> Sacraments are making a big difference to my faith … they feel more natural to me now. I leave the Eucharist feeling renewed, with extra energy … I never felt like that in the Kirk.[523]

> The times when I'm most aware of feeling in touch with something is when I receive the bread and wine at the Eucharist, combined with a sort of inner togetherness … The Eucharist is especially important to me and on the Sundays when we don't have it, I feel there's something missing ... I also value being part of a church which observes the Church's Year … Perhaps I see this as more important than some members of our congregation … Having this gives us some kind of grounding as we move through the year.[524]

> My strongest sense of connection with God is at the Eucharist, where people come looking for something, looking to be fed … I enjoy most types of liturgy, but especially of a more ceremonial kind, with music and processions … Nowhere but England could, for instance, put on a 'show' like Baroness Thatcher's funeral service – marvellous![525]

> I don't feel able to pray except in church and specifically at the Mass … I like processions and High Church ceremonial – 'smells and bells' do have an effect on me, and I find the thought of the Real Presence[526] in the Eucharist very helpful, and saying

[522] Female 6, Church C.

[523] Female 1, Church A.

[524] Female 3, Church A.

[525] Male 5, Church B. The Interview with this participant took place shortly after the funeral service with full military honours of Baroness Margaret Thatcher at St Paul's Cathedral on 17th April 2013.

[526] In Christian theology, the doctrine of 'the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist' expresses the belief that Jesus is really or substantially present in the Eucharist, and not merely symbolically or metaphorically. In general,

> known, familiar prayers. I prefer sung services to said ones, and I think every Sunday service should be a Eucharist. I like worship to be Eucharistic, quiet, and undisturbed.[527]

Here again, the participants cite elements that they associate with the Eucharist and find helpful, including experiencing renewed energy, feeling 'in touch with something,' and being 'fed' physically, spiritually, and intellectually.

c. Negative Experiences

Although most of the participants' experience of the Episcopal Church was a positive one, there were some participants for whom this was not the case. For one there was a lack of real embracing community, as previously experienced. For another, changes to traditional teaching (and continuing pressure to change) were felt to be unsettling and depressing:

> The Scottish Episcopal Church doesn't interest me greatly. It hasn't the same warmth, the same all-embracing love, the kind of 'glow' I've known in other places … Faith was so much part of life [in Ireland], and it doesn't seem like that here, it's more what a small number of people do on a Sunday morning, and I find that sad. We're not a community, and I've never felt like an insider, only an outsider.[528]

> I find the Scottish Episcopal Church incredibly depressing! ... I don't think it can still claim to be part of the Catholic and Apostolic Church ... I don't think individual Synods have the right to change the teachings and beliefs of the Universal Church over matters

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Anglicans promote this belief, but allow how such a change occurs to remain a mystery. As Vernon Staley writes: 'The term '*Real Presence*' signifies the presence of a reality. This reality is the body and blood of Christ, present in the Sacrament under the form of bread and wine. Our Lord's presence in the Eucharist is a spiritual presence. By a spiritual presence we are not to understand that which is unreal, or figurative; but a presence which is not merely natural, or material. A spiritual presence is a presence of a supernatural order. Our Lord is present in the Blessed Sacrament in a manner which is beyond our understanding. The Real Presence is a holy mystery.' See Vernon Staley, The Catholic Religion: A Manual of Instruction for Members of the Anglican Church (London: A.R Mowbray and Co., 1912), p.276. See also Alexander Schmemann, The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom (Yonkers: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997); Nathan Mitchell ,Real Presence: The Work of Eucharist (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2001); Benedict XVI, Stephen Otto Horn, and Vincenz Pfnur, God is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003); James T. O'Connor, The Hidden Manner: A Theology of the Eucharist (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005); St Peter Julien Eymard, The Real Presence (Colorado Springs: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013); John A. Hardon, With Us Today: On the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2013); and David J. Keys, Exploring the Belief in the Real Presence (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2015).

[527] Male 6, Church B.

[528] Female 4, Church B.

> like the ordination of women, homosexuality, and so on ... There are too many pressure groups influencing and changing the teachings of the Church.[529]

Finally, although one participant spoke of the importance to her of the structured nature of Episcopalian services, she also commented that her experience of the Episcopal Church does not include the 'bonds of friendship that I knew in [other] churches' she has been involved in. She also said:

> I don't really think of myself as an Episcopalian, but more as a disciple of Jesus, a Christian. Basically, I'm happy to worship wherever Christ is preached.[530]

In summary, it would seem that although some have had a mixed relationship with it, most of the participants value their relationship with the Scottish Episcopal Church, especially for the opportunities if offers for service and for its pattern of Eucharistic liturgy and worship, which helps them to form and express their Lived Religion.

6.6.2 Analysis

It is in relation to the Scottish Episcopal Church that Albertz's institutional and local levels and the personal level of religion are most interconnected, with the church's formal liturgy and worship being celebrated at the local level and received by the participants at the personal level, thereby blending the varying elements together in a way that is characteristic of Lived Religion.

Many of the participants' responses emphasised how valuable they found the use of a formal, structured liturgy in contrast to a less liturgical structure found in other traditions. This is consistent with the Episcopal Church's understanding of itself as a liturgical church whose 'liturgical style marks us as being distinct from the dominant reformed tradition of the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church.'[531] The Episcopal Church argues that the benefit of a common framework in worship is that as the words of the liturgies become familiar, they

[529] Male 6, Church B.

[530] Female 2, Church B.

[531] See 4.3.2 and Doctrine Committee, Shape, p.11.

are gradually assimilated by individuals and thus become 'part of who we are.'[532] As such, liturgical worship has a contributing factor in spiritual formation in that it seeks to bring worship into the daily lives of the worshippers, so that they may then 'live out' the liturgy during the rest of the week.[533] This views worship as a corporate act by the church community, rather than one carried out by an individual on their behalf, and the relationship between liturgy and spiritual formation has been studied by Carolyn Headley, who wrote:

> For most Christians in the Western world, the time that we meet together for corporate expression of our relationship with God, and as part of our corporate encounter with God, will be [mainly] Sunday services … Our liturgy needs to provide for an outworking of our individual relationship with God, in the context of our corporate relationship … At its best liturgy is a vehicle that enables the people of God to make response to him. It helps us to articulate what is there, encourages what could be there, and acts as a catalyst and an expression of worship … The liturgical framework provides a context of faith and an environment that gives meaning and encouragement to the faith community as a whole. From it we gain assurance, support, and knowledge, individually and together, as we are caught up in its story, rhythm, and cycle. So, we hear it, are instructed and nurtured by it, and are joined by our participation in it.[534]

Headley refers to the role of participation, and as mentioned in 6.2.1b and 6.2.2 this is clearly a key element for several of the participants, in both worship and in the ongoing life of the congregation. Alongside those who have authorised ministries like Readers and chalice administrators, there are people in each congregation who welcome people to the church, read Scripture lessons, preach, assist with the Offertory, sing in the choir and play the organ, work as sacristans, write and lead prayers for the community, assist with children's ministry, and serve coffee. Clearly, these are all practical expressions, emanating from the participant's religion – effectively, examples of their Lived Religion and ways of demonstrating, as one participant put it, how they are 'serving the community.'[535]

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[532] See 'Liturgy' at www.scotland.anglican.org.

[533] See, for instance, H. Wayne Johnson, 'Practicing Theology on a Sunday Morning: Corporate Worship as Spiritual Formation.' Trinity Journal, Volume 31, Number 5, 2010, pp.27-44.

[534] Carolyn Headley, Liturgy and Spiritual Formation (Cambridge: Grove Books, 1997), pp.4,6,14.

[535] Female 1, Church A. For further discussion on participation in worship, see Neal Darragh, Eucharist in the Local Church: Meeting the Challenge of Real Participation (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2012) and Larry Peabody, Curing Sunday Spectatoritis: From Passivity to Participation in Church (Skyforest: Urban Loft Publishers, 2016).

Also, as alluded to above, and as mentioned in 6.6.1, several participants emphasised the Eucharist as holding an especially important role in their regular worship as Episcopalians. They used phrases like 'My strongest connection with God is at the Eucharist,'[536] 'The thought of the Real Presence in the Eucharist [is] very helpful,'[537] 'I leave the Eucharist feeling renewed, with extra energy,'[538] 'Attending Holy Communion on Sundays … [is part] of my regular 'diet' as a Christian,'[539] and 'The times when I'm most aware of feeling in touch with something is when I receive the bread and wine at the Eucharist, combined with a sense of inner togetherness.'[540] Two of the participants spoke of the importance for them of ceremonial worship: 'I enjoy most types of liturgy, but especially of a more ceremonial kind … Nowhere but England could put on a 'show' like Baroness Thatcher's funeral – marvellous!'[541] 'I like processions and High Church ceremonial … 'smells and bells' do have an effect on me.' [542] For each of these participants, the Eucharist clearly plays a vital part in their worship; but for each of them it means something slightly different. For some, it is closely linked to the doctrine of the Real Presence and the continuing importance of traditional ceremonial worship, to others with a sense of personal connection with God and of achieving a sense of 'inner togetherness,' for another as a source of energy and renewal for the tasks of daily living, and for another forms part of a life-pattern of religious practice. Yet although emphasising different elements, the Eucharist is both a primary means of communication with God and a key element in these participants' Lived Religion. Perhaps these words by the late Dom Gregory Dix serve to

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[536] Male 5, Church B.

