

**HYMNODY AND IDENTITY:
CONGREGATIONAL SINGING AS A CONSTRUCT OF CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITY IDENTITY**

by

MIKIE ANTHONY ROBERTS

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Department of Theology and Religion
School of Philosophy, Theology and
Religion
College of Arts and Law
University of Birmingham
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ABSTRACT

In many churches, congregational singing is a central component of corporate worship. The sung hymns encapsulate the congregation's theological beliefs, reflect their historical heritage and underscore the musical biases of the congregation. This writer contends that because hymns are so essential to congregations, there is a correlation between a congregation's hymnody and its identity, which is typically measured by factors such as its rituals, history, leadership and location. However, one variable that deserves greater attention is that of the role of congregational hymnody. Consequently, the aim of this study is to explore how congregational hymnody is a source of congregational identity.

To achieve this, this writer applied a case study methodology to multiple sites. The first is historical and examines the 18th Century Fetter Lane Moravian congregation. The second is an ethnographic study of the St. Thomas Assemblies of God Pentecostal congregation. The third is a textual analysis of the sole Caribbean ecumenical hymnal ever published. Through this study, I advance the notion that as congregations sing hymns they are engaging in a unique activity (*hymnic performativity*) in which as they make music through hymn singing, the music is also at work shaping and forming the congregations' communal identity.

Dedicated to the Memory
of
Isalyn Casilla Richards
(June 8, 1941 – August 11, 1999)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Rationale

There are two main reasons which serve as the rationale and motivation for this study. In 2006, I was appointed as Provincial Director of Music for the Moravian Church in the Eastern West Indies Province.¹ One of my main duties was to lead the charge in the revision of the current hymnal in use² and create a new Caribbean Moravian hymnal. This project is being done in conjunction with the Province of the Jamaica Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman.³ Specifically, our Province was assigned the duties of deciding on the hymns portion of the project while Jamaica worked on the litany section.

At the start of this process, the first duty of the Provincial Hymnal Committee⁴ was to determine which of the 710 hymns in the current hymnal would be retained and which would be deleted from the new hymnal. In order to arrive at a consensus, each territory was given a period of 6 months to review the hymnal, indicate their choices and at the same time to also inform the Hymnal Committee of their tune of choice. When the Provincial Hymnal Committee recognized the gravity of the

¹ Geographically, this Province is comprised of the following islands: Antigua, Barbados, United States and British Virgin Islands, Tobago, Trinidad and St. Kitts. It has a membership of approximately 20,000 with 53 congregations and a staff of just about 50 clergy.

² Throughout the English speaking Caribbean where the Moravian Church is based, the hymnal in usage was that which was published by the British Province of the Moravian Church (1969 edition).

³ This Province is based on the island of Jamaica. It has a membership of approximately 30,000, drawn from 60 congregations and with a staff of 37 clergy.

⁴ This committee was comprised of one representative from each of the 6 Conferences (territories) that form the Province.

assignment, it became evident how meaningful some hymns were to the different congregations across the Province. When a similar response from the Jamaica Province was finally received, I then realized that the content of the forthcoming Caribbean Moravian Hymnal had to be treated with care for the 50, 000 or more Moravians in the Caribbean. These hymns reflected who they were as a Moravian Church community.

The second motivation for this study arose from an ecumenical Hymn Singing Festival which I led in 2006. Starting in 1993, the Barbados Gospelfest¹ has been staged in Barbados. In 2006 the organizer of the festival approached me expressing a desire to stage an event as part of the festival that would be ecumenical in nature and that could potentially draw together in one place persons of various denominations. The idea which germinated in my mind was to bring the community together to sing hymns that would allow the words and the music to be more meaningful. I decided that there should be at least five components which were to be integral to the performance. First, I would choose hymns that reflected a particular theme and then find arrangements that were scored for not just the organ.² Second, there had to be a balance of singing alternating between the choir and congregation so that the audience would be more actively involved in the singing of the hymns. Third, to add some variety to the program, some hymns would be performed with instruments only (brass ensemble, hand bells and violin were the instruments of choice). Fourth, there would be theatrical presentations depicting the story behind the writing of the hymns. Fifth,

¹ This festival is a week-long celebration that is usually held the last week of May. It seeks to attract international and Caribbean Gospel artiste singers, dancers and musicians. Activities are normally held in various venues both indoor and outdoor and the event itself is the island's major Gospel activity that captures the nation's attention and imagination.

² Each year there are a few hymns that are arranged by local musicians and they are done in one of the popular Caribbean music genre like calypso or reggae.

in some cases, persons would be invited to share how a particular hymn impacted their lives meaningfully. With these ingredients in place *Hymnspeak*¹ was born. Eight years later and with an attendance of nearly 1, 000 patrons, this event continues to be highly supported and has appealed to a wide cross section of the Barbadian public.

As I reflected on the annual staging of the *Hymnspeak* program, I have considered what impact is this hymn singing event having on the Barbadian ecumenical identity? In addition, I have pondered why Moravians throughout the Caribbean protested so strongly against having certain hymns that they treasure removed from the community's hymn repertoire. If hymnody is that essential to these two contexts, is it possible Christian hymns are doing more than we think? Beyond expressing Christian doctrine, what else might the singing of hymns, particularly among Protestant Evangelical congregations be said to be accomplishing? Can it be shown that the collective corporate act of singing together as a congregation also has a causative effect on the congregation? These are the main questions that serve as a rationale for this study. This thesis is to explore how the hymnody upon which congregations draw and sing together can be a means whereby congregations express or achieve their distinctive communal identity. Having presented a rationale for this study, I will in the following two sections provide a definition of the two main principles which prevail throughout the discourse of this study: (1) hymnody and (2) identity.

¹ I coined the term *Hymnspeak* with the goal of seeking to capture the congregation's imagination. The neologism also has a phonetic double play in that as congregations sing the hymns then the same way that the hymns speak as they are being sung, so too Christ (Him) will speak.

1.2 Defining Hymnody

Generally whenever I refer to the term hymnody throughout this study it is to be understood as encompassing the genre of Christian hymns that are sung by congregations as they worship. To speak of hymnody therefore is essentially to offer primarily a basic definition of the term hymn. What therefore is a hymn? How should a hymn be understood and what is its purpose? Though there are many definitions a few will serve our purpose. The Grove Music Online offers a generic definition of hymn as “a term of unknown origin but first used in ancient Greece and Rome to designate a poem in honour of a god. In the early Christian period the word was often, though not always, used to refer to praises sung to God, as distinct from ‘psalm’.”¹ It is necessary though in this study to see the term in light of its Christian application. In this light we can consider the definition offered by Harry Eschew and Hugh T. McElrath. They have drawn upon Carl F. Price’s perspective which was presented in Paper VI of the Hymn Society of America where an ‘official’ definition was adopted by the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada.² That definition states:

A Christian Hymn is a lyric poem, reverently and devotionally conceived, which is designed to be sung and which expresses the worshipper’s attitude toward God or God’s purposes in human life. It should be simple and metrical in form, genuinely emotional, poetic and literary in style, spiritual in quality, and in its ideas so direct and so immediately apparent as to unify a congregation while singing it.³

¹ Warren Anderson, et al. "Hymn." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/13648> (accessed November 14, 2008).

² The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada was founded in 1922 and maintains links with the Hymn Society of Great Britain & Ireland which was started in 1936. Both societies aim to contribute to the research of hymnology and the continued development of the art of hymn singing and hymn writing.

³ Harry Eschew & Hugh T. McElrath, *Sing with Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Hymnology* (Nashville: Church Street Press, 1995), ix.

This designation is rather wide in its scope and commendably so for it addresses two very important attributes: the structure and purpose of a hymn. In other words, it simultaneously answers the following two questions: what is a hymn and how is it to be used?

Having considered the above ‘official’ definition of a hymn which has been embraced and espoused by the Hymn Society in North America and Canada, it is noteworthy to compare that to another ‘official’ definition offered by the other most well recognized international hymn society. Consequently, the authors and editors of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland through a series of published booklets captured their unique feature of the nature of a hymn in the following definition:

A hymn is a congregational expression of praise to God. It is most often conceived as sacred poetry in regular stanzas, usually in metric and rhyming form, and set to repeated music for corporate singing. It may focus on different aspects of doctrine or the devotional experience of individuals. This genre includes metrical psalms, but does not necessarily include the less structured pattern of most ‘worship songs’.¹

Like the first definition, this one also addresses the nature of a hymn and its purpose. These first two definitions are both representing not just an individual understanding but also a position that is adopted by groups made of like-minded individuals from professionals to amateurs.

One can readily identify the similar angles taken regarding the importance of the congregational component and the way a hymn is structured and its purpose. However, it is noteworthy that the latter definition makes a distinction between hymns and ‘worship songs’ where ‘metrical psalms’ are included as representative of hymns. Of course this inclusion/exclusion stance points to the contemporary debacle in which Christian congregations engage in worship wars driven by personal preference of

¹ Edward Darling, *A Hymn Society Guide to Understanding Hymns* (The Lydia Press, 2007), i.

traditional hymns on the one hand and contemporary ‘worship songs’ on the other. I agree with this distinction because ‘worship songs’ are usually shorter in length than hymns and utilize more the repetition of words and phrases throughout. What is common to both definitions though is the emphasis of hymns as an important aspect of congregational corporate worship because they capture and express the essentials of Christian faith and have a direct influence on both the individual and corporate approach to worship.

In addition to the corporate definitions to hymns, it is vital to review definitions that have been advanced by major American and British hymnologists as we move from the corporate to the individual. Both Alan Dunstan, and Brian Castle offer a third definition of the word by referencing John Julian’s entry in A Dictionary of Hymnology in which St. Augustine’s definition of hymn is duly noted. Castle, in his comments, remarked that the eminent church father describes a hymn in this way:

Do you know what a hymn is? It is singing with the praise of God. If you praise God and do not sing, you utter no hymn. If you sing and praise not God, you utter no hymn. If you praise anything which does not pertain to the praise of God, though in singing you praise, you utter no hymn.¹

Evidently, for St. Augustine, hymns and singing praise to God are indissoluble.

Unlike the first definition, the structure of the hymn in this case falls into the background. Instead, it is the purpose of the hymn, regardless of the form that is priority.

It is with that in mind that Dunstan offers our fourth definition under consideration when he refers to the writings of the much admired 20th century hymnody scholar Erik Routley. In quoting Routley’s Christian Hymns Observed,

¹ Brian Castle, *Sing a New Song to the Lord: The Power and Potential of Hymns* (Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 1994), 5.

Dunstan points to Routley's definition of a hymn as "a strophic song on a Christian subject capable of being sung by a congregation...not in any sense made up of trained singers."¹ Routley's contribution to the field of the study of Christian hymns, music, and worship is vast and his writings continue to impact research long after his passing.² Throughout his writings, Routley maintains the centrality of hymns as belonging in the domain of the congregation. His immense contribution is geared towards ensuring that congregations and those who exercise musical leadership with them have a greater understanding of the liturgical importance of hymns in Christian worship.

The centrality of hymns to the overall vitality of the social organism that is a congregation is also captured in the definition of Linda J. Clark. In the collection of essays captured in Carriers of Faith: Lessons from Congregational Studies, which presents various perspectives on congregations, Clark gives attention specifically to how hymn singing is connected to faith formation within congregations. Accordingly, she defines a hymn as "*a highly complex set of images, both verbal and aural, set in motion through singing by a group of people who have intentionally gathered to worship God.*"³ Clark's perspective on hymns captures an element of hymns that is at the core of this study in that she highlights that the singing of hymns is the doing of a precise intentional action that yields specific results within the congregation. It is this

¹ Alan Dunstan, *The Use of Hymns: A Practical Exploration of the Place of Hymnody within the Liturgy* (Kevin Mayhew Ltd., 1990), 9.

² Erik Routley has written extensively on various issues in the field of hymnody. Some of his works include: *Church Music and Theology*. (London: SCM Press, 1959); *Words, Music and the Church*. (London: Jenkins, 1969); *Church Music and the Christian Faith*. (London: Collins, 1980); *A Panorama of Christian Hymnody*. (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1979); *Hymns and Human Life*. (London: John Murray, 1952).

³ Linda J. Clark. "Hymn-Singing: The Congregation Making Faith" in *Carriers of Faith: Lessons from Congregational Studies* ed. Carl S. Dudley, Jackson W. Carroll and James P. Wind (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 51.

aspect of hymn singing that is of interest to me. Whereas Clark argues that hymn singing is a faith making exercise, the focus of this study addresses the same question but relative to the making and expressing of congregational identity. I will refer again to Clark's viewpoint since the making of faith through hymn-singing can be seen as a trait of congregational identity as well.

I have examined some of the key views in answering the question what is a hymn and how might its purpose be understood. Is there a clear definition which I can offer which will correspond to this study? There are several with commonality that the abovementioned definitions possess. First, hymns by virtue of their content are associated with how individuals and congregations think toward God and human life in general. This is to infer that hymns are means whereby attitudes and behaviours are affected. Congregations as they sing are advancing set views about God, the world and humanity.

Second, there is the commonly held position that hymns are intended to be sung, and not read, as the main mode of expression. In underscoring that hymns are meant to be sung primarily by communities of untrained singers, means that the musical and textual boundaries must ensure that a hymn retains its 'sing-ability' characteristics. Though contemporary 'worship songs' also possess 'sing-ability' qualities, I am of the same mind that they may not be defined as hymns which are generally strophic in form and reflect a harmonic and melodic pattern that is more in keeping with the architecture of a traditional hymn. Yet we cannot deny that form and musical language employed in contemporary hymnody do not always conform to the strict metrical patterns of traditional historical hymnody. This does not in any way disqualify them from being defined as hymns. Therefore, any definition of hymns

today must be broadened to acknowledge that hymns are fluid devices which can be defined according to the context in which they were formed and from which they emerged. So then, one can rightly speak of Caribbean hymns as possessing distinctive features which may not be reflected in Scottish, Welsh or American hymns.

Third, hymns have a definite purpose when they are intentionally utilized within corporate worship by a congregation that has gathered as a community of faith. The purpose of Christian worship, though it may be unstated, is not usually undefined within congregations. So then the goal of congregational hymn singing cannot be seen as unrelated and disconnected to the broader purpose of worship within the local congregation. In situating hymns within the broader context of worship, what more can be gleaned that will result in a deepened understanding not only of congregational worship styles but also about their identity? In other words, though hymns can be viewed as being derivative of a Christian faith experience, as they are sung, how might we show that they are also generative of characteristics that shape the congregational identity as well? That is central issue in this study.

As a result, in this study, a hymn will be examined in light of its structure and function. Consequently, hymns then will be understood as poetic works that are strophic in structure, simple and ‘singable’ in style and intended to be sung by a mixed congregation as it renders praise in the worship of God.

1.3 Defining Identity

There is no shortage of definitions which aim to offer an understanding of the concept of identity. Though the focus of this study is specifically on congregational identity, it is necessary to first speak of identity and how it is formed in a general

sense. In the following section, I will consider how congregational identity might be understood. However, I will concentrate on two matters which are critical to establishing a fundamental grasp of this principle and to situate the study as part of the broader discourse on identity. First, I will identify some key principles that define identity as a generic term, and second I will consider significant variables that inform how identity is formed.

How is identity defined? Is it a matter simply of being able to say who you are or are not? Jeffrey Weeks highlights the concept from an individual perspective and sees it to be “about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others...[and] gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality.”¹ He continues that any search for identity is a quest to articulate “who we are...to express what we are, what we believe and what we desire.”²

Kath Woodward broadly itemizes five (5) key components that are central to understanding how identity is formed – structures, agency, same, difference, symbols/representation.³ She contends that identity is a combination of several of these variables and is a composite of how we see ourselves and also of how others see us. This reinforces that identity is fed both by the objective external and the subjective internal. In terms of collective identity, Woodward argues that this is chiefly marked

¹ Jeffrey Weeks. “The Value of Difference,” in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 88.

² Ibid, 89.

³ Kath Woodward. “Questions of Identity,” in *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Nation*, ed. Kath Woodward (London: The Open University, 2000), 6 – 7. These are (1) *structures* (the forces which shape identity that are beyond our control); (2) *agency* (how much control we apply in determining our identity); (3) *same* (using similarity as a marker to form identity); (4) *different* (acknowledging the characteristics that make us dissimilar from others as a pointer in identity formation); (5) *symbols / representations* (agreement on a specific tangible object that encapsulates the elements of the identity).

by highlighting what is different, i.e. “by indicating what we are not.”¹ By highlighting what is different, she emphasises the features that make collective identity distinctive. Woodward in developing her position on identity draws on the work of the social philosophers such as George Herbert Mead, Judith Williamson and Louis Althusser. She contends that the imaging of our identity is achieved through *symbolizing* ourselves by means of language, pictures, gestures or clothing which serves in some way to represent aspects of our identity to others. She establishes that pivotal to the concept of identity are (1) the process of *identification*, which is the taking of an identity “into yourself” and (2) the notion of *interpellation* which she defines as a “process whereby people recognize themselves in a particular identity.”² Therefore *interpellation* is a derivative of *identification*.

Stuart Hall addresses the subject matter of identity in light of post-modern considerations. While underscoring the various critiques, Hall maintains that understanding the concept of *identification* is critical in the broader issue of identity itself and how it is formed. As a building block of identity, he proposes that *identification* be seen as “a construction, a process never completed – always ‘in process’, sustained or abandoned...[and that] it is grounded in fantasy, in projection and idealization.”³ Implicit in this is the view that identity is not a fixed reality cast in concrete. This is the same point that is advanced by Zugmundt Bauman who notes that whereas the traditional meaning of identities has incorporated the notion of identities being fixed and identifiable, it denies the inherent problem of the fluidity of identities.

¹ Ibid, 10.

² Ibid, 19.

³ Stuart Hall. “Introduction: Who Needs Identity?,” in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 2 – 3

However, Bauman surmises that the inability of identity to be permanently fixed makes it an asset and not a liability.¹

In light of this, Hall calls for a reassessment of the traditionally held positions regarding the nature of identities. He strongly advocates that

Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation. They relate to the invention of tradition as much as to tradition itself, which they oblige us to read not as an endless reiteration...²

Hall maintains that identities should be understood as being “produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies.”³

Elsewhere Hall, in speaking of this principle of *enunciation* indicates that it is never fixed referring mainly to the subject who is speaking or the place from which the speaking is occurring. Consequently that causes identity to be thought of not as “an already accomplished fact...[but] as a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process.”⁴ It is in this act of production that identity becomes an instrument of power because it is constructed primarily from within then it can decide what is to be excluded while the process is unfolding. Based on Hall’s position, it can be concluded that the course by which identity is formed yields the following three

¹ Zygmunt Bauman. “From Pilgrim to Tourist – or a Short History of Identity,” in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 18 – 36. Bauman argues that the post-modern emphasis in identity is not centred on identity being fixed but being opened. He traces the shift in position by drawing a comparison elements of the pilgrimage hermitic lifestyle and that of identity-building being perceived through the lenses of the stroller, the vagabond, the tourist and the player.

² Hall. “Introduction: Who Needs Identity?,” 4.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Stuart Hall. “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 222.

realities. First there is the establishment of new attachments which serve as signifiers of identity. Second, identity emphasizes difference. Third, the process of identity puts forward or declares new representations.

Manuel Castells' perspective on identity formation is insightful and further elucidates the discussion on understanding the concept of identity. In seeking to unravel how identity is constructed, Castells first defines identity simply as "people's source of meaning and experience."¹ But he expands on that foundation by pointing out that whether individual or collective, identity is constructed through what he calls social actors who build the meaning of their identities "on the basis of a cultural attribute, or a related set of cultural attributes, that is given priority over other sources of meaning."² Castells purports that "in general terms, who constructs collective identity, and for what, largely determines the symbolic content of this identity, and its meaning for those identifying with it or placing themselves outside of it."³ Grounded in that rationale, Castells identifies three means of building or constructing identities. These are (1) *legitimizing identity* – represented through "dominant institutions" which justify their position of dominance concerning the "social actors"; (2) *resistance identity* – represented by those who feel marginalized or denounced by the dominant actors and who now seek to assert their position through active resistance against the governing philosophy; and (3) *project identity* – "when social actors, on the basis of whatever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of overall

¹ Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* 2nd Edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 6.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, 7.

social structure.”¹ Castells builds his argument by showing how the identity is constructed by the interplay of these three building blocks.