[537] Male 6, Church B.

[538] Female 1, Church A.

[539] Male 2, Church B.

[540] Female 5, Church A.

[541] Male 5, Church B.

[542] Male 6, Church B. For further discussion on the role of ceremonial worship, see Vernon Staley, The Ceremonial of the English Church (London: A.R Mowbray and Co., 1904). See also R. Daniel Shaw and William R. Burrows (eds.), Traditional Ritual as Christian Worship: Dangerous Syncretism or Necessary Hybridity? (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2018) and Keith J. Pecklers, Worship: A Primer in Christian Ritual (London: Continuum, 2003).

summarise this diversity of approach and make clear the high esteem with which the Eucharist has long been held by Christians within this tradition:

> At the heart of [the Eucharist] is the Eucharistic action … the taking, blessing, breaking, and giving of bread and the taking, blessing, and giving of a cup of wine and water, as these were first done … by a young Jew before and after supper with His friends on the night before He died … He … told his friends to do this henceforward … [and] was ever another command so obeyed? … One could fill many pages with the reasons why [people] have done this, and not tell a hundredth part of them. And best of all, week by week and month by month on a hundred thousand successive Sundays, faithfully, unfailingly, across all the parishes of Christendom, the pastors have done this just to *make* the *plebs sancta Dei* – the holy common people of God.[543]

Also in relation to the Eucharist, the Scottish Episcopal Church's Doctrine Committee states that although neither the Church's canonical teachings nor its authorised services 'enjoin a particular form of belief about the Eucharist, they clearly teach it to be central to the life of the church.'[544] They cite as evidence of this the wording used in the order for the Administration of Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament,[545] when the minister is a deacon or lay person, where the rubric states:

> *Standing at the altar, the minister says:*
> "We remember in prayer those who celebrated the Eucharist at …" (*here naming the congregation and the service at which the elements were consecrated*), "with whom we now share in communion through this consecrated bread and wine."[546]

The Doctrine Committee write that the words used in the Thanksgiving Prayer provided for use by the minister, 'God of all love, we draw near with awe and reverence to the mystery of our Saviour's Body and Blood … Grant us to receive the Holy One and to be hallowed by the Holy

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[543] Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (London: A. and C. Clark Ltd., 1945), pp.743-744.

[544] Doctrine Committee, Shape, p.27.

[545] General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Administration of Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament (Edinburgh: General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church, 1992) [hereafter, General Synod, Administration].

[546] General Synod, Administration, p.1.

Spirit,'[547] indicate a highly sacramental understanding of the Eucharist,[548] which some of these participants will share.

However, as also seen in 6.6.1c some participants' experience of the Scottish Episcopal Church was quite negative, yet these also contribute to a fuller picture of the participants' Lived Religion. One participant spoke of it not having 'the same warmth, the same all-embracing love … I've known in other places … it's more what a small number of people do on a Sunday morning.'[549] This comment seems to point to a perceived lack of Christian fellowship and community in the participant's current congregation, and this is a phenomenon that scholars have examined in different ways. For instance, Joseph Hellerman argues that spiritual formation occurs primarily in the context of community, and therefore challenges the prevailing culture of individualism which seems to be encroaching on the church and argues for a reclamation of the idea of the church as a mutually – dependent family of believers.[550] Rachel Held Evans also writes about those who have lost hope because of a bad church experience and subsequently question where they belong. She argues that God's grace can help people to overcome this through the messy, risky business of community with those who differ from us, if we are prepared to wrestle with doubt, disappointment, and questions and to travel on with God.[551] Then Joshua Harris criticises those who attend church regularly but neglect it for the rest of the week, claiming this show a fundamental lack of commitment, challenging his readers to

[547] General Synod, Administration, p.4.

[548] Indeed, on his website Scottish Episcopal Church History, Gerald Stranraer-Mull has written: 'In the 19th century the lifting of restrictions and penalties on Episcopalians led to a boom in church building across the nation … The resurgence of the Church coincided with the Oxford Movement, which sought to recall the richness of worship in the pre-Reformation Church. The Episcopal Church has always held a high doctrine of the Eucharist, although its practice had been ascetic and simple … [But] gradually, the celebration of the Eucharist became the normal and central act of each congregation's Sunday.' See www.episcopalhistory.org.

[549] Female 4, Church B.

[550] Joseph H. Hellerman, When the Church Was a Family: Recapturing Jesus' Vision for Authentic Christian Community (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2009).

[551] Rachel Held Evans, Searching for Sunday: Loving, Leaving, and Finding the Church (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2015).

reconsider this and to build closer relationships with other Christians within the local church.[552] With these thoughts in mind, it may be that this participant's comment may in part be to do with her expectations of what the church should be like, based on prior experiences in other places. But the role of social and cultural changes in recent years also needs to be considered and the recognition that these have affected church life. However, there is certainly also a validity in the participant's challenge regarding her perceived lack of community within her local church which also needs addressing.

Another participant described his experience of the Episcopal Church as 'incredibly depressing .... [and] I don't think it can still claim to be part of the Catholic and Apostolic Church.' This has been discussed briefly in 6.3.2, but here it is necessary to say that changes in the area of official church life cause concern for many people, fearing that something they cherish may disappear or alter in a way they cannot agree with. As this participant identifies himself as a 'Prayer Book Catholic'[553] who is particularly concerned about doctrine, he is especially concerned with what he perceives as illegitimate changes in the Church's teachings; as he said: 'I don't think individual Synods have the right to change the teachings and beliefs of the Universal Church over matters like the ordination of women, homosexuality, and so on ... There are too many pressure groups influencing and changing the teachings of the Church.'[554]

It is clear from these differing statements that the Episcopal Church at Albertz's institutional level continues to play a key role in these participants' Lived Religion in a variety of ways, if not always a positive one. Beginning with the often profound influences in their religious upbringing, they each now practice their religion in ways that accord with what they have come to regard as important, and especially in relation to notions of community and belonging and the place of liturgical worship as part of their religiosity, including for some the vital importance

[552] Joshua Harris, Stop Dating the Church! Fall in Love with the Family of God (Portland: Multnomah Press, 2004).

[553] See 6.2.1, and especially Footnote 242.

[554] Male 6, Church B.

of the Eucharist. These personal concerns and the expression of them are reinforced at the institutional and local levels, as evidenced by the statements made at varying points by the Scottish Episcopal Church regarding its self-understanding and the emphases it regards as crucial aspects of its expression of the Christian faith. These are then disseminated at the local level through the regular practices and worship of Episcopalian life. As a Church which 'likes to think of itself as a thinking church' which 'links together the experiential with the intellectual' and 'celebrates diversity and values dialogue alongside dogma,'[555] the Scottish Episcopal Church aspires to be a community for people who value a worshipping life rooted in daily prayer and the scriptures and a strong Eucharistic tradition, but which also seeks to engage with contemporary issues from a modern Christian perspective. As its website states:

> [Our] aim is not to create holy huddles, but … to form prayerful people who can engage [with] the world out of God's engagement with them in a common life of the Spirit and the body of Christ.[556]

As such, the Episcopalian tradition might be said to be one that implicitly, as well as more overtly, seeks to be a source and a space for the practice of Lived Religion within the Christian tradition.

6.7 Other Comments

Finally, as explored at 2.5.4.7, this question was included in case there were areas of the participants' religion and spirituality that were not covered by other questions and allowed them the opportunity to mention anything else that is important to them.

6.7.1 Results

Three of the twelve participants chose to make a response here, which are recorded below. These relate to the personal level of religion in that they deal with matters particular to individual participants.

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[555] See www.scotland.anglican.org 'What does it mean to be a Scottish Episcopalian?' and 'Spiritual Growth.'

[556] See www.scotland.anglican.org 'Spiritual Growth.'

One of the participants, who had earlier expressed the importance to her religiosity of academic study,[557] said:

> When my father died, I felt a sense that he was still with me, a sense of peace. Then, when my husband had an accident, I can remember sitting in the car feeling worried and exhausted, and that I couldn't cope, when I felt a warm feeling, like someone's arms were around me ... Another time, in [church], I got a nice, warm, lovely feeling ... I knew who it was, was made aware who it was, that it was God. From then on, I couldn't speak about this, but I felt overwhelmed and grateful.[558]

Another participant said:

> Since retiring, I feel that my faith has deepened ... [My job] helped me to care for people in a physical way and perhaps this was good preparation for caring in a spiritual way.[559]

Finally, another participant said:

> I support the Pentecostal view that baptism in and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are still available and happen … I [also] firmly believe that the Bible is the inerrant and inspired Word of God and in [its] … supreme authority … in matters of faith and conduct. I do believe it is infallible.[560]

The fact that each participant specifically mentioned these details is significant and will be explored in the following section.

6.7.2 Analysis

The words the first participant used here attempt to communicate having had an emotional experience of the presence of God, and in highlighting this the participant indicated that her Lived Religion included these differing elements, a combination of the intellectual, experiential, and emotional. There has been considerable work on religious and spiritual experience, [561] yet

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[557] See 6.5.1c

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[558] Female 1, Church A.

[559] Male 1, Church C.

[560] Male 2, Church B.

[561] See, for example, William P. Alston, Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Peter Connolly, Understanding Religious Experience (Sheffield: Equinox, 2019); Caroline Franks Davis, 'The Evidential Face of Religious Experience.' Religious Studies, Volume 26, Issue 4, 1990, pp.544-546; and Marianne Rankin, An Introduction to Religious and Spiritual Experience (London:

from the nineteenth century onwards there has been something of a bias against the role of emotion and religion within philosophy and other branches of study.[562] In recent years, however, there has been a reassessment of this.[563] David Bonagura has argued that emotion as a facet of human experience has always had a part in religion. He writes:

> The Scriptures themselves express the full pantheon of human sentiment: joy and sorrow, gratitude and jealousy, trust and doubt, hope and fear, love and hate are all part of the divine economy of salvation because they, in different ways, bring us in to contact with God. But it is critical for believers to understand their emotions as one aspect within the broader context of their faith and their relationship with God – not as constitutive of [it] … Personal experience and feelings can indeed kindle faith, but they cannot be the sole pillars of our spiritual lives, because emotions are not the essence of faith.[564]

As one of a series of facets, emotion certainly has a role to play in many, if not everyone's, approach to religion, and here the participant sought to include this aspect alongside other features she has mentioned as contributing to her Lived Religion.

With the second participant, in line with his overall approach to religion and spirituality he made a clear distinction between physical and spiritual care, and to regard the spiritual as more salient. This stands in contrast to the concept of holistic care. This idea has become more prevalent in recent years in different fields, and its essential meaning is the treatment of the whole person as

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Continuum, 2008). See also the works of Sir Alister Hardy and the work of the Religious Experience Research Centre, founded in 1969.

[562] For instance, John Macquarrie wrote concerning the naturalistic critique of religion during the nineteenth century and later: 'In the nineteenth century the drift of philosophy had been increasingly in the direction of a mechanistic and materialistic world view, and in England this was powerfully advocated by such thinkers as Bertrand Russell, and, later, Alfred Ayer. The natural sciences were taken to furnish the only basis for assured knowledge, and anything that smacked of religion or mysticism was treated as non-cognitive and banished to the region of "mere emotion."' Quoted in Mark Wynn, Emotional Experience and Religious Understanding: Integrating Perception, Conception, and Feeling (Cambridge: University Press, 2005), p.ix .

[563] See, for example, Petri Jarvelainen, A Study on Religious Emotion (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola Society, 2000); Mark Wynn, Emotional Experience and Religious Understanding: Integrating Perception, Conception, and Feeling (Cambridge: University Press, 2005); and Willem Lemmens and Walter Van Herck, Religious Emotions: Some Philosophical Explorations (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008).

[564] From www.thecatholicthing.org.

consisting of body, mind, and spirit.[565] Such a holistic approach is also consistent with Lived Religion, which values an amalgamation of elements within religiosity and the combining of practices in a creative whole. Yet although the participant's approach here was to compartmentalize aspects of life, there was a coherence as he did so, even if this may be out of step with much contemporary religious and social thinking.

Finally, given the emphasis of his words, the third participant's comments raise the issue of whether a Lived Religion can be fundamentalist. As Lived Religion is such a broad subject, a case might tentatively be made both for and against this idea. As some Christians do take the Bible literally and endeavour to live their lives in adherence to its teachings as an authoritative body has interpreted them, this can be seen as a form of Lived Religion. Yet this is substantially different from some of the tenets scholars have often identified as pertaining to Lived Religion, such as a concern with practice rather than doctrines and beliefs, a broad interpretation of religiosity and the role of interpretation within this, the place of diversity and creative hybridity in Lived Religion, and the role of embodied practices particularly with regard to gender relations. My conclusion is that this is an area of inquiry about which substantial work could usefully be done and make a significant contribution to the field of Lived Religion.

6.8 Summary

This chapter demonstrates the variety involved in the participants' understanding and practice of their religiosity. In their responses they combined in various formations the differing levels of religion explored in this thesis, showing that their religiosity varied in character and in how they applied concepts and ideas within their religious lives. For instance, some participants clearly showed the influence of their religious background, which included schooling and the example of significant people as well as church experience. For some, involvement in other churches played a role which in some cases included confirming them in their religious outlook

[565] See, for example, Liz McEvoy and Anita Duffy, 'Holistic Practice – A Concept Analysis.' Nurse Education in Practice, Volume 8, Issue 6, 2008, pp.412-419; Ann Griffin, 'Holism in Nursing: Its Meaning and Value.' British Journal of Nursing, Volume 2, Issue 6, 1993, pp.310-312; and Helen L. Erickson, ''Philosophy and Theory of Holism.' Nursing Clinics of North America, Volume 42, Issue 2, 2007, pp.139-163.

in contrast to other traditions. All are active members of Episcopalian congregations, and some participants emphasised the importance of the church as a community focus, their need for structured, familiar patterns of worship and the role of participation, and the key place of the Eucharist in their religiosity. It is equally clear that in addition to their involvement in the church, all the participants strongly valued their personal relationship with God yet expressed this in diverse ways, with some stressing God's transcendency, others an incarnational theology grounded in a God of love, and others a sense of journey, often with the church as an important vehicle within that journey. Some participants spoke of the role of service, of God and others, within their religiosity, which for some participants was based on service within their local community.

The participants' views on what constituted spirituality, whether this could be personal, and whether there was a relationship between religion and spirituality were also varied. Then they spoke of the things that offered them spiritual nourishment, and showed that these could find expression in idiosyncratic ways, including a concern with creation and special places, the place of art and music, a daily prayer ritual, the importance of intellectual pursuits including attitudes to belief and Scripture, and the role of numinous and emotional experience. In these diverse and varied ways, the different participants have found nurture and a pattern of worship in which to pursue the way they live their religion, at the personal level, as members of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

In the final chapter I aim to bring these differing communal and individual strands of religiosity together and to offer a description of what an Episcopalian Lived Religion might look like for these participants and how this might further contribute to an overall understanding of the subject as it relates to differing fields of inquiry.

CHAPTER 7

THE WAYS OF EPISCOPALIAN LIVED RELIGION

7.1 Introduction

Given all that has been discovered in this research, the question is: Can there be said to be a distinctively Episcopalian Lived Religion? My conclusion is that this is too ambitious a question to attempt to answer, involving more extensive research than has been possible here. However, what is possible is to meet a more modest aim; and it is here and for this reason that I deal most directly with the participants as a discrete *ethnos* who share certain characteristic understandings and approaches that can contribute to an Episcopalian form of Lived Religion, without regarding this as a definitive one. A way of beginning to consider this is to return to the point made in 1.2 regarding the Research Question. This concerns Lived Religion as a distinctive but diverse subject ('the ways of Lived Religion') that can be approached from contrasting angles, but here is expressed in relation to a particular group of people ('among Episcopalians') who are part of a specific Christian denomination with a distinctive history and ethos and who live in a particular geographic area ('in rural Scotland'), thereby indicating the role of context within the research. Allied with this is that this Research Question has been explored using a model inspired by Albertz of the institutional and local levels of religion, with the personal level added, as a framework and through addressing specific Research Goals based around this. This has involved discovering how Lived Religion is described at an institutional level by the Scottish Episcopal Church in particular and in contemporary writings about Lived Religion, then discovering how Episcopalians who are involved at the local level of religion describe their personal Lived Religion, and finally to assess in what ways the personal Lived Religion of participants has been influenced by the other levels in the ways they understand and practice

their religiosity. This latter point is the focus of this final chapter, the discerning of some characteristic features of an Episcopalian Lived Religion.