Therefore in exploring the interconnections between congregational hymnody and congregational identity I view the hymns which congregations sing through the grid of collective identity. How is congregational identity defined in this study? Though later in this introductory chapter I will expound in greater detail how congregational identity might be viewed, I propose at this juncture that congregational identity be perceived as a prescribed state in which there is a collective consent of how the congregation, as a localised Christian community, is represented both to those within the community as well as those without. In articulating their congregational identity, members in their congregation determine how their congregation is similar or distinctive when compared to others.

A congregation’s identity can be informed by its history, location and denominational affiliation, this study, however, advances that the hymnody which the congregation utilizes to be a principal source, and that it informs the image, and furthermore represents what a congregation is, is not or will be. Therefore, throughout this study I hold to the position that congregational identity, though given, is not static and so can be influenced by what the congregation sings. One of the key purposes of this study is to explore how the fluidity that exists in identity when applied to congregational contexts can be measured through hymnody. In viewing identity as a process, through this study, I aim to put into words how congregational hymnody can be seen as having a bearing on this process of identity formation and expression. In

¹ Ibid, 8.

other words, the hymns which congregations sing might be attributed as portraying the attributes of identity that have been noted above.

Since at its core, this study examines how the hymnody employed in congregational singing is related to congregational identity, then in order to position this thesis in the broader discourse on hymnody, I will take into consideration two of the main perspectives that have been taken in the analysis of Christian hymnody.

1.4 Perspectives on Christian Hymnody

Within this study, the dialogue between hymnody and congregational identity is being carried out in the broader context of the discourse on the development and use of hymns in Christian worship. There are diverse positions that can be taken when one examines the topic of Christian hymnody and specifically how it is utilized in worship. Undergirding any approach that may be taken in exploring the field of hymnody, I agree with the position that, in worship, “the primary congregational responsibility is hymn singing.”¹ This implies that throughout this discourse, the hymnody that will be explored in congregational singing is not viewed as a peripheral component of corporate worship. Rather, it is an essential and fundamental element of the corporate worship on the part of the congregation.

However, I am also cognizant that hymn singing is not viewed in the same light throughout the various sects of Christianity. Typically it is among the Protestant denominational branches of Christendom, which are usually described as ‘pulpit-centred’ congregations where hymn singing is predominant. On the other hand, congregations which are ‘table-centred’ where the celebration of the Mass is the

¹ Austin C. Lovelace & William C. Rice, *Music and Worship in the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), 153.

central component in worship then hymn singing may not be viewed as being altogether critical in the unfolding of worship. Though this distinction has merit, it does not negate that in the latter instances congregational singing remains essential, though it may be the singing of a response or versicle.

The specific focus of this study is the examination of hymnody. Consequently, the assumption is made that I will be giving attention to those contexts where the congregational singing is comprised chiefly of hymns and that these are deemed to be a vital part of worship. Furthermore, in the contexts that will be examined which are all of the Protestant traditions, there is the implication that in the singing of hymns, congregations are doing more than just singing. The goal is to determine how, primarily, through the singing of hymns, that this collective act, apart from voicing the people's praise before God, is also serving as an informant of the identity of the worshipping community. Can hymn singing be generative of a congregation's community distinctiveness? Can it be shown that the hymns which congregations sing during worship are to be of primary interest in 'pulpit-centred' contexts because of what they reveal about the nature and identity of the congregation?

Though the focus of this study addresses specifically the hymnody / congregational identity dialogue, this discussion cannot be seen as divorced from the broader colloquy which explores the interpretation and understanding of hymnody. In many ways this study draws upon the wider literature that incorporates discussion on the nature of Christian worship, Liturgical Studies, Theology and Musicology. However, it is important to consider primarily the various approaches that have been taken in the literature on hymnody. Because the second pillar of this study brings to the fore the matter of congregational identity, then an overview of how congregational

identity has been addressed in the field of congregational studies would also prove to be useful. This I will do in the following portion of the chapter. By doing so, I would be offering a contextual framework for this study. In addressing hymnody, I will consider two main perspectives that have been taken towards the study of hymns: (1) theological methodology towards hymnody and (2) historical or descriptive approach to hymnody.

1.4.1 Hymnody as Theology

The view of hymnody as theology maintains that hymns are theological in nature in that they address the fundamentals of the Christian faith. They speak to the nature of (1) God's character and each person of the God-head; (2) the Church in society; (3) humanity and (4) understanding the Christian life. The discourse on hymns as theological expressions has been analysed from a variety of perspectives. I will explore the major proponents of this position. S. Paul Schilling addresses this matter by suggesting that because hymns are theological statements, "We must mean what we say and know what we mean."¹ He establishes that the essence of Christian theology is "the thoughtful inquiry into the meaning of the faith called forth by God's self-disclosing activity, especially in Jesus Christ."² The results of this inquiry done by the faith community are articulated in a systematic manner which facilitates on-going interpretation.

In order to determine if hymns are theological in nature, Schilling contends that there ought to be a critical examination which assesses if they encapsulate the

¹ S. Paul Schilling. *The Faith We Sing: How the Message of Hymns can Enhance Christian Belief* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983), 23.

² Ibid, 30.

basic tenets of the Christian faith. Schilling has concluded that hymns are vehicles of Christian theology and has ascertained that:

Theology, good, bad or indifferent, is present in all hymns making it important to identify just what we are upholding when we sing. The beliefs involved may be affirmed or denied, explicit or implicit, intentional or incidental, eloquently or crudely formulate. In any case, all hymns make some kind of theological statement; they have something to say about God, the divine character and purpose, the nature and destiny of human life, the way of salvation, human responsibility before God, and related matters.¹

Schilling goes further in that he acknowledges that the hymn tunes also play a key role in the hymnody/theology dialogue. As theological expressions, hymns can reinforce Christian belief not only through the text but also through the tune. Consequently, theological meaning can be enhanced by hymn tunes in that even “though hymn tunes do not in themselves convey definite theological ideas, when they are joined with texts they may strengthen or undermine the meanings expressed.”²

Teresa Berger approaches this subject as she examines specifically the doxological language contained in hymns as representations of theological themes. Doxology, for Berger, is defined as “the explicit and implicit speech of praise, confession of faith, prayer, and thanksgiving, as directed to God for God’s glorification. Such doxological speech is found most often in prayer, hymnic confessions and songs.”³ In exploring the issue of the relationship then between hymnody and theology, Berger utilizes the term doxology while focusing specifically to Wesleyan hymnody (*The 1780 Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People*

¹ Ibid, 25.

² Ibid, 35.

³ Teresa Berger. *Theology in Hymns? A Study of the Relationship of Doxology and Theology According to A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists (1780)* (Kingswood Books, 1989), 17.

Called Methodists). It can be understood then that, in this context, when Berger speaks of doxology, she is in fact referring to hymnody. Berger admits that though not all hymns are doxological, they still serve as the framework for her study.

The interdisciplinary nature of the discourse between hymnody and theology is not without its difficulties. By opting to use the term “theological reflection,” she itemizes some key factors that ought to be considered which impact the relationship between hymnody and theology. First, theology utilizes specialized language which is most often addressed to an academic community whereas the language of hymnody (doxology) is addressed to God. Second, theology is by nature “argumentative and descriptive” while doxology is “ascriptive (to God).” Third, theology aims to be rational and logical while hymnody’s goal is comprehensibility and simplicity. Fourth, whereas theology tends to be more abstract, hymnody “intends *orthodoxa* as the proper praise of God is, finally, without agenda.” Fifth, she asserts that hymnody (doxology) is more readily embraced by faith communities that may not even have the same theological persuasion in that “doxological speech is also often shared by more communities than theological reflection: when theological differences exist people are often still able to sing and pray together.”¹

If theology is to be understood as faith seeking understanding (whether it is an understanding of God, humanity, evil, culture, ethics, creation etc.) in the context of a community, then in the domain of the Church, hymns help to put into words this faith as it is understood. Consequently, the conclusion that can be drawn is that hymns are poetic devices which are intended first and foremost to be sung as expressing the fundamentals of the Christian faith while at the same time nurturing that faith. Hymn

¹ Ibid, 23.

singing therefore is a theological enterprise which has a double-sided objective. It is therefore fitting to posit the view, like Richard J. Mouw, a self-described Evangelical that, “hymns are an important means of theological pedagogy.”¹ In this capacity, hymnody can potentially serve as the carrier of the many pedagogics of Christian theology.

It has been established that hymns not only seek to address specific issues and themes that are generic to the Christian faith, but also tackle subject matters that are identifiable with and of import to a local faith community. Consequently, one can speak of hymns contributing to the construct of a theology of justice,² Feminist theology³ and Black liberation theology.⁴ Undoubtedly, the discourse on hymnody and theology is multifaceted, especially if one takes the view that “hymns are theological miniatures...the bearers of the images that are both theological content and experiential patterns of faith and affection.”⁵ It is this seemingly all-encompassing ability of hymnody to express theology that has led theologian Don Saliers to remark “that there is theology in hymn texts is obvious. What is less obvious is what kind of theology this may be said to be.”⁶ How might this issue be resolved? Saliers has recommended that we “give “theology” a broader definition than is found in most standard textbook accounts [and] propose that “lyrical theology” be placed alongside dogmatic, philosophical, and systematic theology.”⁷ It is this concept of hymns as the

¹ Richard J. Mouw & Mark A. Noll (eds.), xiii. Reference is made to David Hubbard’s perspective that hymns contain a “compacted theology”.

² See Paul Westermeyer’s *Let Justice Sing: Hymnody and Justice*. (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998).

³ See Brian Wren’s *What Language Shall I Borrow: God-talk in Worship – A Male Response to Feminist Theology*. (Oregon: Wipf and Stocks Publishers, 1989).

⁴ See. Jon Michael Spencer’s *Sing a New Song: Liberating Black Hymnody*. (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1995).

⁵ Don Saliers, *Music and Theology*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 37.

⁶ Ibid, 35.

⁷ Ibid, 37.

embodiment of a “lyrical theology” that I will develop further in Chapter Five. There I hypothesize that in the singing of Caribbean hymns there was a concurrent formulation and expression of a Caribbean “lyrical theology” which contributed to the reshaping of the Caribbean ecumenical Christian community’s identity.

Hymns do serve as a primary source expressing Christian theology and that theology is communicated through the literary and poetic language of the hymns and to a lesser extent the hymn tune. Conclusively, the act of hymn singing is not just about singing, it is about shaping one’s theology. We sing hymns. We don’t just reflect on them. The range of theological and doctrinal issues that can be addressed through hymnody is undoubtedly expansive. So much so that “hymns could refer to the whole of the Bible and to Christian doctrine, and – even more significantly – to the never-ending movements of the human soul.”¹ A critical aspect of this study therefore is my exploration of hymnody as encapsulating a theological mode which supports the position that it is in the singing of hymns that congregational identity is shaped and /or expressed.

1.4.2 Hymnody as Historic and Descriptive

Whereas the literature on hymnody as expressing theology highlights the main themes of Christian doctrine and theology, the view of hymnody through historical lens brings to the fore the primary characteristics of Christian hymns through the various historical epochs. Though that historical journey typically begins by grounding Christian hymnody in the Judaeo worship practices of the Old and New Testaments, the claim can be made that it is during the period of the Protestant Reformation that there is the blossoming of hymnody. It is almost inconceivable to

¹ J. R. Watson, *The English Hymn* (Oxford University Press), 20.

consider the reality of the Protestant Reformation without recognizing the invaluable input of hymnody in this phenomenal religious movement. In offering a panoramic view of the place of hymns among what he prefers to call the churches of the Reformed tradition, Robin A. Leaver has noted that “although most Reformation churches were united in a common use of congregational song in worship, different hymnic traditions were established.”¹ The type of hymns, their use in worship, the theological content and even the performance of the same among the churches of the Reformation tradition can be seen as a reflection of the personality, theological persuasion and ecclesiological biases of the various religious leaders.

However, the historical analysis of hymnody also highlights the historical peculiarities of the particular religious movement. Consequently, we today can assess the rich and diverse corpus of Protestant hymns according to the branch with which they were associated eg. Lutheran, Methodist, Anglican, Moravian, Genevan Psalmody etc. Furthermore, the characteristics of these hymns were altered as the various denominational sects developed during the 18th and 19th centuries. As a result, additional categories were formed which described the hymnody with reference to geographical location. One can therefore speak of Christian hymnody with the descriptive term of German, British or American etc. The historical and descriptive boundaries go even further so that a body of hymns can be described in terms of a specific religious movement. That has resulted in our being able to offer a critique of the characteristics of the hymnody of the Oxford Movement in England or the ‘white’ Gospel hymnody that emerged during the Great Awakening.

¹ Robin A. Leaver, “Liturgical Music as Corporate Song 1: Hymn in the Reformation Churches.” In *Liturgy and Music: Lifetime Learning*. Eds Robin A. Leaver & Joyce Ann Zimmerman. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 282.

When we examine the historical development of hymnody and the associated description of the main attributes, we have been afforded a better understanding of how the progress of hymnody throughout the centuries has been moored to the nuances of Christian worship that have emerged over time as well. Authors like Louis F. Benson, Samuel W. Duffield, Erik Routley and J. R. Watson have demonstrated how the historical expansion of Christian hymnody has also been the means whereby some of the main tenets of the Christian faith have been either expressed or formed. Through such studies, the descriptive categorization of the key historical features of various types of hymns has been crystallized. These categories have underscored the main elements of the major denominations that emerged because of the Reformation. In other words, through these writings and the analysis of Christian hymnody one is able then to historically situate notable sectarian denominational qualities in the broader life of the universal Christian Church.¹ Paul Westermeyer's most recent contribution to the historical assessment of the use of hymns in the Church has further expanded on the literature in this area of research. His most recent contribution is rather unique in that he has been able to merge into one volume not only the Protestant use of music and hymnody well into the 21st century, but has also incorporated the use of hymns within the Roman Catholic tradition.²

By and large, it is the primacy of congregational hymns within the contexts of Protestants and Evangelical traditions that the study of Christian hymnody has continued to be a subject worthy of examination. The popularity of Christian hymnody and its widespread influence especially among congregations that are

¹Samuel W. Duffield, *English Hymns: Their Authors and History* (1886); Louis F. Benson, *The English Hymn: Its Development and Use in Worship*; Erik Routley, *A Panorama of Christian Hymnody*; and John R. Watson, *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study*.

² Paul Westermeyer, *Te Deum: The Church and Music*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998.

associated with Reformation and Evangelical traditions has caused this subject matter to be addressed from a multitude of perspectives. However, central to the historical analysis of hymnody, whether stated or implied, is enhancing the understanding of hymnody and comprehending the purpose it serves during worship in impacting the Christian faith.

In concentrating on the descriptive nature of hymns, such analysis often highlights components of the hymnody which when accentuated reveal the effect of hymns upon those who make the most of them. For example, Lionel Adey, in his seminal work, has suggested that the images and words contained within hymns, relative to congregational faith identity, have “changed their meanings according to the circumstances and education of those who have sung them...[and] have used them as the principle expression of devotion.”¹ More recently, Brian Castle has pinpointed, in so far as hymns have a bearing on Christian faith identity, that “hymns can be vehicles of doctrine and aids to devotion...frequently [making] doctrine palatable and accessible to those who feel alienated by the propositional language of the creeds.”²

Madeleine F. Marshall has expanded the scope of the descriptive qualities of hymnody by positing that, even though they are generally viewed through theological and historical lens, hymns ought to be studied as poetic devices through the lens of literary criticism. Even in that regard, as she offers a poetic descriptive, Marshall contends that the primary purpose of hymns remains to be that of shaping “our understanding of our faith, to teach us Christian attitudes, and to drill us in proper response.”³ Marshall’s call for this perspective is supported by those who share the

¹ Lionel Adey, *Hymns and the Christian Myth* (The University of British Columbia Press, 1986), x.

² Castle, 9.

³ Madeleine F. Marshall, *Common Hymnsense*, (Chicago, Illinois: GIA Publications, 1999), 6.

conviction that as popular poetry there is still not enough literary critique of hymnody as a particular art form.¹ John R. Watson validates this proposition whilst lamenting that “hymns are the only poetry which is known to most people, yet it is the least studied in the culture.”²

The historical and descriptive approaches to hymnody have firmly established the overall purpose of hymnody as being essential to Christian faith. There is no question about its importance and relevance to faith. However, what has not been clearly addressed is the actual study of congregations and how their identity is actually being formed or expressed by the hymnody which is utilized in worship. What hymns are, how they are structured and the purpose they serve, is crystal clear. That they have historically been important to the Christian religious fervour as they are interwoven in worship is without question. Though we are made to recognise that in many cases the essence of Protestant and Evangelical worship is captured in its hymns, the precise interconnections between hymnody and congregational identity are not altogether clear. Instead it has remained part of the background in the discourse and treated often as a natural consequence. This study addresses this imbalance.

1.5 Congregational Identity

The primary subject of this study is Christian congregations. I intend to gain a perspective of congregations relative to what they sing and how they sing as means by which congregational identity is being formed or expressed. By keeping the congregation as the centre of attention, this study, in addition to drawing upon the

¹ See Jeremy B. Reeves, *Hymns as Literature 1924*; Richard Arnold, *The English Hymn: Studies in A Genre*;

² Watson, 17. In his analysis, Watson seeks to address this imbalance of perspective.

literature that examines the approaches to hymnody, also has to incorporate that which addresses matters related to the field of congregational studies. The Handbook for Congregational Studies, published in 1986 by the Hartford Institute for Religious Research, was a ground breaking book that provided a framework by which researchers could investigate and analyse congregations. The topic of congregational identity is examined in this seminal work. Because this Handbook is generally considered as foundational in this field of study, its definition of identity from the perspective of a congregation is worth noting. Congregational identity is deemed to be “the persistent set of beliefs, values, patterns, symbols, stories, and style that makes a congregation distinctive.”¹ Though on the one hand there is the acknowledgement that identity is not static, in this instance, congregational identity is seen as a reflection of the “congregation’s enduring culture.”² What is unique in the approach to evaluating a congregation’s identity in this work is that there is not that much interest on the broader Christian identity which proclaims allegiance to Jesus Christ with its associated theological assumptions. Rather, in aiming to detect what a congregation’s identity may claim to be, the goal in the Handbook is to decipher if there is a uniquely “singular corporate character”³ that encapsulates the collective identity of the congregation.

In considering the varied means by which congregational identity ought to be viewed, Rein Nauta has proposed that the impact of pastoral leadership as a determinant of a local congregation’s identity is not be overlooked. Nauta argues against the prevailing view and suggests instead that “the identity of the congregation

¹ *Handbook for Congregational Studies*. ed Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley and William McKinney, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 21.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

is not primarily a question of activities and structures, of strategies and policy, of its history, symbols, rituals, norms and manners, but a matter of persons and personality.”¹ He contends that congregational identity is modified whenever there is a change in pastoral leadership. When these adaptations conflict with certain people in the congregation, then they are likely either to split and move elsewhere or opt to stay in the background until there is a change of pastoral leadership. This perspective shows that the influence of religious leadership can either repel or welcome persons into the congregation with the end result that over a period of time the people themselves bring about a change in their congregational identity.

Generally, the study of congregations beyond examining its identity has become increasingly popular. James P. Wind has rationalized that there is this increased interest “because congregations make a difference, people – members, pastors, and now scholars who specialize in congregational studies – find themselves drawn to them.”² In a collection of essays, several contributors give attention to key components that characterise congregations as carriers of the Christian faith. The issue of congregational identity (or culture) recurs throughout and attention is given to how a congregation’s leadership, history, size and location all feed into this identity. One of the submissions in this collection of essays gives attention to how hymn singing could be described as faith-making. It highlights the theme of congregational identity by considering how hymn singing enables a congregation to interpret and better understand the essence of the Christian faith. The placement of congregational singing as a means whereby significant meaning can be appropriated by a

¹ Rein Nauta, “People Make the Place: Religious Leadership and the Identity of the Local Congregation.” *Pastoral Psychol* 56, (2007): 46.

² James P. Wind “Introduction” in *Carriers of Faith: Lessons From Congregational Studies*, ed. Carl S. Dudley, Jackson W. Carroll & James P. Wind. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 10.

congregation positions hymnody among the other variables which according to Clifford Geertz, forms a “web of significance.” The ultimate goal is to unravel and explicate to some degree the place of hymnody within the complex “web of meanings”¹ present within the study of congregations.

One of the critical questions to be addressed in exploring the identity of a local congregation is by what means should one measure that identity? Jackson W. Carroll and David A. Roozen, recognizing that each congregation possesses and reflects its own unique identity, have demonstrated how congregations exhibit individual identities even though they may be under the same denominational umbrella.² Together they constructed a questionnaire to gather data from among United Presbyterian Church congregations so as to create a typology of the different ways in which congregational identities might be categorized. Through this exercise we see how the authors are able to make use of various sources by which congregational identity can be measured. These include the variables already noted as well as factors such as how welcoming is the congregation to visitors, its approach to individual salvation and its engagement in social issues. These are just some of the categories. There is a notable absence of worship matters or hymnody, for that matter, being included as one of the means by which congregational identity is measured.

In engaging congregations and aiming to comprehend how as organisms they operate as identity shapers, one can decide to emphasize either the personal or communal characteristics in the analysis. I have chosen to concentrate on the

¹ *Handbook for Congregational Studies*, 22. Some of the components in this complex web include features related to the congregation’s history, heritage, world view, symbols, ritual, demography and character. It is the collaboration of these elements which when applied to the study of a congregation that opens up new dimensions by which one better comprehend the nature of congregational identity.

² Jackson W. Carroll and David A. Roozen, “Congregational Identities in the Presbyterian Church” *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Jun., 1990), pp. 351 – 369.

communal aspects while being mindful that the communal identity of the whole is still constructed by the individual. Furthermore, in paying attention to congregational identity, elements of the corporate worship have been explored as means through which identity is brought about. However, it is usually the case that the components in worship which are applied to the analysis have been the various types of congregational prayers, the celebration of the Eucharist or the overall worship encounter and experience. Though music is included in this evaluation, the detailed analysis and application of congregational hymns as informing congregational identity has not been stressed as part of the evaluation of the role of worship and its impact upon the congregation's identity.

For example, E. Byron Anderson's exploration of worship and Christian identity is quite detailed. In discussing this matter, he argues that worship informs the Christian identity of the members of a faith community primarily through the liturgical (prayers, creeds etc.) and sacramental practices (mainly communion). He maintains that these practices are so vital that to neglect them would be to erode the essentials that uphold Christian identity. However, though there are many hymnic references throughout his text, it is only in the latter part of his book that Anderson seeks to demonstrate how a hermeneutical analysis of just one of Wesley's hymns (*O for a heart to praise my God*) can serve as a vista not only into Wesley's spiritual condition then, but also as a channel that discloses the faith identity of the individual.¹

Martin Stringer employs an ethnographic research methodology in which he aims to unveil how worship is understood. To answer what meanings are promulgated

¹E. Byron Ander. *Worship and Christian Identity* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2003). In his book, Anderson engages with four United Methodist congregations with the goal of gathering information based on their experiences in worship.

in worship, he engages in a study among four congregations from different denominations. Though Stringer gives attention to congregational worship, in his analysis he focuses more on the individual understanding of worship, though it is done within the framework of corporate public worship. Specifically the issue of hymnody emerges only in his examination of the worship at the Baptist Church. Based on his investigation among the Baptists, Stringer concludes that “hymns can...mirror Bible stories, they can relate these stories to our own personal stories, or they can lead us on to look at the greater narrative of ‘faith’. Hymns, in this context, almost become stories in themselves, or at least trigger the recalling of stories.”¹ What Stringer highlights is that the personal story associated with the hymn fuses with the liturgical story in the process creating a new entity. It is in that process that the individual attains some measure of understanding worship. Through the encounter with the Baptists, Stringer has shown that a more thorough study of congregational hymnody can provide further insights into understanding how congregational singing could be allied to congregational identity.

The ability of congregational singing to impact congregational identity is also addressed by Pete Ward whose stance on congregational singing and how it informs spiritual and theological formation is done in light of the contemporary Church. Ward advances the argument that what is sung by the congregation does have a bearing upon the shape of the congregation and also expresses the essentials of what the congregation believes. In his critique of the singing content of the contemporary neo-Pentecostal Church, Ward voices some of his primary concerns. He surmises that “with contemporary songs, the desire to sing songs to God rather than about God has

¹ Martin Stringer. *The Perception of Worship* (Birmingham, U.K.: The University of Birmingham Press, 1999) 104.

tended towards a lack of interest in the traditional theological content of hymnology or, indeed, the Psalms. In some cases, the songs have very little specifically gospel content. Instead, they speak about what is happening between the worshipper and God at the moment.”¹ Though he is addressing a particular context, Ward’s opinion does support my earlier proposition that congregational singing, as one of the primary actions that a congregation is engaged in during worship, does play a role in congregational identity. What is sung then does exert a bias on worship. And how we worship is a representation of our identity.

The impact of hymns and their importance and relevance on the identity of the broader Christian community has not been ignored. The observation has already been made that “the Christian Church was born in song.”² Therefore how the Church, and particular its identity as a Christian community has been nurtured and formed by its singing continues to be a matter worthy of consideration. The connection between hymnody and identity has been underscored by Castle who emphasizes that a hymn “defines and can tell us something about the community in which it is popular and acceptable as well as something about the community which refuses to sing it.”³ Similarly, Watson, describing the nature of the singing congregation and referencing how its collective identity might be moored to its hymnody has proposed that “hymns are sung by those...who share certain things: Bible reading, doctrine, common prayer, and moral precept. The result is sometimes a procedure which seems – from the outside – to be circular: congregations sing because of what they believe, and believe

¹ Pete Ward. *Selling Worship*, (Milton Keys: Paternoster Press, 2005), 207. He argues that the appeal to consumerism and the associated commercialisation of Christian contemporary songs are the main contributors to this predicament. Blame for this shift can be attributed how songbooks, contemporary recordings and Christian music festivals have contributed to the current state of affairs.

² Westermeyer, 59.

³ Castle, 18.

because of what they sing.”¹ Though there have been analyses such as these which posit the position that hymnody has a bearing in congregational identity, there is a greater emphasis on the hymnody being descriptive of identity. How hymns have been perceived and received by individuals and congregations and how they have contributed to the formation of the wider identity of the congregation as a Christian community is one area that is deserving of continued engagement and further analysis.

Hymnody is a window which could be revelatory to the construct of congregational identity because as hymns are being sung in corporate setting, there are a variety of meanings which emerge and which in turn inform the identity of those who are singing. This however assumes that one subscribes to the view that hymns are crafted primarily for communal use. Therefore, as they are being utilized during worship by congregations, the singing of hymns can be said to also be an activity which manipulates and sculpts congregational identities. If as Westermeyer has suggested that hymns serve as “the womb of church music,”² then hymnody gives birth to congregational identity which cannot be divorced from what it sings.

Ultimately what people believe about themselves, they articulate and portray. This is the essence of identity. Yet because hymnody and identity can be seen as realities that are constantly evolving, in that they are not fossilized, then one has to also acknowledge that in as much as belief expressed through singing is reflecting identity, it suggests that through singing congregational identity is also being reinforced. By making the congregation and what it sings in worship the main focus, this study is geared towards formulating a theory that describes the process whereby

¹ Watson, 18.

² Westermeyer, 23.

congregational identity is generated through the hymnody which is consumed by the congregation.

In highlighting the discourse of the variables which contribute to congregational identity, it is evident to me that there is room for further analysis of how congregational singing can be assessed not as a secondary means which influences that identity but rather a primary source. Can it be shown that the more common elements, listed above, which inform congregational identity can all be said to be reflecting to some degree as well through congregational hymnody? What if we were to isolate congregational hymnody, focusing on its textual and musical content, assessing how it is utilized? What data might this yield that will enhance the current literature on congregational identity? And if we make the observing of the congregation as they sing and worship the primary means for the gathering of evidence, what conclusions might we be able to draw, based on the responses that hymn singing elicit among the congregants? How would we account for the proposition that within the complex web of identity, that congregational identity is mediated through its hymnody? Precisely because both of the issues of congregational identity and hymnody are so eclectic and can be said to encompass several disciplines, the analysis which is given at the end of this study is dialogical in nature. I will now outline specifically the aims of this study.

1.6 The Aims of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to consider how the hymnody which a congregation sings as it gathers for corporate worship affects congregational identity as a Christian community. Central to this is attempting to discover *how*

congregational hymnody shapes the identity of a Christian community. This raises several pertinent matters. Can it be proved that it is the texts of the hymns which are the channel through which the congregation understands its communal identity? Because hymns are crafted to be sung, the tunes of the hymns also have to be included in the analysis. Additionally, one has to explore the context in which the congregation is singing which incorporates examining the performance practise of the congregation. The role of those leading the congregational singing and what are the sources from which the hymns are drawn are also important issues. By giving regard to queries of this manner, the aim of the research will be achieved.

Specifically this study will not argue that the hymns which congregations sing must be seen as the foremost, exclusive and/or primary source by which the community's identity is defined. Admittedly there are other variables which collude with the congregational singing that contribute to the fashioning of congregational identity. Any aim to make such claims would be to disregard or down play other aspects of the liturgy. Congregational hymn singing does not occur in a vacuum and forms part of the broader landscape of worship. Therefore, in each of the situations that will be examined, I will acknowledge other existing factors which can be deemed to be exerting some influence upon congregational identity formation. Such an analysis will offer a holistic balanced approach.

The study does not aim to differentiate what the congregations sing in the usual traditional versus contemporary categories with the aim of trying to ascertain which of the competing genres exerts greater influence. Rather in the study I hold to the view that whether the congregation's diet is comprised of traditional hymns or contemporary songs, whatever is being sung will inevitably be an informant to the

overall identity of the congregation.¹ However, within the study the case studies draw upon congregations where the primary congregational sacred repertoire is hymns and not ‘praise songs’.

I do not aim in this study to formulate too general a theory that can be all-inclusive of the religious and denominational divide. The focus of the context from which the data is drawn for analysis is not Roman Catholic. That was intentional because in this study I was not aiming to disprove the widely accepted position that among Roman Catholics, it is the Eucharist that is the centrepiece of congregational formation and that what is sung still plays more of a supportive role than a leading one. Therefore, this study and the emphasis that it gives to the importance of hymns, examines the hypothesis with a Protestant Reformation bias.

Since singing is a predominant expression of Christian worship, particularly within churches that can be described as ‘pulpit centred’, then the aim of this study is to bear out that by carefully studying the content of what a congregation sings, one ought to be also able to garner some insight into how that congregation understands and defines its own communal identity. By highlighting the congregation’s hymnic repertoire, separate and apart from the other elements in its worship, it will be shown that through the congregations’ sung repertoire, we can determine how congregations exhibit and expresses the particulars of their inimitable distinctiveness.

1.7 The Outline of the Thesis

In addressing the subject under review, the thesis will follow the following format. In Chapter Two, I will review the case study methodology which was applied

¹ The issue of traditional versus contemporary hymnody is only raised somewhat in the second case study at the St. Thomas Assembly of God. It was a mute issue in the other two chapters.

in this study. That entails delving into the pros and cons of utilizing a multiple site case study model. Part of that discussion entails as well highlighting the various means by which data was collected at each site. The aim of this chapter is to present some sound reasons that support and validate the methodological choice employed in this study.

Growing up as a Moravian, it was understood that congregational singing was always a predominant aspect of Moravian worship. In addition to being sung throughout the worship, Moravian hymnody has traditionally also been incorporated into their litanies. Congregational singing in that context was regarded as equally important as the sermon. Because of the frequency of congregational singing, it is fitting to consider the research question in light of the history of the Moravian community. Consequently, in Chapter Three, I analyse the 18th century Fetter Lane Moravian congregation in London, raising the question of how the use of Moravian hymns would have served as an aid in the construction of a Moravian community identity of the *gemeine*. Specifically, I give attention to the first seven years of the Fetter Lane community (1742 – 1749). The analysis offered in this chapter allows for a vista on Moravian hymnody generally and its usage within the recognizable singing practices of the 18th century Moravian Church under the leadership of Count Zinzendorf.

In Chapter Four, I explore the research question in the second case study site through an ethnographic study of the St. Thomas Assembly of God, a Pentecostal congregation in St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands. Whereas the previous chapter addressed the matter through a historical perspective, by employing an ethnographic approach in this chapter, the goal was to determine how the

congregation's self-attributed identity of '*An Oasis of Love and Hope*' was being nurtured and maintained by the sung elements of its worship.

In Chapter Five, I examine how the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) aimed to reshape the ecumenical Christian community within the Caribbean through the publication of a Caribbean hymnal – Sing A New Song No. 3. The significance of this hymnal is that it is the first and only bona fide Caribbean hymnal to have been produced with all of the textual and musical content written by Caribbean hymn writers. Its publication in the mid 1980's was a watershed moment in advancing a new genre of Church music in the Caribbean. The impact of this hymnal and its potential as a vehicle to reshape the identity of the Church in the Caribbean is without comparison. With that in mind, Chapter Five gives a content analysis of the hymns within that hymnal by exploring how through its words and music, Caribbean hymnody gives expression to a Caribbean 'lyrical' theology. The primary goal of this is to re-image the Caribbean Church's ecumenical identity.

Having investigated how hymnody can influence congregational identity in light of the application of multiple case study methodology, in Chapter Six, I aim to provide an answer to the question of *how* this is achieved. By utilizing the data of the three previous chapters, I engage in a dialogical analysis which incorporates the major sub-themes that surfaced throughout the body of the study. Accordingly, I explore some potential means whereby hymnody is a source of congregational identity. Hymns are constructed both as textual and musical creations, and part of the dialogue examined how texts and hymn tunes (as music) both exhibit *performative* traits which have direct and indirect influence on congregational identity formation. In that

chapter, I also delve into how the shaping of community identity of the congregation is derived out of the congregational singing.

Chapter Seven, the final chapter, serves as a conclusion to the study. Having considered the essence of the dialogical analysis which reflects the complex web of meanings, I theorize that congregational singing is a means of identity forming because as the hymns are performed by the congregation, the hymns are also themselves *performing* the congregation. In this concluding chapter therefore, I seek to develop the theory of congregational singing in so far as it is related to the expressing and shaping of congregational identity to be represented in the neologism of *hymnic performativity*. I substantiate this argument by giving attention to both textual and musical performativity of the congregational singing of hymns. Furthermore, I also deduce that *hymnic performativity*, which juxtaposes hymnody and identity, has to bear in mind that the context of the congregation itself is an essential component of this discourse.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

2.1. Which Methodology?

A primary question guides this study: how are congregations impacted by what they sing? The goal is to determine to what extent can the claim be made that hymn-singing, as a major part of the congregation's worship, forms and gives shape to the type of community the congregation is or can become? Stated differently, how does hymnody impact congregational identity? In seeking to decide on a methodology best suited for the study, I considered what limitations and possibilities in methodology would be most appropriate, based on the nature of the research question. Since an interest in hymn-singing within the Moravian church prompted this study, I pondered exploring the issue from a Moravian perspective. Undoubtedly the available materials concerning Moravian hymnody and musical development would have been more than adequate.

However, for me to explore the matter solely from a Moravian perspective would have been too limiting and problematic for two reasons. First, as a Moravian clergy and musician, the likelihood of being an objective researcher and altogether neutral was questionable, especially if the congregations I chose to study were those with which I was associated and over which I exercised musical influence. Second, the decision to explore congregational singing from only one denominational

viewpoint was not expansive enough. A study based solely on Moravian hymnody and congregational singing would certainly have pigeonholed the research and limited the research scope. To focus exclusively on Moravian hymnody would have satisfied only one of the two rationales which guide this study. I could not ignore the other basis upon which this study hinges: the staging of *Hymnspeak*. As part of the Barbados Gospelfest, this event had brought to the foreground the notion that congregational singing could potentially be a means by which an ecumenical identity of the local churches could be fostered.

Having decided to include a Moravian perspective but not be limited to it, the next issue was seeking to better understand hymnody and develop a suitable research model which would explicate the aims of the study. Although the study itself is centred on hymnody, in considering the content and the approach taken in the analysis of the data, a more precise assessment of the research is to situate it within the field of hymnology. Though hymnody and hymnology are often times used interchangeably, according to Eschew and McElrath,¹ both terms are not the same. Eschew and McElrath suggest that hymnody be defined as a “collective term” that “refer[s] to specific branches of the total hymnic corpus (for example, German hymnody, Methodist Hymnody).”² On the other hand, hymnology is described as “the comprehensive study of this hymnody” and it is “concerned not only with the origins and development of hymns, but also with their appreciation and use.”³ It can be said therefore that the discipline of hymnology aims to go a bit further as it encompasses hymnody and the application of the same to specific contexts.

¹ Harry Eschew & Hugh T. McElrath, *Sing with Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Hymnology* (Nashville: Church Street Press, 1995), 158.

² Ibid., x.

³ Ibid.

This study therefore is an exercise in hymnology in that it seeks to do more than merely examine a specific type of hymnody. For instance, I am not just focused on the development of Moravian, Pentecostal or Caribbean hymnody. Rather the goal is to determine how the specific type of hymnody, through its use, can be said to be generative of the identity of the congregations which sing these hymns. Throughout the research, it is my intention to highlight not just the historical development of specific genres of hymnody but also how these are used. Yet any meaningful analysis of a hymnological discourse entails coming to grips first with the nuances of the specific hymnody which is at the core of the hymnology.

Having situated within the realm of hymnology, I deemed it most appropriate to explore the research question using interpretivist concepts with qualitative analysis. Consequently, the goal of this research is in line with the general goal of interpretivism which is that of “understanding human ideas, actions, and interactions in specific contexts or in terms of the wider culture.”¹ However in order to attain this goal, selection of the most suitable methodology is critical. In highlighting the core features of qualitative research, Stacy M. Carter and Miles Little underscore the importance of three inter-related elements, namely, (1) method, (2) methodology and (3) epistemology. Using Schwandt’s definition of epistemology and Harding’s definition of methodology, Carter and Little propose first that “methods can be thought of as research action... [second] methodology justifies method, which produces data and analyses.” They continue, noting that “knowledge is created from data and analyses [while] epistemology modifies methodology and justifies the

¹ Corrine Glesne, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction* 4th ed (Boston: Pearson Education, 2011), 8.

knowledge produced.”¹ In seeking to make a similar differentiation and interconnection, John D. Brewer sees methods as “technical rules that define proper procedures [while] ‘methodology’ is the broad theoretical and philosophical framework into which these procedural rules fit.”²

This means that by keeping the epistemological goal as the focal point, the methods employed ought to be justifiable within the methodological theoretical framework. Consequently, the research question in itself is epistemological in that it is concerned with what is known as well as what is yet to be known and can be discovered. This research is fuelled by the desire for more knowledge, knowledge about how congregational singing shapes congregational identities as communities. Recognizing this epistemology as the ground upon which other arguments will stand, it was critical then to make a case for the most beneficial methodological framework and to utilize methods that would provide the most compelling data for analysis. What were the options?

In exploring the many qualitative methodologies, Carter and Little highlight the following options: (1) grounded theory approaches; (2) narrative, life history, testimonials, and biographical methodologies; (3) various ethnographies; (4) participatory action research traditions; (5) various phenomenological or phenomenographic traditions; and (6) case study approaches.³ Though these approaches are categorized differently, they each evolve and continue to grow and change. It is precisely because of this dynamism that there can be the borrowing and application of various research methods even after a chief methodological choice has

¹ Carter, Stacy M. and Miles Little, “Justifying Knowledge, Justifying Method, Taking Action: Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Methods in Qualitative Research.” *Qualitative Health Research* Volume 17, No. 10, December 2007: 1317, doi: 10.1177/1049732307306927.

² *Ethnography: Understanding Social Research* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000), 3.

³ Carter & Little, 1318.

been made. However, there is the consensus that even though there may be a cross-fertilization of methods, there can still only be one recognizable methodology within a study. In considering the epistemological question before me and my aim of seeking to employ more than one method to attain the knowledge sought, the methodological research option put to use for this qualitative research is case study methodology. In the following section, I will further address how this methodology is understood and by so doing offer a rationale for its use.

2.2. A Case Study Methodological Approach

The use of case study methodology is becoming increasingly popular across various disciplines. J. Nisbett and J. Watt have defined case study quite simply as “a systematic investigation of a specific instance.”¹ They examine this approach and pinpoint the fact that it “draws on the techniques of observational studies, and aims to give a portrayal of a specific situation in such a way as to illuminate some general principle.”² Support for this methodology is not always forthcoming, for as Robert K. Yin, an authority in qualitative research methods, laments that as a research method, case study has been typically ranked very low on the hierarchical ladder and is usually seen as “soft” research. To counter that view, Yin offers what he considers to be a more accurate and comprehensive definition of this methodology. Yin states that “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are

¹ J. Nisbett and J. Watt, “Case Study,” in *Rediguide*, ed. M. B. Youngman, (Nottingham: Nottingham University School of Education, ND), 4.

² *Ibid*, 5.

not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.”¹ Yin’s position towards case study elevates the methodology and counters naysayers who argue that this particular methodology is not a legitimate option.