Yet before exploring some possible characteristics, it is necessary to provide an over-arching caveat that most proponents of Lived Religion agree upon: that as a broad, inclusive subject, it is frequently inconsistent in its approach; there is a considerable degree of crossover between levels; and differing aspects cannot be treated solely in isolation from other aspects. This does not mean that Lived Religion lacks validity but acknowledges that this can be a way that ordinary people often make sense of the differing tenets of their religion and its practice. Although at times aspects can be looked at separately, it is more common that an element or idea expressed by the participants will apply at more than one level, and from this intermingling a more accurate picture of what Lived Religion entails will emerge. By trying to treat aspects in isolation, it is also possible that something participants regard as important may be lost. For instance, one participant spoke of how she '[loved] singing BCP Evensong at my church' – a religious practice rooted in the Anglican/Episcopalian tradition. But she adds that this is connected with the context in which the worship takes place, 'with the hills, the river, the wind in the trees, and the deer,' and then she adds: 'This is a great experience of worship that is right for the place and for the time in which it is set.'[566] Clearly, this participant makes a connection between the style of service and the context in which it takes place in a way that combines the institutional, the local, and the personal levels of religion. To treat either aspect in isolation would alter what the participant experiences as important. Therefore, this combining of different elements and levels and assessing them together is a key characteristic of Lived Religion and shows that Lived Religion is an approach involving permeable boundaries rather than rigid ones.

Having given the caveat that ideas and concepts may apply on differing levels of religion, it is nonetheless possible to outline what might be regarded as characteristic features of Lived

[566] Female 6, Church C.

Religion for these participants. For the purposes of clarity, this chapter will be subdivided into four sections which group together a number of characteristics:

- Tradition, Religion, and Spirituality
- Liturgy and Worship
- Context and Practice
- Idiosyncratic Elements

These will be considered in turn.

7.2 Tradition, Religion, and Spirituality

Having made this point about combining unique and communal elements within their religiosity, a further characteristic is how significant all three of the above elements are to the participants, but that tradition and religion are especially so. In the ways that several participants refer to their religious background and the influences of early experience, education, and significant people,[567] it is clear that these made a lasting impression on their religious outlook. Several participants speak of the importance of tradition to them, especially the Christian tradition,[568] and some participants linked this with the past, especially regarding worship. One participant, for example, said: 'I feel that worship isn't just about today, and that the Episcopal Church's … services help us to connect with the worship of the past … [a] continuity with Christians through the ages, which I value,'[569] and another commented: 'I love the sense [our worship] has of continuity with the past … I feel really connected [through it].'[570] Such phrases make clear the importance to them of their religion as being part of an inheritance of faith with past believers. In some ways, however, this stands in contrast to Orsi's conviction expressed in 3.5.1 that men and women do not simply inherit religious idioms but accumulate them as their circumstances

[567] See 6.2.1a., b. and c. and 6.2.2.

[568] For instance, three participants said: 'I find God in traditional things ' (Male 1, Church C), 'I got to know traditional hymns and Bible stories … [and this] provided an sound basis for my later faith' (Female 3, Church A), and 'I value the tradition and discipline of Episcopalian worship' (Female 1, Church A)
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[569] Female 3, Church A.

[570] Female 6, Church C.

require them. While this view of religion as a dynamic action is clearly relevant to religion as a whole, it would not appear to cohere with these participants' experiences, which are far more concerned with an inherited belief system that they endeavour to find meaning for in their lives.

The importance of tradition can also be seen in the role of the church in the participants' religiosity. Therefore, a further characteristic for these Episcopalians is that their Lived Religion is religion- and church-based. The considerable influence of the church on the participants' understanding and practice has been shown throughout this research in areas such as the sort of religious language they are comfortable with using, the institutional and liturgical framework in which they operate, and the understandings of the world, themselves, and of God that have been encouraged. Yet what is somewhat surprising is the long-term and continuing extent of that influence. This is not something I anticipated I might find when I embarked on this research, given the way that spirituality has so often been promoted as of prime importance within some areas of modern religious and social research. Yet from the way, for example, that some participants spoke about spirituality ('it doesn't go easily into words,' 'a difficult term,' 'an indefinable quality'),[571] it is evident that the participants find it easier to consider religion than spirituality, although all of them offered some thoughts on the subject.[572]

However, although religion is of great concern to these participants, there does not seem to be an equal concern with trying to define or redefine what 'religion' involves, in the sense that Nye and Robertson understand this in 3.5.4. While Nye interprets religion in a contextual sense as 'religioning' and involving how religious ideas might be used creatively and practically within daily life, and Robertson seeks a wider definition that potentially includes facets of human activity not previously considered as religious but which she argues meet the same needs for people, I have discovered that the participants in this research are much more traditional in their understanding and approach to religion. Such reenvisioning of religion may not be helpful to them, as in general they are content to concentrate on areas more usually regarded as 'religious'

[571] Female 3, Church A, Female 5, Church A, and Female 4, Church B.

[572] See 5.2.5, 6.4.1.1, and 6.4.2.

in the ways that their background and understanding have encouraged. While Nye and Robertson's ideas are of interest, with these participants there would probably be little practical application of such an approach. A related point might be made in relation to McGuire's concept of religious blending mentioned in 3.5.3. For although the participants certainly hold idiosyncratic elements within their religiosity, these may not include the sort of extensive religious blending highlighted by McGuire in her research. For instance, as it was not mentioned it can be surmised that none of the participants especially connect with the growing holistic approach to spirituality outlined by Heelas and Woodhead as the 'Subjectivization Thesis' mentioned in the Introduction, neither do the participants seem inclined to exercise the degree of autonomy regarding religious blending that McGuire claims ordinary people now feel. I discovered that the sort of religious blending these participants engage in is of a more nuanced kind, often being quite traditional in nature and based on what may already be seen as potentially connected to religion, such as the participant's daily ritual and the numinous experiences mentioned in 6.5.1c and 6.5.2. I would argue that while these examples are not as pronounced as those mentioned in McGuire's research, they are nonetheless instances of creative blending that apply to the participants' religiosity and therefore are important in building up a fuller picture of the characteristics of an Episcopalian Lived Religion.

These comments on the role of religion and the church within the participants' religiosity also suggests that, along with several Lived Religion scholars, that in general the participants do not share the assumption posited in the Introduction and 1.1 regarding the separation of religion and spirituality. As 6.4.1.3 show, although there were some participants who held that religion and spirituality should be treated separately and whose replies indicate the influence of some contemporary thinking, others either noted that a distinction could be made but to regard the concepts as dealing with different issues, and others argued for the mutuality and connection between them. This is in keeping with Lived Religion scholars like Ammerman and Aune. Ammerman argues that the dichotomy often made between religion and spirituality is ambiguous and fails to do justice to the complexity of either concept, while Aune states that such a dichotomy is analytically unhelpful, especially among those who may not make such a

distinction and who treat the concepts as interchangeable.[573] Also, given the difficulties some participants have expressed regarding spirituality, to see this as part of a wider religious whole may seem helpful. Therefore, as opposed to seeing religion and the church as redundant forces and exalting spirituality as a better 'fit' for modern needs, as Sheldrake argues seems to be a trend in contemporary culture,[574] the participants continue with a traditional approach of regarding religion as primary and to see spirituality as a subsidiary to it, maintaining the linkage between the two subjects. Such an approach provides a distinct challenge to much contemporary thought.

Finally, as the church in Albertz's institutional sense is so important to the participants, it is also significant in its local sense in that all the participants are members of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Therefore, although personal religiosity is essentially a private and largely hidden matter, insofar as the participants have revealed this to me, through their responses to the Research Questionnaire, through the Research Interviews, and through my own conversations with people and observation of their religious behaviour over several years, I argue that the participants' religiosity has a recognisable "Episcopalian shape." By this, I mean that the participant hold together participation in a traditional liturgical pattern of worship with involvement in a broad, inclusive, and tolerant community of believers who can include people of differing opinions and perspectives. This coheres with the Episcopal Church's self-perception. As mentioned in 4.3.2, the Episcopal Church aims to be a recognisable voice in Scotland on contemporary social issues. It is a distinctive, disestablished, Scottish Anglican church, and as a democratic and collegial body is unafraid to revise its church Canons and guidelines as newer truths are considered and revealed. Priding itself on being 'a thinking church … [that values] dialogue alongside dogma,'[575] the Episcopal Church is a diverse body, with a very different ethos to other Christian denominations in Scotland. Yet for all their

[573] See 3.5.2 and 3.5.4.

[574] See 6.4.2.3.

[575] See 'General Synod' at www.scotland.anglican.org.

different attitudes and approaches, the participants have all found a religious 'home' within such a community.