The use of the case study strategy would indeed be the most appropriate option for me in that I sought to engage with specific instances of congregational singing. Could there be enough data for analysis if I were to give attention to congregational singing in just one specific congregation? Would not the study be more revelatory if the focus went beyond just one congregation, and if so would it be possible to maintain the case study option as the primary methodological research tool?

I had determined that it was necessary to expand the study and to examine more than just a single phenomenon. Consequently, by engaging with more than a single congregation, the study could then be considered as a multiple case study. What benefit would this be to the overall study? It would directly address one of the pitfalls of the case study methodology which pertains to the formulation of generalizations. Janet Ward Schofield, Professor of Psychology and Senior Scientist at the University of Pittsburgh, has recommended that this dilemma, which has often been seen as one of the weaknesses² of this methodology can be solved by exploring “multi-site studies” which are heterogeneous in nature. One of the benefits derived

¹ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Applied Social Research Methods Series, Vol. 5 (London: SAGE Publications, 1984), 23.

²Nisbet & Watt itemize some of the strengths and weaknesses of this methodology. For them that case study deals with one specific instance seen as a strength. That one case can influence the explanation of a similar case. One weakness they identify pertains to the fact that the results are “not easily generalizable” (8). Additionally, there is the likelihood of the analysis of the results being “personal and subjective” (8).

from this application is “increased generalizability.”¹ In addressing the use of what he calls “multiple-case designs,” Yin proposes that one should never be casual in this approach because eventually “every case should serve a specific purpose within the overall scope of the inquiry.”² Furthermore, the application of the multiple case study approach necessitates an understanding of the principle of “replication logic,” a situation in which parallel results arise from all of the cases and “replication is said to have taken place.”³

In this study, the need to be able to generalize was critical since the aim of the study speaks to that generalization principle in that the research question was geared towards a general understanding of how congregations are shaped by what they sing. Therefore it was necessary to design a methodology that would provide important generalizations regarding an epistemology addressing the effects of congregational singing that could be applicable to the study of *any* congregation. Beyond the need to generalize, in deciding to examine multiple cases, I also had to ensure that there was the likelihood of replication.⁴ In order to achieve the broadest possible replication which would have some bearing on the final generalizations, I deemed it necessary to design a case study that would incorporate an examination of the singing practices of current congregations on the one hand and a historical perspective on the other. With these as the two extremes, the median point was to include within the research design an examination of how the content of a hymnal can impact directly and indirectly the

¹ Janet Ward Schofield, “Increasing the Generalizability of Qualitative Research in Case Study Method” in *Case Study Method*, ed. Roger Gomm, Martyn Hammersley and Peter Foster (London: SAGE Publications, 2009), 45.

² Yin, 48.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Yin speaks of two types of replication: (1) literal replication means that the results are alike and (2) theoretical replication points to dissimilar results that exist for obvious reasons.

shape of the community that uses a particular hymnal. This gave a much needed balance to the research project.

Yet the question remained, how appropriate was the research design for this methodology in light of the underlying epistemological interest? Could a case be made for a case study methodology in which the multiple sites were so varied that they embraced acts of observing a contemporary congregation, reviewing the singing practice of a historical congregation, and examining the content of an ecumenical hymnal? It was a matter that I had to resolve especially considering that at the core of Yin's definition of case study is the focus on and engagement with a contemporary context. How could the application of case study methodology to a historical context be validated? Would a historical perspective of congregational singing and a focus on the content of a hymnal be an aberration, according to Yin's definition above?

Of course, one way to circumvent this issue would be to restrict the scope of the study so that it would focus only on one or more present day congregations. But I decided against that for the following reasons. First, given that one of the main purposes of case study, as well as any other related qualitative research methodology is to be explanatory, descriptive or exploratory,¹ I wanted exposure to potential sources of knowledge through a broader scope beyond the usual range of investigation to incorporate historical and textual outlooks. Second, I was not altogether convinced that by limiting the study to contemporary context that eventually the replication logic would become predictable, repetitive and uninteresting (although one could argue that there are an indeterminate number of variables within a singular case that could unfold unprecedented data for analysis). Third, I wanted to design multiple cases that

¹ Yin, 15 – 19.

were truly heterogeneous and that by virtue of their differences the generalization to a theory (not necessarily to another case) would be credible in the final analysis.

As a result, I am certain that a case study methodology can be applied outside of a contemporary context. Consequently, I do not agree with Yin on this point that case study methodology can only be valid if it engages with data drawn exclusively from a contemporary context. However, that does not negate that in attempting to carry out case study methodology, constructing a methodological design that moves beyond the strict contemporary context is viable once there is the acknowledgement that a multiple site case study also entails the use of multiple methods to form part of that overarching methodology. I will now explore some of the major sources that form part of this design, paying attention to the pros and cons of each means whereby data was gathered.

2.3. Strategies (Methods) of the Case Study Methodology

The advocates of the case study research methodology seem to agree that one of its advantages is that it allows for more than a singular means for collection of material. In delineating the various ways to gather evidence and data in a multiple case study strategy, Nisbet and Watt include “observations, interviews, examining documents or records.”¹ In addressing the matter of collection, Yin identified six likely sources which overlap with those of Nisbet and Watt: “documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical

¹ Nisbet & Watt, 5.

artifacts.”¹ He urges that more than one source of evidence collection data be used since it is that which gives case study methodology an added major advantage.

Relative to the subject matter of this research and to offer meaningful generalizations coming out of the multiple sites case study, it was obligatory that the research design allow for a mixture of sources in keeping with a multiple case approach. Yet the aim was not to concoct a series of methods haphazardly applied. Instead the objective was to intentionally apply what I deem to be the major sources to all of the three case sites. However, this was done with the understanding that the evidence of heterogeneity would be best served by ensuring that each of the three contexts would allow for at least one particular strategy to predominate in the gathering of data. By factoring such in the research design of this case study model, there was the likelihood of achieving greater authenticity in addressing what Robert E. Stake, describes as the *quintain* of multiple case study analysis. He defines the ‘quintain’ as “an object or phenomenon or condition to be studied – a target but not a bull’s eye.”² It is the ‘quintain,’ which in this instance is the relationship between the singing of congregational hymns and the associated identity which becomes the overarching issue that prompts the research design. The quintain can be described as the central epistemological concern of the research. Stake emphasizes that in a multiple case study approach, “we study what is similar and different about the cases in order to understand the quintain better.”³

In exploring a multiple case study approach for comprehensive analysis, I have also sought to employ numerous methods to complement the multiple case study

¹ Yin, 78.

² Robert E. Stake, *Multiple Case Study Analysis* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2006), 6.

³ Ibid.

methodology. In seeking to advance the most effective methodological approaches for the examination of ritual music through a Judaeo-Christian perspective, Edward Foley highlighted what he considers to be the three most constructive methods by which this particular subject matter can be analysed. For Foley, the three most frequent methodologies (also referred to as areas of interest) are “(1) historical studies; (2) theological reflections upon the relationship between music and worship or faith; and (3) the...non-traditional methods...[which] examine worship music ritually and culturally.”¹ The first of my sites has a historical emphasis which focuses on Moravian hymnody and its hymnological usage at the Fetter Lane congregation. The second case study assigns prominence to an examination of the worship and singing culture of a Pentecostal congregation. The last case employs a strategy which is more theological and textual brings into focus Caribbean hymnody as an expression of a Caribbean theology aimed at reframing the identity of the ecumenical Caribbean Church. Having arranged the desired heterogeneity in selection of the three cases, I will now elaborate on the application of the major means of collecting evidence.

2.3.1 Documentary Sources

Having listed above the various means whereby data can be obtained for case study, I have narrowed them into two broad categories: (1) documentary and (2) ethnographic. The first encompasses two main types of documents which were sourced, namely archival documents and hymnals. Lindsay Prior, in highlighting the importance of documents to research has underscored their prime value in that “the information they contain can influence and structure human agents every bit as

¹ Edward Foley, “Judaeo-Christian Ritual Music: A Bibliographic Introduction to the Field” in *Ritual Music: Studies in Liturgical Musicology* (Maryland: The Pastoral Press, 1995), 1.

effectively as the agents influence the things.”¹ As such, when engaging in social research, he contends that one ought to consider that in the field, a document has a dual role. First, it is a “receptacle;” secondly, in its own way it is also an “agent.”² The document provides content, and the use or abuse of a document in itself has a life of its own and potential effects unplanned by the author or historian. Prior takes a very expansive view of documents and suggests that they cannot just be limited to text.³ However, for the purpose of this research, when I reference the use of documents within the methodological design, I point directly to text-based documents.

The centrality of documents within social research demands that consideration be given to some specific issues. For example, Prior insists that one must question “how documents function in specific circumstances.”⁴ Part of the inquiry includes contemplating the matter of authorship, which can be either individual or collective. In cases where it is not possible to determine precisely which it is, Prior emphasizes the “author-function.” An immediate benefit of this particular posture is that it places emphasis on the content of the document and on how the document is intended to function as a measure of authenticity rather than aiming to legitimize the specifics of authorship. This was a significant element in my research especially since at least two of the case study sites involved inspecting and handling archival documents. Referring specifically to the possible research posture that one ought to take regarding the use of archival documents, Yin underscored that one must remember the nature of the documents:

¹ Lindsay Prior, *Using Documents in Social Research* (London: SAGE Publications, 2003), 3.

² Ibid.

³ Prior emphasizes the diversity of documents so that items such as art work, architectural floor plans and even tomb stones can be incorporated as examples of documents.

⁴ Prior, 4.

[Documents were] written for some specific purpose and some specific audience *other than* those of the case study being done...[therefore], the case study investigator is a vicarious observer, and the documentary evidence reflects a communication among other parties attempting to achieve some other objective. By constantly trying to identify these conditions, a researcher is less likely to be misled by documentary evidence¹

Consequently, with the use of archival documents, the hermeneutical suspicion that emerges in constructing the methodology leads one to grapple with questions related to content, purpose and authorship. There is the need to juxtapose the internal documentary with other external evidence as part of the analytic process. This is vital, for it must be borne in mind that all documents, archival or not, “are essentially social products...constructed in accordance with rules...[which] express a structure...nestled with a specific discourse.” Furthermore, “their presence in the world depends on collective, organized action.”² One of the advantages of archival documents though is that they allow us to reconstruct social histories of earlier eras to which we would otherwise have no access. Yet in the re-creation process, the researcher cannot *make* the document say what it does not say. That is not to deny that differing conclusions are reached by different people examining the same evidence. Much depends on the quest of the researcher.

In my case, I was investigating the singing practices of the 18th century Fetter Lane Moravian congregation as the first site of a multiple case study survey. The ready access to archival material at the Moravian Archives in London contributed to my decision to engage with Fetter Lane as the first case study site. Consequently, the data came mainly from the primary archival documentary sources such as diaries, minutes and other church documents, though the diaries themselves were the primary

¹ Yin, 81.

² Prior, 12 – 13.

sources. Having decided on the congregation, I then had to determine a time span within which to explore the hymn singing phenomenon. I chose to limit myself to the first seven years of congregational life (1742 – 1749) in order to address how hymns would have been used in the embryonic stage of a congregation's development.¹ The main archival sources examined for the seven year period included: (1) Fetter Lane Moravian Church Congregational Diary, 31 October 1742 – 12/23 July 1743, (Ref: C/36/7/1); (2) Fetter Lane Moravian Church Congregation Diary, 13 July 1743 – 27 January 1744, (Ref: C/36/7/2); (3) Fetter Lane Moravian Church Congregation Diary, 1 January 1749 – 31 December 1749, (Ref: C/36/7/3); and the Pilgrim House Diary, Provincial, 27 July 1743 – 30 October 1748, (Ref: AB41/A2).²

These congregational diaries highlighted the events that took place within the community. Because the diaries themselves contained no index of content, I had to read through the accounts of each day so as to extrapolate the data which would inform my research question. The accounts were first-hand and recapped the following basic information: (1) when and where the community met for worship, (2) who the leader and/or preacher was, (3) who preached the sermon (if there was one) and a summary of the main points,³ (4) which hymn congregants sang and what physical or emotional response arose as a result of the singing, and (5) who was received fully into the community through Communion and who were placed on discipline and barred from community privileges. In investigating these primary

¹ 1749 is a watershed moment in that that was the year that the Moravian Church in Britain was recognized by an Act of Parliament as an official Protestant congregation in the United Kingdom.

² This diary is a one volume compilation of essential sources which trace the development of the work of the Moravians in all of Britain including the congregation at Fetter Lane. This source provided relevant information which help to substantiate the claim that the hymn singing practices at Fetter Lane were in keeping with what was taking place at other Moravian settlements that were emerging across Britain at that time.

³ Whenever Zinzendorf was the preacher that there was a more detailed recounting of the sermon details.

sources, one gets a front row seat to happenings on of the emerging Moravian community at Fetter Lane.

My purpose for reading through these diaries was to capture the use of hymns, and I soon realized that the records of these diaries indicate a variety of worship experiences at Fetter Lane. The three main forms of services in which hymn-singing was central were (1) Lovefeast, (2) Singing Hour and (3) Holy Communion. These then became the focus of the research although other variables certainly would have contributed to the formation of the local Moravian community at Fetter Lane as well. These included the presence of Count Zinzendorf himself as well that of the German Moravians.

As I engaged with these documents, questions about process arose and required inquiry beyond mere withdrawal of data. I wondered, for example, what conclusion can be made with reference to the “author function.” Unlike letters exchanged between a sender and a receiver, the diaries do not indicate who the diarist is. It is generally believed that the author of congregational diaries for the 18th and 19th centuries Moravian settlements would have been the minister in charge. Beyond this matter of authorship, it was also critical to grapple with the purpose of the content of the diaries. Was it merely to itemize each day’s events? Should one interpret content as being objective or can one pinpoint some subjective personal opinions on the part of the diarist? Can one claim that the diaries offer an unbiased view of the community at that time? Was the diarist aiming to paint a balanced picture of the community, bringing to the fore only positive aspects or also highlighting as well internal conflicts and struggles that may have existed? I found that reading these diary entries as primary sources and archival documents allowed me a unique

viewpoint and transported me back in time as I tried to reconstruct a historical setting while attempting to view the life therein as though it were a contemporary reality.

The third case study site, which was centred on the impact of the Caribbean hymnal, also necessitated access to and assessment of archival documents. The nature of these documents was different both in type and content from those of the Moravian Archive. Because they were the personal property of an individual and not a recognized organisation, they were not catalogued or carefully stored. Instead they were simply stockpiled in a shed at the back of Patrick Prescod's house. As the editor of the Caribbean hymnal, Sing A New Song No. 3 and the coordinator of the Caribbean Church Music Program for the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC), Prescod had saved copies of news articles, official reports and other unofficial documents that he had acquired over the years as he worked in compiling the hymnal. The majority of these documents were official reports which had been submitted to a governing body. The content of these documents simply gave details of meetings, recommendations, action plans and the like. Also contained within this personal archive were unpublished papers which offered an academic perspective as well as reflections on the theological viewpoint underlying the development of Caribbean hymnody.

When I visited Prescod at his home in St. Vincent, for the purpose of doing the interviews, I was granted access to his personal archives. Since there was no catalogue which one could follow, I was faced with the daunting task of sorting through piles of boxes some containing musical scores and other books, to carefully select those documents which I deemed useful for the purpose of the study. Compared to the Fetter Lane archives, I was granted greater liberty with the documents that were

housed in Prescod's personal archive. Additionally, I had the benefit of engaging with him through a series of interviews. This allowed for there to be further elucidation on the archival documents which I had selected. This, of course, was not possible with the 18th century Moravian archival documents.

Taking the stance that documents are diverse, Prior has proposed that musical scores can be included as archival documents in studies such as mine. To that end, the final set of documents which formed a major part of the cache in constructing the case study methodology was composed of hymnals. My research allowed for the examination of this category of documents at all three sites. Prior's viewpoint shed new light on the approach to hymnals. To engage in a content analysis requires addressing both the text as well as the performance of the hymn tunes in order to achieve a balanced and comprehensive analysis. This means "looking beyond the surface content of a document and into its functioning."¹ Mindful that "performance reinvents the notation (text),"² one has to accept that the meanings participants derived from the hymns are indeterminate.

However, the aim of the content analysis in this instance was twofold. First, it was to recognise that a hymnal functions both as hymnal and as theological treatise. Second, in this light, one must interpret the text and music to formulate the main ideologies espoused whether in the Caribbean hymnal, the 18th century Moravian hymnals or the hymnals of the St. Thomas Assembly of God. The incorporation of data from other archival documents in one case as well as that collected via interviews in the others served to substantiate the main concepts which emerged from the content analysis of these hymnals.

¹ Prior, 21.

² Ibid.

In the first instance, I was allowed to examine the hymnals which were published and used by the Moravians during the period under review. There were innumerable references throughout the diaries which record what hymns were sung during which services; usually diarists recounted the impact of these hymns on the singing congregation. Though the documents themselves did not indicate a tune but only a hymn's text, I had to determine, if possible, what tunes would have been used for the hymns. In that regard, gaining access to the original tune books which were published during the 18th and 19th century broadened the field and scope of the research.¹ Finding the hymnal with all the verses of a particular hymn and then matching that to the tune added another dimension to the hymns. It was possible to read the texts in their entirety while "hearing" the hymns' melodies. As a result, a researcher could more fully grasp the communal response within the congregation to the singing that the diarists noted since there are enough variables (musical and textual) to more accurately reconstruct what it was like to sing these hymns.

It was in the third case study site that the use of hymnals as text documents was central to the methodology. The primary hymnal investigated was the Caribbean hymnal Sing A New Song No. 3. To serve the overall research and to more fully understand the significance of this particular hymnal, it was necessary for me to examine the two smaller publications that preceded it.² The key issue that emerged centred on the question of whether the claim could be substantiated that these Caribbean hymns could be categorised as more than just devotional material intended

¹ The preface to the tune books contained vital information relevant to the performance practice of 18th century Moravian congregational singing. The general understanding of the use of instruments and the role and expectation of organists and other musicians were also explicitly enunciated.

² Copies of *Sing A New Song* and *Sing A New Song No. 2* were made available to me through the personal library of George Mulrain. It was useful to compare these two small editions as precursor to the full hymnal published later; the process enabled me to better understand the significance of *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

to be used in worship. What message was communicated, subliminally or consciously, about the nature of the Caribbean faith community to the church-goers singing these hymns? What would a content analysis of this hymnal unfold?

At the second case study site, members in the congregation voluntarily provided copies of the two printed hymnals used by the congregation. Copies of these hymnals have become rare. Throughout the field work, the members who had loaned me their hymnals kept reminding me that I was in possession of their personal treasure. The place of hymnal as document to be examined in this context was a blend of both the historical and contemporary features. On the one hand there were the former hymnals which were now relics of a particular era in the worship life of congregation. At the same time there was a contemporary hymnal which was an electronic document into which new congregational songs were being added continuously. The leader of the multi-media ministry also made available a printed copy of the electronic hymnal that now serves as the hymnal repository for the congregation.

2.3.2 Ethnographic Sources

Apart from the documentary sources, there were two other main sources of data collection, both of which could be considered ethnographic in nature: (1) interviews and (2) direct observation and participant-observation of a congregation at worship. A single definition of ethnography is not a straightforward matter since the term overlaps with other qualitative research methods. Basically, ethnography as a research method aims to “describe a people or cultural group.”¹ Its roots are connected with anthropology and as a research method it became popular in the late

¹Glesne, 17.

19th and early 20th centuries with the focus of its application on tribal groups.

However with the emergence of the Chicago School, the emphasis of ethnography transferred to urban areas. There was now the recognition that ethnographic studies are applicable closer to home in modern cities where the same societies within which the ethnographers lived served as the “field.”

Though the discourse on ethnography underscores its fundamental principles, there has been some reassessing of this research method. John Brewer, in making a distinction between ‘little’ and ‘big’ ethnography sees it generally in this light:

[Ethnography is] the study of people in naturally occurring settings or ‘fields’ by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but without meaning being imposed on them externally.¹

He further suggests that its uniqueness must be seen “not [as] a particular method of data collection but a style of research that is distinguished by its objective.”² The articulation of that objective and the means whereby it is accomplished has been challenged. Brewer still acknowledges three methods of collecting data – participant observation, personal document and interviewing.³

Re-examination of the application of methods and the objectives associated with ethnography stirred notable changes in ways of thinking about it. Even though the claim could be made that ethnography was traditionally collaborative in nature, in recent times there has been a renewed emphasis on its collaborative character. This new shift reveals “an approach to ethnography that deliberately and explicitly emphasizes collaboration at every point in the ethnographic process, without veiling

¹ John Brewer, *Ethnography: Understanding Social Research* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000), 10.

² Brewer, 11.

³ Ibid.

it.”¹ The implication of this new trend is borne out by Jim Thomas who, in outlining the new posture required of those who engage in this method of qualitative research, makes a distinction between conventional and critical ethnography. He pinpoints that whereas the former usually “speaks for their subjects,” the latter “accepts an added research task of raising their voice to speak to an audience on behalf of their subjects as a means of empowering them.”²

Part of engaging in what can be termed as a ‘new’ ethnography also entails going beyond the traditional boundary of recapping accounts from field notes and formulating general theories based on observations. Norman K. Denzin highlights that the new trend in ethnography, apart from being more intentionally collaborative, also requires the researcher to be more interpretive with the data. Denzin suggests that ethnography is “that form of inquiry and writing that produces descriptions and accounts about the ways of life of the writer and those written about.”³ It is expected, therefore, that a key component in the practice of ethnography includes the researcher’s reflexive position in entering and disengaging from the field. Such reflexivity necessitates admitting too that one is never totally neutral and unbiased upon entering the field. Because “those we study have their own understandings of how they want to be represented,”⁴ we have to ensure that our researcher’s eyes see past what is being presented and consider what is not obvious.

¹ Luke E. Lassiter, *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 16.

² Jim Thomas, *Doing Critical Ethnography*, Qualitative Research Methods Series, 26 (London: SAGE Publication, 1993), 4.

³ Norman Denzin, *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century* (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), xi.

⁴ Ibid, xii.

If as Prior claims, “All ethnographies are constructions,”¹ what then are the factors that guide and determine what exactly is constructed? Is ethnography constructed primarily by what emerges from the field? Does the risk of the empirical eye circumvented by personal biases nullify the validity of ethnography as a research method? Legitimising ethnography calls for reconstruction of the context in which the research has taken place. Beyond description, the writing of field notes also requires constructing a theory or hypothesis to explain the findings uncovered during the field work. It is this balance between description and theorizing that Martyn Hammersley sees as one of the things that are ‘wrong’ with ethnography. Recognising that ethnography “claims to offer a distinctive kind of description: *theoretical* description,”² Hammersley contends that this is not altogether very clear, based on the premise that “description cannot *be* theories.”³ Hammersley, however, offers four possible rationales for ethnographic method.⁴ His four rationales were helpful in informing the processes of ethnography in the research project. The methodological challenges of ethnography do not in any way provide a justifiable reason “to doubt ethnography’s scientific credentials.”⁵

2.3.2.1 Historical Ethnography

Although I have already explored the use of documents in case study, the question of how to justify the application of ethnography to historical archival documents was critical, especially as I examined the first of the three case study sites.

¹ Prior, 137.

² Martyn Hammersley, *What’s Wrong With Ethnography?: Methodological Explorations*. (London: Routledge, 1992), 12.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Hammersley points out that in ethnography theoretical description can be accounted for through (i) *insightful* descriptions, (ii) descriptions of *social microcosms*, (iii) *applications* of theories, (iv) *developments of theory* through the study of crucial cases (13).

⁵ Thomas, 16.

Since ethnography traditionally assumes the entrance of the researcher into a field and the writing of copious field notes, are ethnographic methods applicable to archival sources? What justification could be made for historical ethnography and how different would it be from contemporary ethnography? Though there were no interviews in the first case study site, I grappled with the matter of how to translate the content of the archival documents “from historical past to ethnographic present...from data to generalization, event to structure, history to form.”¹ In other words, I mused over how to let history speak through ethnography. The work of John and Jean Comaroff offered support by maintaining that ethnography is “historically contingent and culturally configured.”² However, in engaging particularly with historical ethnography, could the argument also be made that in such instances “ethnography does not speak *for* others but *about* them... [since] neither imaginatively nor empirically can it ever “capture” their reality.”³

Without the advantage of being able to do interviews or having the experience of actually directly observing or participating in the 18th century Fetter Lane congregation, the archival diaries served in some way as a time machine in that they revealed the daily worship routines of the community highlighting not only what hymns were sung, but also how these were sung and their impact on both the individuals and the community as a whole. Nevertheless, it was advisable, in constructing this historical ethnography to situate these primary archival documents within the wider historical framework of 18th century Moravian mission works elsewhere and in the ecclesiastical groundings of Zinzendorf and the practise of

¹ John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1992), 21.

² Ibid, 9.

³ Ibid.

Moravian hymn-singing. This stance is imperative since “a historical ethnography... must begin by constructing its own archive. It cannot content itself with established canons of documentary evidence because these are themselves part of the culture of global modernism – as much the subject as the means of inquiry.”¹ Allowing the internal evidence to be verified by external data and by applying historical ethnography to the archival documents facilitated a dynamic process in which it is possible to measure and track the transformation of a community. Such processes “reciprocally shape subjects and contexts... [and] allow certain things to be said and done.”² Apart from the non-traditional historical ethnographic methods which were geared towards the archival documents, two other ethnographic techniques employed in the more traditional reflexive ethnographic method included participant observation coupled with direct observation and interviews.

2.3.2.2 Participant Observation and Direct Observation

In making a case that ethnography is a way of gathering evidence, John Swinton emphasizes that “observation is central to the ethnographic enterprise.”³ But the validity of ethnography rests not only on observation but also on the researcher’s ability to participate to some degree in the phenomenon being observed. Pete Ward offers some clarity on the nature of the researcher’s participation in ethnography by highlighting that “participation has... come to mean an approach or a willingness to participate in social worlds in a range of different ways.”⁴ However, there is the recognition that in participating, one cannot become fully immersed in that which is

¹ Ibid, 34.

² Ibid, 31.

³ John Swinton, ““Where is Your Church?”: Moving Toward a Hospitable and Sanctified Ethnography” in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, ed. Pete Ward (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 71.

⁴ Pete Ward, Introduction to *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography* (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012), 7.

being studied especially since the researcher is usually labelled as an outsider to the social reality under analysis. This is traditionally referred to as the “insider-versus-outsider” dichotomy. Hammersley points out that though there are advantages and disadvantages to both postures, he believes the “chances of the finding being valid can be enhanced by a judicious combination of involvement and estrangement.”¹ Upon entering the field work one has to work constantly to maintain this delicate balance for it is through participating that one gains the trust of the members of the community and consequently gains access to data that is not normally made visible to outsiders.

The second case study site called for the use of this element of the ethnographic method. I entered the field work of the Pentecostal congregation at the St. Thomas Assembly of God to observe primarily how its use of hymnody results in maintaining its identity which members described as “*An Oasis of Love and Hope.*” For 10 months, I participated in weekly worship while at the same time observing directly the congregation as it gathered for worship on Sundays. Bearing in mind that the central research question is how congregational singing shapes congregational identity, my observance of the congregation was limited to the singing during Sunday morning worship services. I did not pay particular attention to the other times when the congregation met apart from its main Sunday worship service.²

Permission to enter into the congregation as an observant researcher was granted by the senior pastor. My field notes reflected observations made of the

¹ Hammersley, 145.

² Every other Tuesday there was Bible study at the church. On the alternative weeks, members met in various homes for small cell group meetings. These gatherings were on a much smaller scale and singing did not feature prominently at these gatherings. Rather the focus was centred on the study of Scripture or the materials designated for the cell groups. Pastor Phillips led the Bible study, but each cell group had its own lay leader.

general congregation during their worship. I paid particular attention to what was sung during the service, observing specifically how individuals in the congregation responded to the language and the music. As part of the field notes, I also kept a log of each hymn or song sung and performed during the service. Over the ten (10) month period, there were few occasions which prevented me from attending worship. To ensure that the log was as complete as possible even in my absence, I would afterwards secure from one of the musicians the list of songs or hymns that would have been used during what was termed “worship time.”

In my position as researcher and participant/observer, I constantly reflected on my position within the worship community as I aimed to maintain the delicate balance of outsider versus insider. Although the congregation acknowledged me as a researcher among them, I felt that there was every attempt by the congregation to make me feel as though I were not an outsider. Although I had never visited the congregation until the commencement of my field work, it is quite likely that their ready and genuine embrace of me among them was the result of two main factors. First, there was the public support and encouragement given to me by the pastor in which he appealed to the congregation to participate in the research project. Second, I realized that among the members I occupied a dual role, where on the one hand, I was accepted as a graduate student engaging in an academic investigation. On the other, they viewed me as a Church pastor. Although I sought to minimize the latter role, it was unavoidable. However, I also believe that it provided a unique position and proved to be beneficial especially during the interviews and group discussions.

2.3.2.3 Interviews

As part of the method in the gathering of data for the second and third case sites, I found conducting interviews very advantageous. Yin has suggested that interviews are of three types: open-ended, focused and survey. In order to collate as much data as possible, I decided to use all three forms of interviews. Some interviews were one-on-one; others were in group settings in the second and third case study sites. The survey form of interviewing was applied only in the second case site. I deemed such a mode to be useful, especially since I was engaging with a larger number of participants. Through the survey I was able to gather some basic information which then formed an integral part of the open-ended and focused interviews.

The first and second of four individual interviews were done with the third case study site as I addressed the impact of the Caribbean hymnal *Sing A New Song No. 3*. The first interview took place in St. Vincent with Patrick Prescod. As the editor of the Caribbean hymnal, *Sing A New Song No. 3*, and as Director of the Caribbean Church Music Programme, Prescod was able to share some very important details concerning the process undertaken in publishing this first ecumenical hymnal. Although the interview was focused in that I was seeking to accumulate specific details relating to time lines and general procedures, parts of the interview were open-ended. In the open-ended interviews, there were times that Prescod shared information which I had not previously considered but which later proved invaluable in elucidating my analysis of the hymnal and its impact on the ecumenical Caribbean Church. Several benefits were derived from the interviews with Prescod. The interviews revealed that he had an intimate knowledge regarding the publication of

the hymnal from its inception to completion and that he was cognizant of the general ideological, theological and cultural principles which guided the process in choosing what hymns were eventually included. Prescod also revealed that as he reflected on his legacy and the contributions he has made to the development of Caribbean Church music, he felt a mixture of joy and regret in that he was proud of accomplishments but regretted that the momentum towards the continued development of this aspect of ecumenism within the Caribbean had waned.

The perspective of the editor needed to be measured against at least one of the contributors to the hymnal. Realizing that most of the contributors are scattered throughout the Caribbean and in many cases now deceased, I was able to secure an interview with Pearl Mulrain from Trinidad.¹ The goal of this interview was to delineate how as a Caribbean hymn writer, she understood the purpose of her hymns as part of a greater vision and intent of the Caribbean Conference of Churches in reshaping the Caribbean ecumenical community. Mulrain's input was important because, apart from the hymns that were included in the Caribbean hymnal, she had also written and published her own original collection of hymns.

The other two individual interviews were completed as part of the second case study site at the St. Thomas Assembly of God, one with the administrator of the congregation and another with the pastor. Both of these interviews proved fruitful in helping me to acquire a better understanding of the local Church community. The Church's administrator, though he was not so named, served in a capacity similar to an assistant to the pastor. Through the interview with him, I gained an important

¹ Though I have made many attempts to locate and interview other noted Caribbean hymn writers whose works were published in the Caribbean hymnal, these efforts proved futile. Attempts were made to contact in particular Mr. Noel Dexter and Roman Catholic priest Father Richard Ho Lung, both of Jamaica. Both men contributed extensively to the Caribbean hymnal. Further, Dexter served as the editor of *Sing A New Song No. 2*.

historical perspective on the development of the congregation, especially since his mother was one of the members of the Assembly from its inception. He had been a part of the congregation from youth into adulthood. It was the only Church he knew and he could relate his range of experiences as a member and now as a key part of the Church's leadership. Consequently, through the interview with him, I was able to acquire a unique assessment of how the community has evolved and how congregational singing has contributed to that evolution.

Similarly, though with a slightly different tenor, the interview with the pastor allowed me to grasp the theological and ecclesiological influences which shaped the congregation over the period of tenure. The interview with the pastor enabled me to ascertain his perspective on the role and function of congregational singing in the worship life of the congregation. In that regard, the interview was focused on a particular aspect of congregational life. However, at times our talk was more open-ended in that I deemed it necessary to explore in the interview how his current understanding of the place of congregational singing has been influenced by his own Christian nurture and exposure. The interview unearthed an awareness that, separate and apart from one's pastoral training, there are other variables which have some bearing on the exercise of ministry. By articulating his position on congregational singing and by drawing connections between that and how the faith community is shaped, I was able to assess the same as I participated and observed the congregation in worship.

Members of the congregation at St. Thomas Assembly of God also participated in survey-based interviews. An appeal went out for members to participate in the study by completing a survey (**See Appendix One**). The data

gathered from this survey directed the small group discussions and helped shape the analysis in determining the extent to which congregational singing in this case impacts the formation of the local faith community. Five interviews took place with the volunteer groups divided according to the following age ranges: 21—30; 31—40; 41—50; 51—60; 61—70 and over 71. The last two groups met together. A total of 74 members participated in the study by completing the questionnaire, but not all of these persons attended the group discussion meetings. During the group discussions, a central talking point was the list of hymns and songs sung by the congregation and the community's response. The survey, coupled with the small group interviews, provided added data that enhanced the field notes I had recorded as an observer/participant during the Sunday morning worship. A drawback to the small group interviews was the lack of full attendance of all 74 original responders to the survey.

Use of survey-form interviews within the small groups proved to be particularly apropos when done with two other groups within the congregation. I considered both of these groups to be distinctive in nature and so needed to engage them separately, apart from the other larger study group interviews. The first was done with the four original members of the congregation. By virtue of being present from the inception of the congregation, these members could best recount the metamorphosis that had taken place over the past 40 years. I decided to interview them separately so that they could better appreciate the value of their contribution to the overall ethnographic study. The second group incorporated the musicians and the members of the “praise team” whose primary duty involved choosing and leading the singing. Learning how they understood and interpreted their role within the

congregation was important to me because I wanted to determine the extent to which their perspective was in accord with that of the pastoral leadership of the congregation. Their primary task lay in leading congregational singing as cantors, and I wondered whether the execution of their function aligned with the expectations and understanding of the congregation's members.

2.4. Reflection

The application of a case study methodology to the question of how congregations are shaped by what they sing is a workable method. For me the greater challenge was to construct a methodology that was malleable enough to accommodate a variety of methods by which data could be gathered. Yet I realized that there was an associated danger in that if the methodology were too flexible it could potentially become unrecognizable. This for me was a cause for concern because I did not want to apply so many methods or strategies that could potentially be incongruous with the overarching methodology. In other words, how could I avoid constructing a particular methodology which, unbeknownst to me, might metamorphose into one totally different?

I am certain now that the use of case study methodology applied to a broadened base of multiple site case study was the most appropriate path to take. I could facilitate the application of methods that were more suited to the individual sites. However, even though I had chosen three heterogeneous sites which would serve as tributaries of the main epistemological question, the methods selected could be applied in one degree or another to each site. In that regard there was some commonality among the three sites. What was unique, however, is that the peculiarity

of each site dictated which particular method would predominate. By considering a historical case study, for example, I could explore archival documents and demonstrate how issues related to historical ethnography can be approached. The use of archival documents and use of documents in general was also critical in the other two sites though not to the same degree.

With each site, as I approached the gathering of data, I was constantly re-examining the stance that I was taking and considering how my analysis of the material would be impacted. For example, as I grappled with dissecting the Caribbean hymnal to formulate what I deemed to be a valid content analysis of this hymnal and its role in reshaping the Caribbean ecumenical identity, memories associated with singing these same hymns in my youth constantly resurfaced. Though I was not an active participant/observer to the hymns sung in a congregation in this instance, I was seeking not to have my analysis of the hymnal clouded by the pleasant memories of learning these songs in my youth. Getting ‘behind’ the hymnal and understanding the issues which were present during its formulation helped me to reorient myself to the content of the hymns, and I tried not to allow my familiarity to interfere with objective analysis.

The dual posture of being an ordained minister and a researcher at times required some navigation to keep both roles in balance. This was not much of a point in the first case study site. However, I was conscious that as a Moravian minister and having been a Moravian all my life that I had to ensure that in my reading of the Fetter Lane 18th century community that I would not fall prey to offering a hagiographic picture of that Moravian settlement. That proved not to be a major issue since I was writing about a congregation within a Province in which I was not serving

and in which there existed for me the sense of being ‘distant’ from the congregation and not just historically.

However, the toggle between pastor and researcher was more of a concern at the St. Thomas Assembly of God. The pastor offered me the opportunity to preach one Sunday early during my field work. I did struggle with the decision but decided to accept the invitation because of the conviction that there was more to gain than to be lost in my occupying the congregation’s pulpit. In some way I needed to go ‘local’ so that I could be granted further inroads into the Assembly, and I reckoned that through preaching I would gain such advantage. It did pay off. I found that thereafter I gained the confidence and trust of many of the members and more persons volunteered to participate in the questionnaire. Somehow choosing to preach had legitimized my pastoral office while at the same time reinforcing my researcher’s posture. That one action had made me less of an outsider. Yet as I engaged with the interviews and group discussions, I was mindful of my ethical responsibility not to misrepresent the data gathered or to be too limiting in my analysis of the same. I maintained a balance in my roles but emphasized my role as researcher, thereby gaining open access to necessary material or sources. At the same time though, there were instances during the interviews and group discussions when—even though the participants shared freely their views on worship generally and the singing repertoire of the congregation—there was the sense that enough had been said. I became aware then of a silent, unwritten but agreed upon boundary in the minds of the participants which, as the researcher, I could not cross.

The aim of this case study’s use of multiple sites is to make some valid generalizations to address how the identity of congregations is shaped by what they

sing. The natural generalizations the study renders are compelling, drawn from multiple methods and substantiated by data from multiple sites. Through the examination of a historical community, the ethnographic study of a Pentecostal congregation and the content analysis of an ecumenical hymnal, we will be able to understand more deeply how hymnody shapes congregational identity.

CHAPTER THREE

THE USE OF MORAVIAN HYMNODY IN ESTABLISHING A *GEMEINE* AT FETTER LANE (1742 – 1749)

3.1 Introduction

For the 18th century renewed Moravian Church, under the leadership of Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, the concept of the *gemeine*¹ was central to the practise of Christianity. Zinzendorf's assertion that there is "no Christianity without community"² reflects the centrality of this principle for his understanding of Christian living. Without doubt this belief would have guided the establishment of the emerging 18th century Moravian settlement at Fetter Lane in the city of London. Colin Podmore proposed that even though Zinzendorf promoted the principles of the *gemeine*, he did not invent the concept but is credited with resurrecting and perfecting what was lying dormant in the beliefs of the religious refugees from the old *Brudergemeine*. Arthur Freeman explains that Zinzendorf understood the *gemeine* as

¹ Throughout this chapter I will use both terms community and *gemeine* interchangeably. The *Unitas Fratrum* is the original Latin rendition for the official name of the Moravian Church when it was officially organized in 1457 comprising chiefly the followers of the Czech reformer John Hus who had been put to death on July 6, 1415 after being tried at the Council of Constance. That the *gemeine* was fundamental to the renewed 18th century Moravian Church under Zinzendorf is further reflected in the German rendition for the official name of the Church (Unity of the Brethren) to be *Brudergemeine*.

² Colin Podmore, *The Moravian Church in England, 1728 – 1760*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 136. This book will be frequently referenced in this chapter since it is a primary source on the early years of the Moravian Church in England. Because this chapter focuses on the early years of the Fetter Lane congregation, I found it to be particularly helpful in highlighting the major issues in the beginning years of the Moravian mission. Because Podmore addresses the Moravian's presence in England in the early year, in his book he provides some keen insights especially into the transitioning of the Fetter Lane Society into a Moravian congregation. For these reasons, I rely heavily on Podmore as a major source for this chapter.