These comments make clear the continuing and important roles of tradition, religion, and the church for the participants' understanding and practice of their religiosity. They continue to value their connection with worshippers in other ages, to view religious concepts in ways that those from the past would find recognisable, and in general they do not separate their spirituality from their religion. They are firmly based in the Episcopalian tradition, with the differing strands of individual and communal life that this involves. In the next section I will explore the related issues of liturgy and worship.

7.3 Liturgy and Worship

Since earliest times, the Scottish Episcopal Church has had a strong liturgical tradition, holding that a repetitive, rhythmic pattern of prayer and worship is a profound means of learning the truths of faith almost by osmosis. The Episcopal Church speaks of liturgy as 'the Church's corporate worship … the structured and shared worship that Christians engage in when they gather together,'[576] and adds: 'Much of our worship follows a common framework, [and] in this way words become familiar, and part of who we are.'[577] Rather than a didactic understanding of the deeper meaning of worship, the Episcopal Church holds that through the regular exercise of a structured form participants will imbibe the truths that worship holds on conscious and unconscious levels. As this research show, the use of structured forms of worship is deeply significant for many of the participants, and this was often contrasted with the more affective and extempore forms of worship favoured in other traditions. This is most clearly demonstrated in relation to the Eucharist, probably the most frequently used service in Episcopalian worship. The Church has always had and maintains a high Eucharistic tradition, with priest and people seeking to be a local sacramental expression of Christ's body gathered around the Eucharistic altar. Several participants mention the high esteem in which they hold the Eucharist, and this is

[576] See 'What is Liturgy?' at www.scotland.anglican.org.

[577] See 'Liturgy' at www.scotland.anglican.org.

coupled with the place of participative worship. The participants spoke about being somehow involved in services and of feeling that they were involved in and contributing to the worship being offered. It is, however, quite revealing to note that at one time Church B elected to change their non-Eucharistic Family Service to a service of Matins from the Scottish Prayer Book, indicating again the strong role of tradition for the participants. Therefore, a further characteristic feature of Episcopalian Lived Religion is the importance of a structured liturgy that they were able to participate in.

7.4 Context and Practice

Here the focus is on the ways that characteristics are influenced by context, on the practices that participants engage in within their daily context, and the meanings these have for the participants. The word 'context' can be used in a variety of ways. When considered in relation to geography, it is reflected in several of the participants' concern with creation and nature. As seen in 6.5.2, some spoke of this in terms of enjoying living in a rural environment, while others connected it more closely to their religiosity, reflected in the use of words like 'awe,' 'wonder,' breath-taking,' and 'catch the magic,' often followed by expressions of thankfulness to God for creation, and as also seen for one participant this appreciation became subsequently linked in his religious understanding with care for creation, leading him to take action through involvement with a faith-based environmental movement and encouraging others to be aware of such concerns. This links the participant's religiosity at the personal and local levels of religion with a situation that is global in its concern. Also, as seen in 3.5.1, Robert Orsi has pointed out that often the context can dictate what is regarded as acceptable or unacceptable for those involved in it. One example from the participants' Episcopalian context relates to a member of the congregation of one church, who did not take part in the Research Interviews but who was known to hold her Christian beliefs alongside a strong belief in reincarnation, something not generally accepted by other church members but which is an aspect in some contemporary religiosity. [578] Both these examples indicate the role that geographical context can play in the participants' approach to Lived Religion.

[578] See, for instance, Geddes MacGregor, Reincarnation in Christianity: a new vision of the role of rebirth in Christian thought (London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1989) and Tony Walter and Helen Waterhouse,

Another contextual issue that several participants related to the practice of their religiosity concerned special places, which again relates to the differing levels of religion in varying ways. For one participant, this was especially about a sense of rootedness in her birthplace and the need to visit there regularly,[579] while for others it related to a continuity of faith with believers and friends from the past[580] a sense of wonder inspired by buildings like the great cathedrals constructed through faith,[581] and for others the activities that take place there.[582] Some participants spoke about their own churches as sacred spaces, expressing a strong emotional connection to the church building and the feelings it inspires in them in addition to the worship offered there so regularly.[583] Participants who spoke in these terms concentrated mainly on the personal needs these sacred spaces helped to provide, such as being places of sanctuary 'when life is difficult,'[584] of peace and tranquillity when life can be busy, and of quiet in which to meet with God. This has traditionally been something the church has provided throughout history, and its continuing role in addition to whatever else takes place there continues to be important for the participants.

One further aspect concerns the idea of context as relationship. The participant expressed this in different ways. One spoke of the importance of 'those intimate conversations with dear friends … where I form and grow my spirituality'[585] which indicates how significant these relationships are for her. Relationships are also highlighted in Kristin Aune's study of feminism

'A Very Private Belief: Reincarnation in Contemporary England.' Sociology of Religion, Volume 60, Issue 2, 1999, pp.187-197.

[579] Female 1, Church A. See 6.5.1a.

[580] Male 1, Church C and Female 3, Church A. See 6.5.1b and 6.6.1a.

[581] Male 3, Church B and Female 3, Church A. See 6.5.1b and 6.5.2.

[582] Male 2, Church B and Female 6, Church C. See 6.5.1b and 6.5.2.

[583] Female 5, Church A, Male 6, Church B, Female 1, Church A, and Female 4, Church B. See 4.3.3a, 6.3.1b, 6.3.2, 6.5.1b, and 6.7.1.

[584] Female 5, Church A. See 6.3.1b, 6.3.2. See also 2.4.7.

[585] Female 6, Church C. See 6.5.1c.

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and Lived Religion, where the '[prioritising of] relationships as the context for religio-spiritual formation' is emphasised, arguing that such an approach is 'socially-located and tied to social practice, social interaction, and the wider context of … [the participants'] biographies and … lives' and providing a further endorsement of Lived Religion.[586] Other participants make a strong link between context, practice, community and belonging. Although Ammerman makes the point that belonging can be seen in a positive or negative sense, which largely depends on whether people are religiously active or not,[587] most participants viewed belonging as positive. This is seen both in the responses made in the Research Questionnaire[588] and in the Research Interviews, where phrases like 'the chance to make a commitment to [others] and to … move on together as a community,' an emphasis on 'the contacts and friendships you make' through belonging, 'how we think and act towards others … [and] care for them,' 'get the support of others' and 'being part of a community is very important'[589] make clear the significance these participants place on being in relationship with others. Also, as seen earlier this emphasis on community often finds practical expression beyond the church community as participants engage with different community projects.[590] All these examples illustrate how context as relationship matters to these participants and that this frequently finds expression in practices and action towards others.

It is also important to mention a further element of practice. McGuire argues strongly for an intimate connection between what she terms 'embodied practices'[591] and Lived Religion, viewing them historically and in modern times as ways that people can link the spiritual realm with their daily lives and needs. Certainly, the connection between faith and the body can be an

[586] See 3.5.4.

[587] Ammerman, Scientific Study, p.25.

[588] See 5.2.2.

[589] Male 4, Church A, Male 3, Church B, Female 1, Church A, Female 5, Church A, and Female 2, Church B. See 6.3.2.

[590] For example, Male 4, Church A, Female 5, Church B, and Female 6, Church C. See 6.3.2.

[591] Se 3.5.3.

important one; yet for the participants in this research, this was of a much less intimate kind than that presented in McGuire's writings. It concerned practices like preparing the altar for the Eucharist, serving the chalice, arranging flowers, taking the collection, ringing bells, and making coffee – all embodied practices, and ones that the participants were at ease with, but perhaps not those envisaged by McGuire. Yet these gentle forms of practice are no less elements of Lived Religion, and within the participants' context would be accepted and appropriate.

Finally, mention should be made of 'Golden Rule Christianity' – what Ammerman describes as 'America's mainstream form of religiosity,'[592] but which also has resonances in the practice of these participants. As a basic attitude of Christian care for others, living by certain values, and being involved in church life while generally holding lightly to ideological convictions and doctrinal orthodoxy, this may undergird the general approach that many participants have towards their religiosity, expressed in phrases like 'I try to be and to do good,'[593] 'I like to be useful – to do things, take part, to help,'[594] and '[showing] our concern for [others].'[595] Here is a religiosity that is not heavily doctrinal, but is essentially a moral outlook on life based on attitudes of kindness, generosity, and good neighbourliness and that seeks practical expression. Ammerman writes that Golden Rule Christianity may lack orthodox theological undergirding, but it is pervasive and well-intentioned. It is a form of Lived Religion that many of the participants implicitly assent to.

Therefore, whether expressed as concern for creation, with special places that inspire in different ways, or as a belief in community that demonstrates itself in action, the importance of context and practice as an aspect of the participants' Lived Religion is made clear. In whatever sense it

[592] See 3.5.2.

[593] Female 4, Church B.

[594] Female 5, Church A.

[595] Male 3, Church B.

is interpreted, the context inspires these Episcopalians to demonstrate their Christian commitment in practice, in relation to God, to others, and to the environment in which they live.

7.5 Idiosyncratic Elements

A final characteristic that the participants hold in common is the diverse and idiosyncratic nature of their personal religiosity. Each participant expresses this in different ways, highlighting themes that are especially significant to them in accordance with how their religiosity has been shaped by their background, experiences, and personal inclinations. This leads to an array of differing concerns, such as a role for the numinous,[596] a concern for logic,[597] thanksgiving for bodily strength,[598] performing a daily ritual,[599] the need for places of nurture and contact,[600]the need for integration, [601] a role for ceremonial and ritual worship,[602] the place of study and discussion of faith issues,[603] an appreciation of art and music,[604] a conviction of a God of love and acceptance,[605] the importance of serving others,[606] and the need for community.[607] The breadth of the participants' personal religiosity is also revealed in the phrases they use, as seen in a few examples:

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[596] Female 1, Church A and Female 5, Church A.

[597] Male 2, Church B and Male 6, Church B.

[598] Male 4, Church A.

[599] Female 2, Church B.

[600] Female 1, Church A, Male 1, Church C, Male 2, Church B, Female 3, Church A, Male 3, Church B, and Female 6, Church C.

[601] Female 3, Church A.

[602] Male 5, Church B and Male 6, Church B.

[603] Female 1, Church A, Male 1, Church C, and Male 4, Church A.

[604] Male 3, Church B and Feale 4, Church B.

[605] Female 2, Church B.

[606] Male 1, Church C, Female 1, Church A, Female 5, Church A, Male 4, Church A, Male 5, Church B, and Female 6, Church C.

[607] Male 3, Church B, Female 2, Church B, Female 4, Church B, and Female 6, Church C.

> Wonderful music and worship … feed me on all sorts of levels.[608]
>
> The whole time I'm having an internal conversation with God, speaking through different things with him.[609]
>
> Nothing has seriously shaken my belief that the Bible is the inerrant and inspired Word of God … [and that] it is infallible.[610]
>
> Your own spirituality is completely and utterly unique, because it's shaped by the distinctive person that you are. And although through the years it's influenced by external things, it's still in essence – and is *the* essence – of you.[611]
>
> I think that my faith is a much *healthier* one now than it was in the past, stronger and based on convictions, more like a celebration of life, in thankfulness for all God has done.[612]
>
> Perhaps my religion is more practical than theoretical, more about helping others and getting along with them.[613]
>
> That's what the Church has always believed and handed down, and I don't find this difficult.[614]

To say, however, that these religiosities are idiosyncratic is not to infer that they are privatized stances that only satisfy the individual, but that they include particularities that are meaningful to each participant and that find legitimate expression within their religiosities alongside other elements that are shared by other participants. These idiosyncratic elements provide unique insights into the participants' understandings of religiosity, and it is indicative of the scope of

[608] Female 3, Church A.

[609] Female 1, Church A.

[610] Male 2, Church B.

[611] Female 6, Church C.

[612] Female 2, Church B.

[613] Male 3, Church B.

[614] Female 4, Church B.

Lived Religion that it can include these diverse elements enabling the participants to articulate and express a Christian religiosity that combines the unique and the communal.

7.6 Conclusions

This research shows that the ways of Lived Religion among Episcopalians in rural Scotland are varied, combining a concern with Albertz's institutional and local levels of religion, combined with the personal level, in differing ways. Yet it has been possible to identify some characteristic features of these participants' personal Episcopalian Lived Religion.

Firstly, as with all Lived Religion, it can be inconsistent in approach, but this indicates the complexities involved in this subject and adds to the overall understanding of the participants' religiosity.

Secondly, it continues to be highly influenced by the institutional and local levels of religion, with key places for tradition, continuity, and the church, and especially the Episcopal Church. The influence of religious background can also be seen. This concern with tradition and the church as an institution offers a challenge to some modern understandings of religion, and especially the role of spirituality, that stress the importance of the individual and the quest for self-fulfilment, showing that for these Episcopalian participants the communal dimension of religion retains a vital role. This may also provide opportunities for scholars in fields such as the sociology of religion for studies on the continuing role of tradition and the church in modern religiosity, at a time when the role of institutions is often minimized or disregarded.

Thirdly, it does not separate religion from spirituality but approaches them as either different aspects of the same phenomenon or as related concepts. This also challenges modern attempts to view this in dichotomous terms.

Fourthly, it has a vital place for structured liturgy and worship as practised by the Episcopal Church, which forms and nurtures personal religiosity. This affirms the Scottish Episcopal

Church in its self-perception as a liturgical church whose worship enriches those who practice it and then extends into people's everyday religiosity.

Fifthly, it sees context as important, and this can be interpreted as physical space, special places of nurture and significance, and relationships with others. Their contexts influence the participants' practices, and this is especially shown as a concern for creation, community, and through the practice of 'Golden Rule Christianity.'

Finally, it contains idiosyncratic elements of importance to each participant which find expression in varying ways and practices alongside these other concerns.

In summary, these participants' Episcopalian Lived Religion blends together the inconsistent, the traditional, the institutional, the local, and the personal, the liturgical, the contextual, and the idiosyncratic. As such, it is a distinct and unique combination that allows these participants to practice a personal religiosity as part of their continuing Christian journey.

However, this research also raises other issues that challenge current understandings of Lived Religion. For instance, while the participants' religiosity includes a place for exploring religious understanding, it may be that their approach to this differs from those in the academy. While Orsi, Nye and Robertson ask questions about the meaning of religion, and McGuire focuses on the roles of embodied practices and religious bricolage, the participants are more likely to consider how religion can be used in their lives, what practices will enhance their experiences and that of others around them, and how this will help bring them closer to God. These are both personal and practical considerations by people who have spent much of their lifetime 'living' their religion. Therefore, although a different approach and understanding from those in the academy, this approach to Lived Religion cannot be dismissed. Grounded as this is in everyday experience, it offers an important insight into the lived religiosity of ordinary Christian people.

This research also challenges the implicit bias that there seems to be within much Lived Religion literature. Just as the religion/spirituality dichotomy is now being questioned, this research

suggests that the apparent liberal bias of several Lived Religion scholars is also open to discussion. The traditional style of religion that has sustained many of the participants for much of their lives, and which has included a conservative, even fundamentalist, form for one participant, should not be ignored as contributing to Lived Religion. As one who regards himself as firmly within the liberal Christian tradition, to find myself raising this matter is something of a surprise. But this research has led me to consider this, and I argue that the issue of conservative religion as Lived Religion both challenges the way that Lived Religion is sometimes presented and is a potential area of interest for practitioners of religious studies, perhaps in relation to other faiths as well.

A final challenge relates to one of the central strands of Lived Religion, its concern with religious practice. It was surely right for writers on Lived Religion to promote the serious consideration of religious practice alongside the focus on dogma and tenets of faith. However, this research shows that in addition to practice some of the participants are interested in doctrinal matters, and for one participant[615] is a major concern. While scholars like Orsi and Ammerman may argue that Lived Religion is not entirely dismissive of institutional religious concepts,[616] the way in which other scholars emphasise practice suggests that for them, it plays a minor role at most. From this research, I suggest that now it is time to consider, or re-consider, the place of theory *and* practice, of belief *and* action, in order to provide a fuller expression of Lived Religion.

As this research shows, the subject of Lived Religion is multifarious, capable of exploration from numerous perspectives. This study explores it by describing the ways that Lived Religion is revealed in the words and actions of some Episcopalian participants resident in a rural Scottish context. It describes some characteristic features of their personal religiosity and so provides a discrete picture of what an Episcopalian Lived Religion can look like. It is a picture that could not be found in the same configuration anywhere else but is one of demonstrable significance

[615] Male 6, Church C. See 6.3.1c.

[616] See 3.5.1 and 3.5.2.

for how these participants live their religion in daily life. In taking seriously context, practice, and interpretation, Lived Religion seeks to be a vehicle that transcends the boundaries sometimes created to keep differing ideas and practices apart, which, while it may make some kinds of study more manageable, does not capture the fullness that Lived Religion seeks to manifest. Although it may require revisiting the role of traditional practices, institutions, and beliefs, Lived Religion is an area of inquiry that aims to ground religiosity in the realities of daily life. My hope is that this research has added to this in ways that may be of future use to scholars in differing disciplines who seek further knowledge of contemporary religiosity.

APPENDIX I

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM **APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW**	*OFFICE USE ONLY:* Application No: Date Received:

1. TITLE OF PROJECT

Personal Spiritualities Among Episcopalian Christians in North East Scotland.