“a daily system of God.”¹ Zinzendorf explicated this notion in a sermon preached in Heerendyk on August 16, 1741 just before his departure to America. He declared that when one is accepted into the community, the ultimate goal of the Moravian *gemeine* involves “communally laying on the Saviour’s heart a soul whose heart has been touched and tugged by this same Saviour and surrendering him to his arms, ‘so that he is not separated from him by any rift on this his earth.’”²

Reflecting the desire to establish a religious community in which there was general submission to Christ, the emerging structure of the Moravian *gemeine* at Fetter Lane would have modelled the pattern of living already firmly established at Herrnhut. Consequently, the *gemeine* implemented a distinctive social structure to serve their religious and spiritual intent to include the smallest social units called *bands*,³ formed “to promote personal growth in grace and fellowship between kindred spirits” and “constituted free and informal associations of those who felt drawn to each other.”⁴ *Bands* were the foundation to the larger units called *choirs*.⁵ There were designated spiritual leaders associated with the *bands* and *choirs*, including Elders,⁶

¹ Arthur Freeman, *Zinzendorf’s Theology: A Gift to Enable Life in The Distinctiveness of Moravian Culture*, eds. Craig D. Atwood and Peter Vogt, (Nazareth: Moravian Historical Society, 2003), 279.

² Count Zinzendorf, *A Collection of Sermons from Zinzendorf’s Pennsylvania Journey*. Trans. by Julie Tomberlin Weber. (Bethlehem: P.A.: Interprovincial Board of Communication, 2001), 13.

³ The term, *band*, referred to small cell units comprising 5 – 6 individuals. Initially these groups met for prayers and personal discussions.

⁴ Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G. Hamilton. *History of the Moravian Church: The Renewed Unitas Fratrum 1722 – 1957*. (Bethlehem, P.A.: Interprovincial Board of Christian Education Moravian Church in America, 1967), 32.

⁵ The term, *choir*, designated a larger grouping, formed according to gender and status. Consequently within the *gemeine* one would find a married *choir*, single brothers and single sisters’ *choir*, children’s *choir* and a *choir* for widows. Membership in a Moravian congregation meant compulsory membership in a *choir*. The first *choir* was formed in 1728 and was comprised of six unmarried men who came together to live in a common household.

⁶ In the early Herrnhut community, twelve elders were chosen. Later that number was reduced to four and by 1730 there was only one chief elder. However, on September 13, 1741, members gathered at a synodical conference in London and determined through the casting of lots that only Jesus Christ will occupy the spiritual office of Chief Elder within the Moravian community. The announcement came on November 13, a date still observed as a Moravian festival day.

Vice Elders, Eldresses, Vice Eldresses and Wardens who were chosen by lot.

Acceptance into the Moravian *gemeine* required subscribing to this social structure.

The particular social structure of the *gemeine* fostered a community that prioritized spiritual accountability. In elaborating on the nature of the *gemeine*, Zinzendorf underscored this feature, noting that one who “lives with us” in community is deemed our “travelling companion” and “it is natural for us to begin speaking with him about how we would want him to go the right way, if we see him heading in a way which might lead him into danger.”¹ A religious system with a balance of “discipline and punishment”² could achieve spiritual accountability.

Undergirding this notion of the *gemeine* as a “daily system of God” was a firm belief that the *gemeine* was a theocratic community. Dietrich Meyer distinguishes this in light of a resolution arising out of the 1764 General Synod held in Marienborn which reinforced Christ as the Chief Elder, and the “use of the lot, which served to discern directly the will and command of Christ, and the establishment of closed settlement congregations where all aspects of life were geared toward the spiritual life.”³ The 1764 Synod resolved that the Moravians’ community would be one in which there was “only the direct government of God over His people...who Himself is keeping order in His house... and whose voice we have to pay attention to, whose mouth we have to listen to and to obey with the greatest degree of precision.”⁴ Consequently the ultimate goal of each communal activity was to reinforce the shaping of congregation into what the Lord desired it to be, i.e. more like the Saviour in every way.

¹ Weber, 13.

² Weber, 15.

³ Dietrich Meyer, ‘*The Moravian Church as a Theocracy: The Resolution of the Synod of 1764*’ in *The Distinctiveness of Moravian Culture*, 256.

⁴ Ibid, 257 – 258.

Daily worship was a chief means through which to attain and reinforce the ideals of the *gemeine* as a “daily system of God.” The pattern established at Herrnhut resulted in “ample provision... for the cultivation of the religious life.”¹ Members applied the same standard at Fetter Lane from its inception. The forms of such gatherings included the Singing Hour and Quarter of Hour, Lovefeasts, Communion and Prayer Days. As early as 1728, this “daily system of God” was strengthened further by the addition of the distribution each day of a biblical text which was referred to as the watchword (*Losung*). Considering the myriad experiences of worship within the Moravian community, the distinctiveness of the Moravian *gemeine* is evident when compared to similar 18th century Pietist sects. Podmore highlights several noticeable differences:

Pietism was strongly individualistic, whereas the Moravians emphasized community. The Pietists opposed dancing and comic plays, but the Moravians replaced austerity with gaiety, seriousness with playfulness, fearfulness and striving with assurance and joy in the presence of the Saviour. Where Pietism emphasized work, Moravian life was increasingly marked by festivity and celebration, music, art, colour, and light.²

Having explored broadly the main characteristics and centrality of the Moravian *gemeine* in the 18th century, I contend that the Moravians employed hymn-singing as a major means by which they constructed the Moravian *gemeine* at Fetter Lane in the period 1742 – 1749.³ I will show through historical perspective that hymn singing is formative and contributed to the initial shaping of an early religious community. I will also demonstrate that the choices of hymns for congregational

¹ Hamilton and Hamilton, 37.

² Podmore, 17.

³ Although the Fetter Lane Society was started as a gathering of like-minded persons with a common religious persuasion, by 1742 the Fetter Lane Society was fully under the direction of the Moravians and was emerging as a predominantly Moravian community. Later in 1749, through the efforts of Zinzendorf and other Moravian leaders, an Act of Parliament legally recognized the Moravian Church in England, a construct that had evolved from the Moravian *gemeine*.

singing were not haphazard but rather intentional and directed by the community's theological understanding of its hymnody. Woven through hymns in regular worship, the "daily system of God" at Fetter Lane came through the powerful conduit of congregational singing. I have chosen to examine the three main forms of worship that existed among the 18th century Moravians: the Lovefeasts, Singing Hour and Lord's Supper (Holy Communion) as conduits through which the main components of the *gemeine* were embodied in the congregational identity of the Moravians at Fetter Lane.

To substantiate the above claims and establish historical context for our discussion, I will first offer a brief overview of the early Moravian presence at Fetter Lane. Secondly, I will review the general state of Moravian hymnody of that era, bringing to the fore the key guiding principles of the 18th century Moravian hymnic practices and attitudes. Thirdly, I will give attention to the three major religious services and explain how hymns were used in each in a manner that would have contributed to the formation of a Moravian *gemeine* at Fetter Lane.

3.2 The Moravians at Fetter Lane

What eventually emerged as the Fetter Lane Moravian congregation by November 10, 1742 was first started as the Fetter Lane Society in 1728. In detailing the historical accounts of the development of the Moravian Church in England from 1728 to 1760, Colin Podmore argues that the presence of the Moravians in England was not intentional but accidental in that, "the motive was never evangelistic: the Moravians aimed to win neither converts to Christianity nor new members for the Moravian Church here." So why did they come? He suggests, "first, the desire to

establish ecumenical relationships, second, settlement in the new American colony of Georgia, and finally a combination of these concerns brought Moravians to England between 1728 and 1737.”¹ Podmore contends that it was not until after 1738 with the arrival of four Moravians visitors to London, viz.: Peter Bohler, Georg Schullius, Friedrich Wenzel Neisser and Abraham Ehrenfried Richter (none of whom were sent to establish an English Moravian Society), that alliances were first made leading to the formation of the Fetter Lane Society. In addressing the development of the Fetter Lane congregation, he seeks to correct what he deems to be a historical error in which published accounts have “exaggerated [Wesley’s] own role and underplayed the importance of the Moravian contribution.”²

From Podmore one gathers a broad perspective of the interplay between several major characters and how personalities and circumstances collided, leading eventually to the planting of Moravianism at Fetter Lane. It is evident that among the key personalities in the Fetter Lane Society, their posturing on principles related to theology, ecclesiology and biblical interpretation, either knitted them together or in the end led to their separation. Consequently, the Fetter Lane Society, as it sought to define and understand Christianity, was engaging and responding to the philosophy of the likes of John and Charles Wesley and the Holy Club members from Oxford, George Whitefield, James Hutton, John Thorold, Benjamin Ingham, Richard Viney, Augustus Spangenberg, and Peter Bohler. From a reading of Podmore, the conclusion can be drawn that the Fetter Lane Society by 1742 had fundamentally become a Moravian congregation. He substantiates his argument by showing that by 1739 Moravian social communal structures and practices (Lovefeasts, Prayer Day,

¹ Podmore, 28.

² Podmore, 29.

continuous intercession, bands and choirs) were being commonly observed and that it was the Moravian Peter Bohler who drafted the rules governing the Society.

With the eventual separation of the Wesleys from the Fetter Lane Society and the establishment of a Society at the Foundery in Upper Moorfields by July 1740,¹ the decision was made to fully take over the leadership of the Fetter Lane Society, transforming the same into a Moravian community. This was executed under the leadership of Spangenberg. However, a Moravian *gemeine* was constructed along two parallel paths: physical and spiritual. The design of the former typically required large quantities of open space on which were constructed separate dwellings for the *choirs* and a central building large enough for the entire community to gather for worship (*salle*). However, such a blueprint could not be readily realized in the crowded industrialized city of London. Consequently, “several single sisters went to live in a house hired for them in Fetter Lane, (but which has a passage to the chapel by a door which has been made) and are to be under the care of Sister Brockdorf: hereby they will enjoy more choir-advantages, than they could hitherto while scattered abroad.”²

However, the physical impediments were resolved by ensuring that the spiritual components of the model of a Moravian *gemeine* were instituted at Fetter Lane. As a result, by 1742 the social structure of this spiritually centred Moravian community was evident in that the members had already been demarked into various *choirs* along with the designated leaders (**See Appendix Two**). With this skeletal framework of the community firmly in place the formation of a *gemeine* at Fetter Lane was on the right path.

¹ Podmore, see Chapter 2 *The Fetter Lane Society: 1738 – 1740* (29 – 71).

² Fetter Lane Diary 3, 12 Apr. 1749. Hereafter, I have abbreviated the references to the various volumes of the Fetter Lane Diary as FLD.

3.3 Hymnic Attitudes and Practices

It is apt to consider the general state of English Moravian hymnody at that time and the prevailing attitudes which guided Moravian hymnic orthodoxy. Moravian hymnody is inseparable from its history and there is a direct connection between Moravian hymnody and the historical development of the Fetter Lane congregation. For the Moravians, their hymns served more than just liturgical purposes. They were deemed to be carriers of the core Christian beliefs of the Moravians and as such were held in very high regard. At Fetter Lane, as elsewhere, an emerging Moravian community would be made to understand the premium attached to the hymns and their relevance to the shaping of a Moravian identity. The following diary entry supports this claim:

The daily choir of hour was kept by Bro. Schlicht, and likewise the Singing-hour at 7. This meeting was begun about a quarter of a year ago, instead of the weekly preachings and always hitherto some verse out of the last part of the hymn-book has been explained; because on the one hand, many people could not otherwise find out the idea which the congregation has by several expressions; and on the other, the system of Doctrine is really lodged even in the Hymns...this time the verse Adorable Side's Rent was explained, and the solidity which lies under such childlike language vindicated.¹

The exposition of Moravian hymnody was equalled to that of Holy Scripture. At another time, it was noted that “at night was preaching, as also for 2 Thursdays past, in the Singing Hour and explanation of the hymns, the solid and scriptural meaning which lies in them having been shown.”²

¹ FLD 3, 19 Jan. 1749.

² FLD 3, 6 Apr. 1749.

Holding to the position that its hymns were primarily bearers of their theology, the early hymn writers of the Moravians cared not if their hymns were adjudged for their poetic sophistication. Their primary intent was to craft hymns that would ultimately enhance life as it was practiced in the Moravian *gemeine*. Criticism would be directed towards them for their hymns and the preface of the 1742 hymnal printed by Hutton unapologetically remarked:

Our Brethren and Sisters who have made these Hymns, are mostly simple and unlearned People, who have wrote them down at the Time, when the Matters therein expressed were lively to their Hearts; and therefore they are without Art or the niceties usually expected in poetry: yet not withstanding to every Heart that knows, or desires to know Jesus Christ, we doubt not but they will afford some Satisfaction and Comfort of a much better kind.¹

It is important then to emphasize that the efficacy of such hymns must be appraised in light of the context and purpose for which they were written which was peculiarly Moravian.

Though there is no denying the centrality of Scripture as a whole being a pillar to Moravian 18th century hymnody, there was an unusual emphasis on the New Testament and specifically the accounts of Jesus death and its meaning in the life of a believer. In particular there was emphasis on the wounds of Jesus and how the Church is spiritually nourished through its relationship with Christ as husband. S. Paul Schilling is correct when he asserts that each Christian denomination demonstrates its theological biases through its own hymnic idiosyncrasies. For the 18th century Moravians, the ‘*Side-Wound/Hole*’ theology of Zinzendorf was the most predominant feature of its hymnody. It is essential to recall Zinzendorf’s position of the purpose of the *gemeine* was to ensure that the souls, having being surrendered to Christ, and who

¹ Page 4 of the Preface of *A Collection of Hymns, with Several Translations from the hymn book of the Moravian Brethren*, London: Printed for James Hutton, at the Bible and Sun, in Little-Wild Street, near Lincoln’s Inn-Fields, 1742.

were now part of the community would remain fully committed through a daily system of worship which involved hymn singing and mutual accountability. The prolific use of certain poetic metaphors and images in the text of their hymns which reflected such vivid imagery would serve as a constant reminder to the members of the community of their position in relation to Christ – as that of Husband and to enter into the vicarious wounds, especially the ‘*Side-Hole*’. So the hymn texts themselves contributed to the construct of the *gemeine* at Fetter Lane.¹

Beyond the actual hymn texts, the significance of Moravian hymnody lies as well with the performance practise of congregational singing. Because the hymns were carriers of Moravian core beliefs then, careful attention was paid to how the hymns were to be sung. The Fetter Lane congregation was instructed that its singing “ought to be done with a feeling of heart, and not too slow and drawling, nor too loud; and in a liturgical meeting, with a particular attention to the brother who keeps it, to sing soft with him and lay an emphasis now and then, just where he lays it.”² Additionally, the Fetter Lane community was reminded of the approach which was acceptable in worship and would serve as a guide in creating a unique Moravian ethos clearly indicated that “all Singing Hours, Bible Hours &c should be weighty...for there is a particular feeling of the Spirit of the Church in such meetings. All the acts in a congregation should have Substance...Spirit & Power.”³ This tenet was so important that at an Elders’ Conference, “Bro. Bohler spoke occasionally of the

¹ In Chapter Six, I explore specifically a sample of hymns that were used repeatedly throughout the period to show how these hymns could have potentially contributed to the shaping of a Moravian community at Fetter Lane.

² FLD 3, 16 Nov. 1749.

³ Register for The Congregation of the Lamb, 1742.

outward stillness and decency requisite in the more liturgical congregation-meetings...”¹

The Moravians were just as intentional about the *what* of their hymnody as well as the *how*. Just as much attention and emphasis were placed on giving clear instructions as to how the hymns were to be sung. Obviously there was the understanding that the efficacy of a hymn upon the singers is not only dependent on its text but also on how the congregation sings. A deepened meaning and fuller understanding of the theology contained within the hymns could be had, based on how it was performed. Commenting on hymn tunes, Schilling has suggested three variables about which the 18th century Moravians would have been aware: (1) tunes “are capable of stirring and expressing deep emotion”; (2) they contribute “to the moods evoked by hymn texts”; and (3) “hymn tunes may fortify or weaken the convictions embodied in the words.”²

The manner in which hymns were sung forms an important part of the argument that Moravian hymnody played a key part in construct of the *gemeine* at Fetter Lane. Whereas the hymn writers contributed to the construct of the *gemeine* through the use of poetic metaphors and images, credit must be given to the musicians who ensured that hymns were played and sung the ‘Moravian’ way. That meant (1) hymn tunes were to be played precisely; (2) simple accompaniments were preferable; and (3) facilitating the best congregational singing was priority. The conclusions are drawn based on the very detailed remarks laid out in the preface of one of the earliest tunes book printed by Hutton. It noted:

¹ FLD 3, 8 May, 1749.

² S. Paul Schilling. *The Faith We Sing: How the Message of Hymns can Enhance Christian Belief* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983), 35 – 40.

The Graces [grace notes] are left out on purpose, because it is not every one's gift rightly to express them; many who are unskill'd in musick have hitherto forc'd themselves to sing them and spoil'd thereby the whole singing. Therefore it will be well if the Tunes, wherever they are used, are sung just so as they are, and if they that understand musick should sing so long and alone; till the rest have forgot their wrong way of singing them which they have learnt before. Where one can have an instrument it will be the more easy. We love the Lamb and rejoice as well to sing and play of him as to speak of him. Whosoever is offended at our singing and playing, him we desire to bear with us, because we also bear with his weakness. Several have wish'd that instructions for singing might be added to these Tunes, but it would have been superfluous, considering that there are so many printed already. May the Lamb...make all our singing and playing of his Blood still more Heavenly.¹

In a later hymn tune book publication (1796), Christian Ignatius LaTrobe in his preface quoted extensively from the 1778 and 1784 tune books of Christian Gregor. LaTrobe affirmed the 'Moravian' way of singing by reiterating Gregor's admonition that:

The excellence of congregational singing consists in this: that though all join, yet none seek to outvie the rest. By bringing each voice to the level of the whole, a sweet and yet powerful confluence of harmony is created. But whoever leads the song, should sing so distinctly, that the words of the hymns may be heard, which cannot be expected from the whole congregation, nor could well be effected without prejudice to good singing. Both the minister and the congregation should likewise take due notice of the contents of the hymn or verse to be sung, and regulate the cheerfulness or solemnity of their voices accordingly. Whenever one metre has several tunes, attention ought to be paid, in the choice of them, that the strain of the Tune may be suited to the sense of the hymn. Tunes, that have hitherto been unknown to the congregation, may be introduced, either by being at first repeatedly sung by the choir, or played, previous to the opening of the service, in lieu of the usual prelude, by which the congregation becomes insensibly acquainted with them.²

¹ Preface, *The Tunes for the Hymns in the Collection with Several Translations from the Moravian Hymn Book*. London, Printed for James Hutton, at the Bible and Sun in Little Wildstreet, near Lincolns Inn-Fields. (1744?).

² *Hymn Tunes, Sung in the Church of the United Brethren, collected by Christian Ignatius LaTrobe*. London, Printed for the Editor and Sold by John Le Febvre, Chapel Place, Nevils Court, Fetter Lane, 1796, ii.

It is apparent that by the late 1700's the Moravians had developed not only their hymnic repertoire but also had become advanced in their understanding of the hymnic performance practice.

In addition to the principles which guided the performance of congregational singing, the Moravians were also keenly aware of the important role that the musicians themselves were to observe. Musicians were made to understand that all instruments, including the organ used for congregational singing, were intended to support hymn singing. However, LaTrobe warned that "in order to maintain the true and beneficial effect of an organ, it is required that the organist should enter into the spirit of his office, and become actuated by the same principle that every other servant in the house of God is taught to act from. Without this, he not only neglects his call, but betrays his trust."¹ The ministry of the organist was an integral component of how the congregation would sing the hymns and grasp the understanding of the same. To underscore that the task of the musicians was moored to the congregation's understanding of the hymns they were singing, it was expected that:

Every musician, possessed of sound musical taste and judgement, will readily acknowledge, that *simplicity* is a grand source of beauty in church-music; and yet superior genius seems required to be conscious of its powers and willing to follow its dictate...but there is still something of far greater importance than our taste and judgement, that determines the real degree of excellence in church-music: this is nothing less than the blessing of God conveyed unto us through the means he deigns to employ...²

But there was also the very clear directive of how the organ was to be played so that the 'simplicity' which was desired would be achieved. For that to occur,

The organ should never overpower the voices, neither in accompanying an individual, the chorus, nor the whole congregation, but yet have sufficient strength of sound to prevent their sinking...the louder the organ is played, the

¹ Ibid, ii.