2. THIS PROJECT IS:

University of Birmingham Staff Research project ☐
University of Birmingham Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student project ☑
Other ☐ (Please specify):

3. INVESTIGATORS

a) PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS OR SUPERVISORS (FOR PGR STUDENT PROJECTS)

Name: Title / first name / family name	The Revd. Dr. John Vincent
Highest qualification & position held:	PhD
School/Department	Theology & Religion (UTU)
Telephone:	
Email address:	

Name: Title / first name / family name	
Highest qualification & position held:	
School/Department	
Telephone:	
Email address:	

b) PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF ANY CO-INVESTIGATORS OR CO-SUPERVISORS (FOR PGR STUDENT PROJECTS)

Name: Title / first name / family name	
Highest qualification & position held:	
School/Department	
Telephone:	

Email address:	

c) In the case of PGR student projects, please give details of the student

Name of student:	James Curry	Student No:	
Course of study:	PhD PT	Email address:	
Principal supervisor:	The Revd Dr John Vincent		

Name of student:		Student No:	
Course of study:		Email address:	
Principal supervisor:			

4. ESTIMATED START Date: May 2012 **OF PROJECT**

ESTIMATED END Date: May 2014 **OF PROJECT**

5. FUNDING

List the funding sources (including internal sources) and give the status of each source.

Funding Body	*Approved/Pending /To be submitted*
Self funding	

If applicable, please identify date within which the funding body requires acceptance of award:

Date:

If the funding body requires ethical review of the research proposal at application for funding please provide date of deadline for funding application:

Date:

6. SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Describe the purpose, background rationale for the proposed project, as well as the hypotheses/research questions to be examined and expected outcomes. This description should be in everyday language that is free from jargon. Please explain any technical terms or discipline-specific phrases.

I propose to undertake a small-scale study of the personal religion and spiritualities of people from within three Episcopalian congregations in rural Scotland where I currently serve as the Rector. It is my hope that embarking on this study will both extend my understanding of those for whom I have pastoral responsibility and that together we might find ways to address the spiritual needs expressed. The fact that this is a local group of people, living within a particular context and who are part of a particular Christian denomination, is also important. In comparatively recent years a number of researchers have stressed the important role of local and contextual theology, and through explorations, conversations and interviews with this group regarding their religion and spiritualities my intention is to discover what specific factors influence these understandings, how these are revealed in practice, whether these understandings are typical of those found in the wider society, or whether there is something distinctive about them that can contribute to the wider portrait of religion and spirituality today.

Following a literature review outlining contemporary trends in religion and spirituality and an outline of the scope and methodology to be used throughout the research, I shall offer a social and cultural analysis of my own context and I also hope to include some thoughts on the history and nature of Episcopalianism in north-east Scotland where these congregations are based, both in view of my concentration on the personal religion and spiritualities of Episcopalian Christians here and because historically the impact of Episcopalianism on the region has been considerable. I shall also explore the idea of a personal spirituality and whether such a notion is important in general and to these participants in particular.

Then at the centre of my research will be the engagement with people from within the Episcopalian congregations here. By focussing on examples from this context, I hope to explore the influence or otherwise of the local on people's approaches to religion and spirituality, and to draw out both the similarities and contrasting features there may be with wider trends and emphases in contemporary explorations of these subject-areas. Initially, this will involve the completion of a Questionnaire on various aspects connected with spirituality and personal belief, followed by Research Interviews with congregational members of differing ages and experiences about their religion and spirituality and how they seek to put their understanding of these into practice. This will include endeavouring to find out what factors have influenced their understanding, such as family background, people, places, and experiences, as well as their personal motivations and convictions and how they came to hold these. In addition, I will

be keen to try to discern people's conception of the sacred and what helps them to nourish this. In general, my intention will be to present as accurate a portrayal as possible of what people among whom I live and work actually think about religion and spirituality, and in particular their personal spirituality, both in order to understand them and their needs more fully and so that as a Christian minister I might help enable them to meet the spiritual needs they express.

In the light of all that I may discover during the fieldwork process, I will then offer a critical analysis of the data collected concerning personal spirituality and assess how this might relate to what current research into religion and spirituality is saying. A final chapter will attempt to discern what this research might suggest concerning the wider spiritual and religious scene, especially in relation to the future of religion and spirituality and any new insights and possibilities that my research may contribute to this wider picture.

7. CONDUCT OF PROJECT

Please give a description of the research methodology that will be used

Essentially, I envisage this study as a qualitative research project, utilizing an ethnographic methodological approach as the most suitable one for engaging with a relatively small group of participants within their usual contexts. I will make use of a number of different methods of data collection and analysis, such as an examination of context, a literature review of current trends in religion and spirituality based upon the writings of researchers working in this field, the use of a detailed Questionnaire, and Research Interviews with Episcopalian Christians who live within my context.

Given that there is already an established relationship between myself as the researcher and the participants, I will aim to show my awareness of any perceived "authority" issue through an exploration of the 'Insider/Outsider' issue within the Methodology section of the thesis in the hope of demonstrating that both the researcher and the participants will be operating as far as possible on a level of equality.

This combination of methods seeks to provide a healthy balance of approaches that I see as suitable for obtaining the kind of data about personal beliefs and spirituality that I require.

8. DOES THE PROJECT INVOLVE PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE OTHER THAN THE RESEARCHERS AND SUPERVISORS?

Yes ☑ No ☐

Note: "Participation" includes both active participation (such as when participants take part in an interview) and cases where participants take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (for example, in crowd behaviour research).

If you have answered NO please go to Section 18 . If you have answered YES to this question please complete all the following sections.

9. PARTICIPANTS AS THE SUBJECTS OF THE RESEARCH

Describe the number of participants and important characteristics (such as age, gender, location, affiliation, level of fitness, intellectual ability etc.). Specify any inclusion/exclusion criteria to be used.

There are to be 12 participants, whose actual names will be decided on the basis of a congregational Questionnaire submitted to congregations in Village A (45 members), Village B (45 members) and Village C (10 members). It is envisaged to have a representative number of participants from each village, based upon overall congregational numbers. A mix of persons by age, gender, affiliation, level of fitness and intellectual ability will be made on the basis of the Questionnaire.

10. RECRUITMENT

Please state clearly how the participants will be identified, approached and recruited. Include any relationship between the investigator(s) and participant(s) (e.g. instructor-student).

Note: Attach a copy of any poster(s), advertisement(s) or letter(s) to be used for recruitment.

Initially, the selection criteria of participants will be based on the participants' willingness to take part in the research and who have shown an interest in the project, as well as aiming to present a representative sample of those from within the congregations who are to be studied. In addition, selection will also be done on the basis of age, gender, affiliation, level of fitness, and intellectual ability, which will be set beside the further criteria of:

a) being from among a representative sample of Episcopalian Christians within the client group to be studied; and

b) the potential productivity of these participants in terms of the project, giving some attention to specific. diverse backgrounds or experiences of potential participants.

11. CONSENT

a) Describe the process that the investigator(s) will be using to obtain valid consent. If consent is not to be obtained explain why**.** If the participants are minors or for other reasons are not competent to consent, describe the proposed alternate source of consent, including any permission / information letter to be provided to the person(s) providing the consent.

Consent Form (see attached) will be sent to selected participants on the basis of Questionnaire responses. Those who sign the Consent Forms constitute the 12 persons who will be the project participants.

Note: Attach a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (if applicable), the Consent Form (if applicable), the content of any telephone script (if applicable) and any other material that will be used in the consent process.

b) Will the participants be deceived in any way about the purpose of the study? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☑

If yes, please describe the nature and extent of the deception involved. Include how and when the deception will be revealed, and who will administer this feedback.

N/A

12. PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Explain what feedback/ information will be provided to the participants after participation in the research. (For example, a more complete description of the purpose of the research, or access to the results of the research).

1) Participants will be shown a written summary of the Research Interview, which will be modified if they request it.

2) Participants will be shown the modified copy where necessary.

3) Participants will be given the results of the research.

13. PARTICIPANT WITHDRAWAL

a) Describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project.

See Consent Form.

b) Explain any consequences for the participant of withdrawing from the study and indicate what will be done with the participant's data if they withdraw.

No consequences – data will be destroyed.

14. COMPENSATION

Will participants receive compensation for participation?

i) Financial ☐ ☐
Yes ☐ **No** ☑

ii) Non-financial ☐ **Yes** ☐
No ☑

If **Yes** to **either** i) or ii) above, please provide details.

If participants choose to withdraw, how will you deal with compensation?

N/A

15. CONFIDENTIALITY

a) Will all participants be anonymous?
Yes ☑ **No** ☐

b) Will all data be treated as confidential?
Yes ☑ **No** ☐

Note: Participants' identity/data will be confidential if an assigned ID code or number is used, but it will not be anonymous. Anonymous data cannot be traced back to an individual participant.

Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants and/or confidentiality of data both during the conduct of the research and in the release of its findings.