² Ibid, iv – v.

greater simplicity is required; and it is a great mistake to suppose, that a cheerful and majestic tune acquires any additional brilliancy by a number of shakes, and other ornaments, very ill suited to the character of hymn tunes, and undermining the very effect the player wishes to produce.¹

Ultimately, musicians were to see that the theology of Moravian hymnody addressed not only the Church's understanding of the orthodoxy of Christianity but also that congregational singing could be deemed as practical theology. The content of the hymns was equally as important as the manner of how these hymns were sung. Both aspects contributed to the construct and maintenance of the Moravian *gemeine* at Fetter Lane. Hymn writers captured the essence of Moravian hymnody but it was the musicians who ensured that the spirit of what was penned was made manifest. That the well-being of the wider community took priority over the tendency toward individualism was vividly communicated to musicians, who in the playing of their instrument should do so,

With a view to render the voice of the congregation more steady and pleasing, and the performers being impressed with the same awful sense of the presence of God, and the importance of their service in his house, considered it utterly inconsistent to gratify their own vanity, and draw the attention of the congregation towards them, by an ill-timed display of their fancy.”²

It is this prevailing attitude among musicians and singers that would have contributed to the construct of the *gemeine*. Hymns – both text and tune – contributed to the construct of the Moravian *gemeine* at Fetter Lane. The hymn texts reveal how hymn writers utilized poetic images to paint a picture of the relationship between the community and Christ. Composers of hymn tunes crafted melodies which were played and sung according to the performance practice of the Moravians. The appropriate playing of the music ensured that the theological content of the hymn texts with their

¹ Ibid, v – vi.

² Ibid, iv.

explicit images of the Lamb would be emblazoned into the hearts of those who are singing.

The linkage between Moravian hymnody and community identity has been established. Podmore argues that the essence of Moravianism itself was radically changed during the latter part of the 18th century when much of the content of its English hymns was removed. He suggests that by so doing the Moravians discarded their unique hymnody in which “the spirituality was Christocentric, focusing on Christ’s blood and wounds, particularly the side-wound, and in line with Zinzendorf’s ‘marriage religion’, on Christ as the husband....”¹ A similar thrust exploring the bond between Moravian identity and the theological content of its hymnody was made in the unpublished dissertation of Jonathan Yohan, who discusses this issue within the context of the period known as the ‘Sifting Times’ (1743 – 1750).² For the purpose of our discussion here, Yohan’s work helps us to understand the following about Moravian hymnic practice and understanding during the period under review. We learn that (1) Zinzendorf’s theology was best expressed through poetry and song thereby connecting more with the heart of the believer; (2) the common practice of the *Singstunde* (Singing Hour) reinforces that the memorization of hymns and the spontaneous singing of the same was a major tool in fostering devotion to Christ; and (3) during the years 1742 – 1749 the Moravians would have produced six (6) hymnals

¹ Podmore, 132.

² Jonathan Yohan, ‘*Evangelicalism and Enlightenment: The Moravian Experience in England, c. 1750 – 1800*’ (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation: University of Oxford, 2007). He substantiates his claim that the course of the history of the Moravians in England changed when its hymnody changed. He postulates that the identity of the Moravians in England was changed with the publication and revision of its hymnals between 1754 and 1789. Although the time period upon which Yohan focuses is later than that in this chapter, his analysis of the change in attitude lends support to my position that Moravian hymnody was a shaper of the identity of Moravian community at Fetter Lane.

under the leadership of James Hutton, which were drawn from German sources as well as those recently composed.¹

I will now consider the three primary forms of worship (Lovefeast, Singing Hour and Communion) paying particular attention to the ways in which Moravian hymns were utilized. Though each service had its distinct liturgical purpose, the prevalence of hymn singing within these services will show that “song was the unifying factor”² that binds all three worship services. By examining the use of hymns, it will be seen that Moravian English hymnody contributed to the formation of a *gemeine* at Fetter Lane.

3.4 Lovefeasts, Singing Hour and Communion

3.4.1 Lovefeasts

It is generally believed that the celebration of the Lovefeasts among the Moravians was started on August 13, 1727.³ The lovefeasts mirrored the agape meals of the early Christian church. For the Moravians this form of service grew in popularity and was usually associated with special and significant days in the lives of individuals and the community. For example, lovefeasts were typically used to commemorate birthdays or special anniversaries that were associated with major milestones in the lives of both individuals and the congregation. The commemoration of one’s ordination anniversary was also counted among the occasions that merited such observances (**See Appendix Three**). At first, the format of the celebration was

¹ Yohan, 149 – 175. A close examination of the hymnals produced by the Moravians before 1754 compared with those that came afterwards reveals a radically changed hymnodic corpus.

² Podmore, 149.

³ It was on that day that the early Moravians experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at a communion service held at Bertholdsdorf which united the diverse and fragmented community of religious refugees. Historical records indicate that after the service Zinzendorf sent food to the various groups that were still engaged in worship so as not to interrupt their fellowship.

one in which “often water and bread were served...in the early years, or water only. The service itself consisted of singing, free conversation and the narration of religious experiences.”¹

The practice of the lovefeast as a “distinctive feature of the Moravian Church”² was introduced very early in the Fetter Lane Society because of the influence of the Moravians. Podmore suggests that the emphasis on celebrating life and expressing the same through the medium of the lovefeasts was one of the features that made the Moravian Church appealing to Londoners. He postulates “the chief setting for celebration was the lovefeast, classically a symbolic meal of tea and buns accompanied by music, and godly conversation. This formed a bridge between the worship of congregation meetings and that of the whole of life, as understood by the Moravians, for here what would otherwise be secular celebrations of birthdays, welcome, or farewell were brought within the religious system.”³

3.4.2 Singing Hour

The Singing Hour (*Singstunden*) was a form of worship uniquely Moravian which emphasized the priority of congregational singing in worship. In examining the emergence of the early Singing Hour under Zinzendorf, it was noted that:

He actively cultivated within the Herrnhut congregation an appreciation of the spiritual power of hymnody and gradually developed a unique kind of service called the *Singstunde*, which became in time his favorite form of public worship. In it the brother in charge selected with care individual stanzas from various hymns in such a manner that they would develop some Christian truth as the singing progressed. The congregation, which possessed an unusual command of the hymnal, would fall in with the leader before he reached the

¹ Hamilton & Hamilton, 38.

² Podmore, 32.

³ Podmore, 157.

end of the first line of each stanza, singing by heart. No address was given on such occasions; none was needed.¹

Podmore too underscores the value of this form of service to Zinzendorf, by noting that:

For Zinzendorf this service was second in importance only to the Communion, and superior to the sermon or homily; if religious truth was perceived best by the heart, it could be expressed most directly in song, and if the singing was by heart, it would come from the heart. Since all participated by singing, this service expressed community better than most. The Singing Hour was fundamental because Communion, lovefeast, and other services were given their structure by being encompassed in a Singing Hour on the Sacrament or the appropriate theme.²

The Singing Hour was one of the Moravian practices that made them attractive to those seeking to have specifically a religious experience of the heart.

The particular feature which made the Singing Hour distinctive was that the singing was done from memory even though there were printed hymnals.³ Yohan has argued that because of the centrality of singing as expressed within the *Singstunden* that the identity of the English Moravian Church has been shaped by the content and use of its hymns. Arguing from the premise that the essence of Moravian theology is captured in its hymnal and considering the improvisatory nature of the *Singstunden*, Yohan makes the claim that among the Moravians “a hymn text had to be experienced to be understood” so that “it was not the published hymnody that characterized the Moravian Church under Zinzendorf, but its sung hymnody in *Singstunden*.”⁴

¹ Hamilton & Hamilton, 37.

² Podmore, 149.

³ Between 1742 & 1749, there were several hymnals in use at Fetter Lane during the early years all of which were produced by James Hutton, a printer by profession and a member of the Society. Hutton printed 6 Moravian hymnals: Part I (1742); Part I, 2nd Edition with Appendix (1743); Part I, 3rd Edition (1746); Part II (1746); Part III (1748); and Part III, 2nd Edition (1749). However, the first official Moravian English Hymnal published by the Moravian Church in England was not produced until 1754.

⁴ Yonan, 160.

3.4.3 Communion

For the 18th century Moravians, participation in the sacrament of Holy Communion was not automatic. It was reserved exclusively for those who had been admitted into full membership. That the Lord's Supper was the pinnacle of all liturgical experiences is best captured in Zinzendorf's declaration "‘das ich keine Gemeine Jesu ohne Abendmahl statuierere' – no congregation without Communion"¹ At a 1749 General Synod Count Zinzendorf confirmed that the Brethren's belief was more akin to the Lutheran. He stated that the Moravians believed in "a real participation" of Christ in the communion.² There was no further explanation on the meaning of the words of institution and the above represents the sum of the Moravian doctrinal position on this sacrament.

Although there was not an emphasis on producing a theological treatise of the Moravian position on the sacrament, the dignity associated with the observance of the sacrament was not diminished. The gravity of this service was reflected in the mode of dress, the solemnity of the service itself and the meaning of the hymns which were an integral part of the liturgy. We see this demonstrated in the description of a communion service held at the Yorkshire congregation. It recounts,

That [at] a general Lord's Supper of 200 communicants at which the dear Ordinary [Zinzendorf] officiated, the first time that he has done it in an English congregation...at the communion all the sisters had on the Exousie or cap usual in the congregation, which is so simple and a memorial of the napkin wherewith our Saviour's head was bound. This was the first time that among us such a whole assembly has been so dressed, but which soon encouraged a second, for at this present solemn meeting the sisters in London did the same, the Lamb letting us feel so his protection and presence, that we neither need nor can remember the large town we live in, but only our liturgy.³

¹ Podmore, 147, quoted by Hickel, *Abendmahl*, 13.

² FLD 3, 9 Jan. 1749.

³ FLD 3, 24 Jul. 1749

The gravity of this sacrament was generally understood. There would be no Communion if the congregation was not deemed to be spiritually ready to receive from the Lord's Table. Among the Moravians, one had to be spiritually ready to participate in Communion. Two factors determined one's readiness: (1) being in right relation with Christ and (2) with each other. Because the spiritual preparedness of the members of the *gemeine* was critical to the celebration of Communion, unlike the Love feasts or Singing Hour, the celebration of the sacrament was not regular. The only means whereby there could be the assurance of the community to receive communion was through the rite of *Speaking*.¹ As early as 1742, it was decided that Communion would have only taken place "after the elders concluded to speak to every member of the Fetter Lane Society that they would give in writing a short narrative of their lives and how their state was at present."² By October of the following year there was no change of policy in that "all of the brethren and sisters of the congregation are to be spoken to first before we can make out whether we shall have a sacrament or no."³ It must be noted that the spiritual preparedness of the community to receive communion was not impartial. What was expected of the members was also true of the labourers. They too had to validate their own readiness

¹ *Speaking* preceded the Communion service. It arose out of the "concern...to have all members partake worthily...the elders and their helpers conversed privately with each member, and any found not to be in the proper frame of mind were advised to remain away from the Lord's Table." (Hamilton & Hamilton, 38) Although the barring of persons from Communion might be viewed as being discriminatory, I agree with Podmore when he affirms that the practice of *Speaking* was one of the means whereby the Moravians exhibited pastoral care, a characteristic that made the church appealing (Podmore, 19). *Speaking* created an avenue whereby members of the *gemeine* were being held accountable to each other in ensuring that the members of the Moravian community remained loyal in their Christian calling especially in their private lives.

² FLD 1, 19 Apr. 1743.

³ FLD 2, 13 Oct. 1743.

to receive the sacrament. Therefore both Brothers Holland and Hutton spoke to all the labourers “concerning their own hearts and also of the sacrament.”¹

Because admission to receive Communion could be denied, then it was understood that this sacrament was not a right but a privilege. Consequently, if it was determined after *Speaking* that one was not ready to be admitted to the sacrament, then that person was barred from receiving. Such was the case when “Holland spoke to the married men and widowers who were to come to the sacrament. Knolton and his wife having had some difference could not be admitted...[but] the congregation came together again and had the sacrament administered to them by Bro. Schlicht.”² In another case, “Thomas Moor was a crying when he heard there was something in the way concerning his going to the sacrament.”³ But “all the brethren and sisters were permitted to receive the sacrament excepting brothers Sonnis, Hunt, Knight, Watson Gotichallt, Wade and Mrs. Makinsie.”⁴ Yet at that same communion service, “before it began, Bro. Browne, George Moore, Thomas Moore and Mrs. Moore begged pardon of each other and forgave each other and were all much melted. We had a very blessed sacrament.”⁵ Refusal to proceed with Communion could be applied not only to individuals but also to the entire community if it was deemed that they were not ready for the same. Consequently, at a congregational Lovefeast in 1742, “Bro. Spanenberg gave them an account of the work in different parts of the world and told them he thought it would be best to defer the sacrament a few days.”⁶

¹ FLD 2, 13 Oct. 1743.

² FLD 2, 23 Oct. 1743.

³ Ibid.

⁴ FLD 2, 20 Aug. 1743.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ FLD 2, 15 Oct. 1742. Although a specific reason is not cited, it is reasonable to hypothesize that there might have been some tension among members of the Fetter Lane Society and the emerging Fetter

The aim was not to bar persons from the sacrament. Rather it was the goal to have as many persons share in Communion but with the caveat that this was not automatic. When there was full partaking of the sacrament that did not go unnoticed. At one Communion service at Fetter Lane, the diarist was careful to emphasize that “all the members were admitted to the sacrament... the absolution made a deep impression on all, the Lamb was present and melted our hearts very much.”¹ Another time it was celebrated that:

The congregation met together to partake of her Husband’s body and Blood, but first, that nothing might hinder his free communication, Bro. Boehler’s mouth begged absolution not only for what was positively wrong, but even for not having been more Jesus-like and corpse-like...He distributed the blessed repast to the sisters and Bro. Biesser to the brethren and Christel sung during our communion several verses.²

Without doubt, having access to Communion was the most important liturgical act of the Moravian community. It was the marker which indicated that a member had not only been embraced fully within the community but also that one had become one with the Saviour. In the latter part of this chapter we will explore how hymnody was used to prepare and position the community for this most important act of worship.

3.5 The Use of Hymns at Fetter Lane

Sarah Eyerly posits the view that Moravian hymnody, especially during the 18th century, was alchemic in its purpose. In her dissertation she focuses on the practise of hymn singing among the Moravians primarily within the context of the Singing Hour. Throughout her writing, Eyerly has reflected this alchemical attribute

Lane Moravian congregation. The future of the Fetter Lane Society was in jeopardy since the dairy entry for the same day records that “the society should not be continued much longer.”

¹ FLD 2, 11 Dec. 1743.

² FLD 3, 9 Jun. 1749.

of Moravian hymns and maintains that this was the case because “Moravians hymns abound with images designed to sensually transform without mediation by the rational mind.”¹ She argues that the transformational power of the early Moravian hymns was communicated through vibrational and sensual techniques with the aim of fostering what Eyerly describes as a *Blutgemeine* (a blood community). The qualities of Moravian hymnody which she underscores in the Singing Hour can be applied to the other two forms of Moravian worship which I consider in this chapter. Because hymn singing was central to the Lovefeast and the Communion services, then what Eyerly has described of the Singing Hour can also be said of the general use of hymnody in all forms of Moravian worship at Fetter Lane. She proposes that “*Singstunden* as rituals of communal singing, channelled the vibrations of the “divine voice” and marked it as a member of Christ’s *Blutgemeine*.”²

At Fetter Lane, Moravian hymns were alchemic in the purpose too. However, as an emerging congregation in 18th century London, the use of hymns to achieve the transformation of this congregation into a *gemeine* can be noted in three distinct ways. I will now give attention to the three ways in which the utilization of hymns within the worship services would have contributed to the formation of a Moravian *gemeine* at Fetter Lane.

3.5. 1 To Unite German & English Factions

Within the Fetter Lane congregation there were both German and English factions. It cannot be denied that there were instances when there were separate worship services which catered to the members of each group. The diaries record that

¹ Eyerly, Sarah, “*Singing from the Heart*”: *Memorization and Improvisation in an Eighteenth-Century Utopian Community* (Unpublished PhD Doctoral Dissertation: University of California (Davis), 2007), 72.

² Ibid, 70.

“at 7 was the Sabbath’s lovefeast for the English brothers and sisters (because tomorrow it will be for the German) at which were present several of the German Labourers.”¹ It was also noted the German brethren “had a little German conference wherein it was made out that the Germans should have a singing hour, twice a week and that it would be best if we gave them two of our singing hour.”² Arising out of the meeting, it was later decided by consensus “that there shall be 2 Germans singing hours one on Wednesday night the other on Friday night.”³ Six days after the first German conference which had taken this decision, “the German singing hour began this night and is to be continued weekly of this and Wednesday night afterwards.”⁴ With the decision to have two separate Singing Hours, that invariably led to the Singing Hour being in two locations – the Fetter Lane Chapel and a building on Wild Street. “The German had theirs at Wild Street while the English was at the Chapel at Fetter Lane.”⁵

Even though each group had carved out opportunities for its own times of worship, the diaries also reflect a deliberate effort on the part of the community to blend both groups. Those ventures were repeatedly mentioned in the diary entries. What was fascinating was that on such occasions there was not only the meeting of both groups but that was accompanied by singing hymns in both German and English. For example, it was noted that one “evening we had a love feast ... where the German brothers and sisters were also.”⁶ At another Sabbath lovefeast,

Bro. Francke and Worthington sang several side-hole verses, particularly out of the hymn ***We kiss each other in the Side***, and then as at both these

¹ FLD 3, 13 Jan. 1749.

² FLD 2, 24 Sep. 1743.

³ FLD 2, 29 Sep. 1743.

⁴ FLD 2, 30 Sep. 1743.

⁵ FLD 2, 5 Oct. 1743.

⁶ FLD 2, 31 Dec. 1742.

meetings, the German brethren were a part of the assembly, and as it had also usually been the language of the Sabbath love-feast, Br. Boehler concluded with German verses.¹

Obviously, in spite of the cultural differences and language barrier, this blended worship would have contributed to uniting and constructing a single Moravian *gemeine* with a unique English/German blend.

The presence of the English and German Moravians co-existing and worshipping together at the Fetter Lane congregation directly impacted the hymnic performance practise which would have further contributed to uniting both segments.

At another congregational lovefeast there was:

A beautiful composition, almost all in the words of Scripture, concerning our Saviour's retaining after his resurrection the marks of his sufferings, and his everlasting fellowship with his people, was chanted in a heart-affecting manner by Bro. Boehler and Franke alternately, the former singing his part in English and the other in German; to which were added some more hymns on the same subject.²

On occasions when both groups met for a combined Singing Hour there would be the singing of both English and German verses. The records indicate that "Bro. Boehler kept a singing-hour of German and English verses alternately, the company being also mixed."³ So there were Singing Hours which accommodated both sects.

Obviously, there was no difference in perspective among both the German and English elements regarding the theological significance and position of its hymns. Within the Communion service, the entire Moravian community gathered together and so would be singing the same hymns which would have shaped the entire community. It was recorded that at a combined Communion service, "the German and English congregation met in the Chapel, to enjoy the Body and Blood of their eternal

¹ FLD 3, 3 Feb. 1749.

² FLD 3, 27 Mar. 1749.

³ FLD 3, 13 Jan, 1743.

husband. The Ordinary came in after Bro. Boehler had the absolution and sat with Bro. Johannes on one side and sung throughout the whole celebration many verses, particularly those well-known hymns which express and seal the blessed transaction...it was remarkable, that this time there was not one brother or sister sick and unable to come.”¹ That the diarist draws attention to the fact that there was full attendance reflects the sense of satisfaction that was achieved with experiencing the reality of Moravian *gemeine* at Fetter Lane. It is also recorded that at one Communion which had been preceded by a lovefeast “during which some new verses were sung, very suitable to the Lambs Text which Bro. Boehler afterwards spoke upon,” during the distribution of the bread and wine “many heavenly verses both in German and English were sung while it was admonished...at which both the other communicants, and the new ones...were sensible that they had been meeting their husband in truth.”²

3.5.2 To Experience Saving Faith

Having already stated that, according to Zinzendorf, the ultimate goal of the Moravian *gemeine* was to ensure that those who were among their numbers be wholeheartedly joined to Christ, one can view the *gemeine* essentially as a gathering of believers whose lives demonstrated that they had come to personal faith in Jesus Christ. Because this was the core quality of the community, the hymns were aimed at (1) bringing persons to that point of faith and (2) ensuring that this was a permanent position. How then did the hymns in the three services contribute to this aspect of constructing a Moravian *gemeine* at Fetter Lane?

¹ FLD 3, 24 Nov. 1749.

² FLD 3, 12 May 1749.