All participants in the research project will be identified solely by the use of initials, and each participant will be assigned a confidential ID code, although participants' actual words and phrases will be retained as I feel that these are germane to the project. Inevitably, the curious may wish to guess who said what! However, I intend that participants will only be given access to their own responses once the research interviews have been written up, as well as to the conclusion of the whole project. By doing so, I hope as far as possible to protect the identities of individual participants from disclosure.

If participant anonymity or confidentiality is not appropriate to this research project, explain, providing details of how all participants will be advised of the fact that data will not be anonymous or confidential.

N/A

16. STORAGE, ACCESS AND DISPOSAL OF DATA

Describe what research data will be stored, where, for what period of time, the measures that will be put in place to ensure security of the data, who will have access to the data, and the method and timing of disposal of the data.

1) Data will be disposed of after the degree is awarded.

2) All material will be ID coded and stored in a secure filing cabinet in the candidate's study.

17. OTHER APPROVALS REQUIRED? e.g. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks

☐ YES ☑ NO ☐ NOT APPLICABLE

If yes, please specify.

18. SIGNIFICANCE/BENEFITS

Outline the potential significance and/or benefits of the research

I believe that my chosen area of inquiry is a very rich one, and I welcome the opportunity of exploring this in depth. My intention will be to make an informed contribution to knowledge about religion and personal spirituality by presenting a detailed portrait of how this is being experienced and practiced among a particular group of Christians in an area of rural Scotland. I hope to discover what specific factors have influenced their understanding of the subject, and whether these are to be found in the wider sphere of spirituality or are a direct result of the influence of this locality and region. From this, I hope to be able to identify elements that might usefully be explored in future research on religion and spirituality.

19. RISKS

a) Outline any potential risks to **INDIVIDUALS**, including research staff, research participants, other individuals not involved in the research and the measures that will be taken to minimise any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap

No potential risks are identified.

b) Outline any potential risks to **THE ENVIRONMENT and/or SOCIETY** and the measures that will be taken to minimise any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap.

N/A

20. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ETHICAL ISSUES RAISED BY THE RESEARCH?

Yes ☐ No ☑

If yes, please specify

21. CHECKLIST

Please mark if the study involves any of the following:

- Vulnerable groups, such as children and young people aged under 18 years, those with learning disability, or cognitive impairments ☐
- Research that induces or results in or causes anxiety, stress, pain or physical discomfort, or poses a risk of harm to participants (which is more than is expected from everyday life) ☐
- Risk to the personal safety of the researcher ☐

- Deception or research that is conducted without full and informed consent of the participants at time study is carried out ☐
- Administration of a chemical agent or vaccines or other substances (including vitamins or food substances) to human participants. ☐

- Production and/or use of genetically modified plants or microbes ☐
- Results that may have an adverse impact on the environment or food safety ☐
- Results that may be used to develop chemical or biological weapons ☐

Please check that the following documents are attached to your application.

	ATTACHED	NOT APPLICABLE
Recruitment advertisement	☐	☐
Participant information sheet	☑	☐
Consent form	☑	☐
	☐	

APPENDIX II

The Research Questionnaire – <u>Exploring Religion and Spirituality</u>

1) Please fill in as much of this section as you feel comfortable about doing <u>This information will not be shared with anybody else.</u>

Gender: Male □ Female □
Age Range: 0-15□ 16-20□ 21-30□ 31-40□ 41-50□ 51-60□ 61-70□ 71-80□ 81+□

Educational Qualifications

□ None
□ Intermediates/O Levels or similar
□ Highers/Advanced Highers/A Levels or similar
□ Degree(s)
□ Higher degree(s)
□ Other post-school qualifications

Paid Employment – present or last

□ None
□ Manual
□ Semi-skilled
□ Clerical/Administrative/Technical
□Professional
□ Higher Managerial or similar

2) In relation to your thoughts about spirituality, are any of the following statements important to you? Please rank them in order of their priority to you (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree).

	1	2	3	4	5
• That life has meaning/purpose	□	□	□	□	□
• That my personal beliefs help give meaning to my life	□	□	□	□	□
• That spiritual and personal growth is one of the chief goals in life	□	□	□	□	□
• That there is a strong and important connection between body, mind and spirit	□	□	□	□	□
• That people demonstrate what they believe by what they do	□	□	□	□	□
• That it is important to be part of a religious community	□	□	□	□	□
• That all spiritual truths come from within the self, and it is not necessary to be involved in organized religion to know these truths	□	□	□	□	□
• That it is possible to have a close and meaningful personal relationship with God	□	□	□	□	□
• That there is a sacred presence in nature	□	□	□	□	□

3) Where do you find God most fully? Please rank in order of importance (1 = not very important, 2 = fairly unimportant, 3 = neither important nor unimportant, 4 = fairly important, 5 = very important).

- ☐ While attending religious services and other church events
- ☐ While walking in the hills and being among creation
- ☐ When helping other people
- ☐ When I seek the deeper things in myself
- ☐ None of the above – please give detail

4) Does your relationship with God include any of the following? Please rank these in order of importance (1 = not very important, 2 = fairly unimportant, 3 = neither important nor unimportant, 4 = fairly important, 5 = very important, 6 = extremely important)

- ☐ It helps me to be a better person and to lead a good life
- ☐ It helps me to make decisions about how to live my life, especially when life is difficult
- ☐ It helps me to look outward, and to be concerned for other people
- ☐ It helps me to look inward, and to find the resources I need to be happier
- ☐ It provides me with a feeling of reassurance and security
- ☐ It is full of adventure and opportunities for me, both outwardly and inwardly

5) How would you define 'spirituality'? Please continue over the page if necessary

6) Are there any further comments you would like to add?

7) Would you be willing to be contacted further for a personal one-to-one research conversation?

□ Yes, I would be willing Name:
□ No, I would not be willing

APPENDIX III

Participant Information Sheet

THE REVD. JAMES CURRY
BA (Hons) (Dunelm) B.Th (Hons) (Oxon) MA (Dunelm)
Tel.
E-mail:

Study Title:

Personal Spiritualities Among Episcopalian Christians in North East Scotland.

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this.

The Purpose of the Study

I am currently a part-time research student with the Urban Theology Unit in Sheffield reading for a PhD validated by the University of Birmingham. This is the third year of a six year research project. My subject is personal religion and spirituality, and I am interested in finding out what this involves for Episcopalian Christians living in this part of north-east Scotland. In particular, I am keen to discover how different sorts of people understand and define the term 'spirituality,' and what factors in their background and experience have contributed to this understanding. I am also interested in finding out the elements that currently nourish people's spirituality and how they seek to express this.

As someone who very kindly completed my initial questionnaire on Exploring Personal Religion and Spirituality and who indicated that they would be willing to offer me further help, you are now being invited to take part in a one-to-one Research Conversation with me about your personal spirituality. In all, there are 12 participants representing three different Episcopalian congregations who are being invited to take part in the Research Interviews. The Research Interview will take approximately one hour.

Other Information

This Information Sheet and the Consent Form have been approved by the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee. Please let me emphasize that participation in this study is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this Information Sheet to keep and be asked to sign a Consent Form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Let me also emphasize that all information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Any information which is disseminated will have your name and address removed so that you cannot be recognised from it. Although data generated by the study must be retained in accordance with the University's policy on academic integrity, please be assured that confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage, and publication of research material. Data will then be kept securely in paper and electronic form for a period of ten years after the completion of the research project, in accordance with the policy of the University.

If you require any further information about this research project, please contact me at any time.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

The Revd. James Curry

APPENDIX IV

Consent Form

Full Title of Project: Personal Spiritualities Among Episcopalian Christians in North East Scotland.

Name, Position and Contact Details of Researcher:
The Revd. James Sebastian Curry, Episcopalian Rector and PhD Student.
Tel. [redacted] Email: [redacted]

Please initial below

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

4. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications

5. After it has been anonymised, I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored in a specialist data centre and may be used for future research.

_____ _____
Name of Participant **Date**
Signature

_____ _____
Name of Researcher **Date**
Signature

APPENDIX V

The Research Interview Questions

1. Please tell me about your religious background.

2. What words would you use to describe your personal faith now?

3. I am interested in the subject of personal spirituality, but there can be varying views on what the term ‘spirituality’ means.

    a) What does ‘spirituality’ mean to you?

    b) In what ways would you say that your spirituality is ‘personal’ to you?

    c) Do you see spirituality and religion as the same, or different? Please explain your reply.

4. What things in your experience and practice would belong to what you would call your spirituality? These might include prayer, acts of worship and devotion, visiting special places, an appreciation of art, music, and nature, or something else again. Please mention all those that apply to you.

5. How does your involvement in the Scottish Episcopal Church influence your spirituality and its practice?

6. Is there anything further you would like to add about your spirituality?

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