The lovefeast by its simple structure was utilized as a vehicle to both win those who were lost and to bring back into the fold those souls who had fallen away. The lovefeast was also a doorway by which persons were introduced to Moravian brand of pietism and what it meant to be a part of the *gemeine*. As a result,

Bro. Cennick gave a lovefeast in our hall to several of his acquaintances who had desired to be introduced to the Brethren; they were between 20 – 30, men and women; Bro. Latrobe and Hammond were present as preachers, and some of the Labourers of the several choirs and about the middle of the love feast Bro. Boehler came in. Bro. Cennick first of all told them the intention of the meeting, that as they had found a desire, some for half a year, some for a whole year past or longer, to be acquainted with the Brethren, he had continued this opportunity for it and that these were brethren and sisters whom they might visit, if they chose it and be hearty with them.¹

Although it is not mentioned what hymns were sung, the deduction can be made that the hymns which would have been sung would have been in keeping with the purpose of that particular lovefeast which was evangelistic in nature.

On the other hand, mention is made of a sister who, having once been a part of the community but having gone astray, “begged heartily forgiveness for all her misbehavior and that she did with tears. She gave herself this verse at the Love Feast pg 139 verse 4.”² This overarching sense of contrition which was matched by a heartfelt desire to continue living the life of faith was borne out when “there was a love feast for Mr. Baker on his birthday [who] is very much melted and wants to be a child of God.”³

¹ FLD 3, 7 Sep. 1749. A subsequent entry (20 Sep. 1749) suggests that there were some decisions made to on account of this initial lovefeast. So that at a later lovefeast (on September 20), there was “received into the society 24 men and women who had been Bro. Cennick’s hearers and had some time desired it.”

² FLD 2, 7 Sep. 1743. The words of the hymn verse below clearly demonstrates the deep sense of contrition felt:

*O give me great exceeding Greace, Thou seeth that that I’ve need,
‘Twas for such deep-corrupted hearts, Thou didst so freely bleed;
Yet let me not Thy Grace abuse, And sin because Thou’rt good,
But let thy love fill me with shame, That I have it withstood.*

³ FLD 2, 31 Oct. 1743.

Christian mission was the pulse of the 18th century Moravian Church.

Consequently, one of the features of Moravian worship was interceding for others to also come to saving faith. Such intercessions focused on the work of the Church beyond the local *gemeine*. It is noteworthy that at Fetter Lane, hymns were used as a means of intercession as part of a Singing Hour worship that was observed on a Prayer Day. These verses show that the members of the Fetter Lane community were mindful of similar missionary endeavours elsewhere that sought to bring others to the Saviour. The following entry shows the list of verses sung and for which community. At the Prayer Day they:

Spoke of the churches...here in England very heartily and also of them abroad and sung for everyone a verse: for the Yorkshire church *She by thee chosen was upon a gracious day*; for Lambs Inn *Give to those poor little souls & When Satan at an hour*; for Basingstoke and Sharborn *Thy five dear wounds form wide for*; for Scotland *My God thou seest them flying*. For the heathen: *May God be gracious to us here*...for the whole church we sung: *Congregations Christian relation*. There was a very sweet wind of grace flowing blowing among us, and we were very hearty and happy together.¹

Such an experience would have caused the members of Fetter Lane to see themselves as part of a growing body of Moravian believers who were attached to their communities as they were to theirs. The impact of the use of verses in the Singing Hour in such manner was acknowledged in that at a Singing Hour led by Bro. Neisser, he “begged of the Lamb heartily to send that spirit amongst us to anoint and sweeten the singing hour in our churches abroad.”²

However, bearing in mind that the *gemeine* was also a community whose members were challenged to be accountable to each other, it is noted that the verses sung during the Singing Hour were also geared towards deepening the faith of those

¹ FLD 2, 21 Jan. 1744.

² FLD 2, 4 Jan. 1744.

who were already within the *gemeine*. Accordingly, at Fetter Lane some Singing Hours were not opened to those who were not Moravians. It was noted that “after the church hour, a singing hour is to be at the chapel under the name of a music meeting. Nobody is to come there but the members of the church.”¹ No specific reason is given. On another occasion again it was recorded that “at 7 o clock we had the newly made out Church Singing Hour in our chapel for the first time... We are to have always music in this singing hour and nobody is to be admitted to it but members of our church.”² It is of interest that this event was labelled not just as the Singing Hour, which was the norm, but instead as the ‘Church Singing Hour’.

What was the likely rationale? I am opined that by limiting the Singing Hour to church members only, such occasions provided an avenue to teach more deeply the truths of the faith to those who had been initially drawn close to the Lamb’s side wounds. It was a discipleship tool. Such occasions would ensure that those who were singing the faith as expressed in the hymn verses, also understood the substance of the faith which was captured and expressed in the imagery of the hymn verses. This claim can be substantiated by noting that, “in the singing hour he [Zinzendorf] explained that verse, *There hangs the little creature dear* and recommended to all souls, instead of repentances where good of our own is supposed, the sinner like falling down before & enarmoured clinging fast to the compassionate *Arch-Penitentiary*.”³ On another occasion “during the congregational hour the Ordinary [Zinzendorf] preached in

¹ FLD 2, 17 Dec. 1743.

² FLD 2, 4 Jan. 1744.

³ FLD 3, 26 Jan. 1749.

German which was later translated into English on Christ as Alpha and Omega [and] in the singing-hour was explained the phrase *Cross-air-Bird*.”¹

3.5. 3 To Cause Covenantal Joining with Christ

If there were to be a supreme spiritual position that the members of the *gemeine* were to attain it would be to reach a state of being permanently joined with the Saviour. It bears reiterating that for Zinzendorf it was understood that each member of the community was to be “not separated from him [Christ]” by anything whatsoever in life. It was customary at Fetter Lane that lovefeasts were the main type of worship used to observe birthdays, anniversaries and other commemorative days. Though such occasions would have contributed to the overall construct of the *gemeine*, it was the hymns that were utilized within the Communion and to a lesser extent the Singing Hour which moved members of the community to this most cherished of places – being affixed to the side-wounds of Jesus.

During the mid-18th century, the Fetter Lane community would have benefited from Zinzendorf’s presence in that he would have ensured that the theological and ecclesiastical nuances of the Moravians were put into full effect. Given that the Moravian doctrinal position on Communion maintained the posture of ‘real participation’, the hymns used during the celebration of sacrament were directed at bringing those within the community to experience that ‘real participation’ for themselves. The Communion hymn text would have accomplished this goal by demonstrating two key aspects of the nature of the relationship between the Saviour and the members of the *gemeine*: (1) that of identifying with the side wounds of the

¹ FLD 3, 2 Feb. 1749.

Lamb and (2) relating to Christ as a husband. In both cases the emphasis was on joining oneself totally to Christ in an intimate manner.

Consequently, the taking of the sacrament was not to be done without appreciating the gravity and solemnity of the event. In preaching about the Moravian's position on communion at Fetter Lane, Zinzendorf affirmed that Christ's blood and body provide "strength and nourishment from him as do children do when they suck and that others were often at that time so intimately united to him as to become... flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone and that after souls received such a blessing thereat as to have the fear of death entirely removed."¹

The hymns therefore can be seen as liturgical vehicles with a three-fold intention: (1) enabling the community to encounter the 'real presence' of the Lamb in the Communion service; (2) highlighting the state of the sinner's soul and impressing thereupon the need to confess one's sins and be absolved of them before sharing at the Lord's Table; (3) conveying the believer's joy in becoming one with Christ as husband and the sharing in his side wounds. The format of the Communion service was very similar to the Singing Hour with the addition of the Communion elements of bread and wine. Satisfaction with the hymns fulfilling their purposes can be seen in the diarist comments after a Communion service, "having obtained this, his Body and Blood, his death and life were partaken of by us, according to our wishes and belief expressed in those hymns *Spouse, husband of thy church* and *Thou Death-Sweat mix'd with Blood*."² This is reinforced when at another Communion service, where

¹ FLD 1, 6 Mar. 1743. The following hymn verse was inserted recounting Zinzendorf's sermon:

*Blood of my Saviours wounds how dear
This sound to each believer's ear
Thou God unsearchable thou Lamb once slain
Let all now feel thy blood and health obtain.*

² FLD 3, 30 Jun 1749.

brothers Boehler and Bieser, “after begging absolution from our Husband, both by prayer and those 2 verses *Be present with us, master dear, Live as thou livest and thy flock*....the still and blessed transaction was echoed to from the organ-loft by Br. Benzien with verses between whiles.”¹ In reflecting on how impactful a Communion service was, it was remarked “what a dear corpse and blood operated upon us, was echoed and acknowledged in the meantime by singing suitably *Thou Death-Sweat* and *Hear’st thou Elder*.”²

The following diary entry, though lengthy, paints a vivid picture of a Communion services and further demonstrates the three purposes of the hymn verses sung at Communion:

We had our blessed Lord’s Supper. The brother and sisters came together in the Chappel between 7 and 8 in the morning, and as there were many communicants (near all the German brethren and a great part of the sisters receiving with us) therefore the brethren, except for a few went into the gallery, and the sisters staid below. First Br. Boehler sung the 1st, 2d, 3d, 6th verses of the hymn *Dear Creature whom Immanuel*, and at the Word’s *Arch-Penitentiary Thou!* all got up and kneeled down before our husband, to whom Bro Boehler confessed, that we were indeed his lowing poor hearts thro’ his blood, but yet on account of many defects must bathe his Feet with Magdalentears and beg absolution; which he therefore should grant us with his throughpierced hands, to make us meet to be penetrated thro’ marrow and bone by his holy corpse, which we should now so intimately partake of: Then was sung *Lord Jesus, be thou to us near*, after which all rising, that verse was added, *Where agonizing Blood* under which Br. I Nitschman and his wife bles’d those who received the first time viz. Br. Thenmine, Fowden, Boddington, Sister Prior, Haslip, Grace, Lewis (Br. Lewis the Taylor’s wife). Then the Ordinary, who was above in the Pulpit all the while, began singing (in German) the 1st, 7th & 10th verses of the hymn *Hear’st Thou Elder* (in which last verse, as well as in some others, he hardly sung at all some lines and words, where silence was more expressive) and then the 3 verse of that hymn *Thou Death-sweat mix’d wit Blood*, which was the consecration of the Bread which Br I Nitschmann had in his hands and then he and Br Boehler gave it, the latter to the brethren and the former to the sisters. During the distribution the Ordinary sung, *O that the Saviour’s faithful Bride* and some of the following verses. Then at his singing, *Church, tremble* all fell down together

¹ FLD 3, 19 Feb. 1749.

² FLD 3, 2 Aug. 1749.

on the ground, and there felt and took part in that verse *What does a Bird – when enter – in it will and dare?* And rose again at that, *Brought to the Birth dear creature Thou* and afterwards all being seated, he proceeded, *Who does the cross – air – ointment mix, How is it with the cross-air- eye* etc which suited the case of several eyes there present; then went on to verse 11th & 12th of *Hear'st Thou Elder* subjoining the trumpet-verse, *Then the criminals bones were broke* at which all rose and the two forementione'd brothers went to the table again; then he added the 13th verse, whereupon they poured out the Wine, over which were also pray'd the 2 last verses of *Thou Death-Sweat* while the cup was given to the congregation, he sung several verses, as *But what does the dear marriage heart, Now be glory to the side repeated, What heav'nly harmony and Voices, Singing, yea themselves out of the body* and the most part of the *Te Pleuram*. Also those 2 verses meanwhile so lamblike so side-ward looking at the close of which the communicants kissed one another and under the 8th vers of *Hear'st thou Elder* the following brother and sisters....coming near, received the confirmation kiss. The whole transaction was liturgical.¹

This account reveals clearly how hymns were not an ad hoc component of the Communion service but were carefully woven into the very core and fabric of the sacramental celebration. With each verse sung, members of the *gemeine* were being reminded of their covenantal joining with the Saviour.

But how do we know that the hymns had achieved the intended purpose? I submit that the emotional and associated physical responses to the singing can be seen as indicators that members had grasped the significance and importance of being joined together with Christ. Repeatedly it is noted that members, because of engaging in singing the hymn verses during worship, were overcome with inexplicable joy at being embraced and accepted by the Saviour. For example, at a Singing Hour “The Saviour with the pierced side, who is so desirous to screen and hide us from wrath, was so near to Bro. Hutton that he could scarce speak for weeping.”² It was particularly noted that on one occasion when “Schlicht kept the Singing hour...there

¹ FLD 3, 22 July, 1749.

² PHD, 1 Aug. 1743.

was a wind of grace.”¹ Such emotions were normative for there was a “Mss Fuller [who] received the invitation to the Lord’s Supper with great joy and humility.”²

Referring specifically to the Singing Hour, Yonan affirms that the “goal of the *Singstunden* was to generate a deep impression in the heart of the individual believer, that is, the verses sung were understood to speak directly and objectively to the heart by the Holy Spirit’s leading.”³ That the emotional response to the singing of hymn verses is noted underscores the efficacy of the *Singstunden*. In drawing this conclusion, Yohan reinforces Eyerly’s position that hymn singing, done from the heart among the Moravians, was transformative in nature. The following instruction given to the congregational leaders at Fetter Lane indicate that there was an intentionality on the part of the community leaders to ensure that the manner in which the verses were sung during the Singing Hour would achieve this much desired transformative effect. It was emphasized that “all Singing Hours...should be weighty, especially to all labourers, for there is a particular feeling of the Spirit of the Church in such meetings. All the acts in a congregation should have substance...Spirit and power.”⁴ If we accept that the format of the Communion service was in essence a Singing Hour with the Lord’s Supper then the attitude towards the singing during Communion would be of the same ilk. That is supported by the above references to the responses to singing of hymns during the Communion.

¹ FLD 2, 18 Aug. 1743.

² FLD 2, 19 Aug. 1743.

³ Yohan, 162.

⁴ 1742 Fetter Lane Congregational Register.

3.6 Conclusion

It can be argued that there were other variables that contributed to shape the Moravian *gemeine* at Fetter Lane during the mid-18th century. These included establishing bands and choirs; Elders, Eldresses and other lay leaders; providing communal housing; instituting daily worship as a rule; standardizing a mode of dress; formalizing seating arrangements in worship and, of course, the presence of Count Zinzendorf himself in London during the period under review. However, it was the frequent and regular singing from the heart the hymns of the Moravian Church in the Lovefeasts, Singing Hour and Communion Services which was vital in the making of the *gemeine* at Fetter Lane.

The utilization of hymnody in shaping the Moravian *gemeine* at Fetter Lane was achieved because the community understood, appreciated and implemented the particular Moravian stance on music and hymnody; there were printed hymnals available to enable congregational singing and facilitate memorization of hymns; there were competent musicians and hymn writers who captured and reproduced the theological and musical nuances of Moravian hymnody. Through the regular and repeated singing of hymns at Lovefeasts, Singing Hour and Communion, what would have begun as the Fetter Lane Society would eventually be transformed into the Fetter Lane Moravian *gemeine* – a distinctive community.

Through the singing of Moravian hymns in these three services there resulted “the progressive blessings of a congregational member...from degree to degree.”¹ If then we were to assign degrees, the Lovefeast would be the third, the Singing Hour the second and the Communion as the first. Therefore, it can be deduced that at Fetter

¹ FLD 3, 3 Apr. 1749.

Lane the singing of hymns would have moved persons along in the community from the third degree centripetally until they would have achieved the highest degree, viz. sharing in Communion. The arrival at this much desired faith position was vividly expressed physically and emotionally. Hymn singing was woven into the fabric of all activities within the congregation making each facet of communal experience also a religious experience.

I agree with Eyerly in the conclusion that she reaches regarding the use of hymns specifically within the Singing Hour worship tradition. Eyerly concludes that “those outside the community were transformed in small and private ways, but for those inside the *Blutgemeine*, singing marked those chosen and sealed by the *Lammes-blut*. As they listened to the voices of those around them, this mark was audible as if their foreheads were literally painted with a cross of blood.”¹ However, what has been said regarding the use of hymns within the Singing Hour I am opined can be broadened and applied for the use of hymnody within the Lovefeast and Communion services as a Moravian *gemeine* was being created at Fetter Lane.

The Moravian Church was not officially recognized by the British parliament until 1749, seven years after its official inception in 1742. However, it can be concluded that through the singing of its hymns in Lovefeasts, Singing Hour and Communion services, that at Fetter Lane by the mid-18th century a Moravian *gemeine* was firmly established. Through the use of its hymns, the Moravians were able to unite different factions of the same congregation; cause persons from the outside to come to saving faith in Christ as Saviour and, most importantly, affirm among its members that they have been joined in covenant with Christ as Husband by sharing in

¹ Eyerly, 89 – 90.

his side-wounds. By so doing, hymns did indeed play a key role in creating a Moravian *gemeine* at Fetter Lane.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN EVALUATION OF THE ROLE OF MEMORY AND BODILY GESTURES IN EXPRESSING AND SUSTAINING CONGREGATIONAL IDENTITY AT THE ST. THOMAS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

4.1 Introduction

In seeking to address the general thesis of this study that congregational identities are shaped by what they sing, I deemed it prudent for me to test this by engaging in an ethnographic study of a congregation. The congregation I chose for an ethnographic study was the St. Thomas Assembly of God in St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands.

I chose to study the congregation at St. Thomas Assembly of God¹ for two reasons. First, it is a diverse and growing congregation which started in 1971 with 39 members; forty-two years later it has a membership of approximately 300 members and an average weekly attendance of 200 to 250 persons.² Secondly, I wanted to study a congregation that was not too old and which would still have among its numbers, members who were alive at the beginning of the congregation's existence and so could serve as primary sources of its oral history. Such was the case at the Assembly. This congregation matched that criteria plus is unique as well in that it is the only

¹ Hereafter the congregation will be referred to as the 'Assembly'.

² Although the predominant ethnic composition is of African descent, the diversity among the members is evidenced by the countries of origin from which the members are drawn. Apart from local Virgin Islanders, countries represented among the members include Antigua, St. Kitts, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Continental USA. The diversity is captured by the plurality of places of origin of its members.

Pentecostal Church on the island that is associated with the Assembly of God International.¹

On March 7, 1971, the first official service for the St. Thomas Assembly of God was held with the Rev. Abraham E. Fenton as the founding pastor. Eight years later, in 1979, the congregation was relocated to its current location in the Contant neighbourhood, a residential community on the fringe of the capital city, Charlotte Amalie. Even though the congregation had secured a permanent home, the 1970's saw a transition of pastoral leadership with the resignation of Rev. Fenton in July 1974, and the Rev. Dr. Carlton Williams, who had joined the pastoral team one year prior, was his replacement. Under new leadership, a new sanctuary was built as the Assembly continued to grow.² However, by 1981 there was a split in the congregation which resulted in the sudden departure of Rev. Dr. Williams along with some of the members.³ After a two year void in pastoral leadership, the Rev. George E. Phillips was appointed as the third pastor of the Assembly in 1983. The arrival of Rev. Phillips signalled the rebuilding of the community at the Assembly. Thirty years later, the Rev. Dr. Phillips continues to serve as the pastor of the congregation. Undoubtedly, longevity has its advantages and over the past thirty years, the congregational identity of the Assembly has been guided under his leadership while

¹ I did consider several Pentecostal congregations in my initial search across the island. I eventually decided on this congregation because after making an initial exploratory visit, I realized that it was a community that placed a high premium on music and congregational singing within its worship.

² The steady growth of the membership resulted in there being two services each Sunday and the Sunday School between both services. The areas of ministry opportunities offered by the congregation also expanded and included a prison ministry, television broadcasts and the founding of the Virgin Islands Bible Academy in 1974.

³ Rev. Williams established another congregation that was named Zion Assembly Church.

concurrently witnessing an expansion of the church's ministry in the local community.¹

Sunday morning services, which began at 10:30 AM and ended approximately 12:30 or 1:00 PM followed this pattern:

Praise and Worship
Welcome
Family Celebrations
Offertory
Music Ministry (Choir or Solo)
Sermon
Altar Ministry
Dismissal

Generally, the children are dismissed for Children's Church except for first Sundays when Holy Communion is celebrated. Musically, the congregation's worship is led by a designated worship leader who stands at the lectern/pulpit and who receives vocal support from the members of the praise team.² The instruments used to accompany congregational singing include two keyboards, a complete drum set, two conga drums and a woodwind instrument. All of the words sung by the congregation are projected unto two large screens at the front of the sanctuary.

Having presented a brief historical overview of the congregation and offered some insight into how the worship of the congregation is structured, I will now offer an analysis of the two main variables which emerged from my giving attention to the place of singing vis-à-vis congregational identity. I am opined that these two factors work creatively to sustain the image which the Assembly has created as "*An Oasis of*

¹ Other ministries that have emerged within the congregation include the Missionettes, Royal Rangers, Men's Fellowship, Ushers Ministry, Music ministry, Puppet Ministry, Jubilee Praise and Worship Dance Ministry, and Marriage and Family Life Ministry. Additionally, media outreaches have expanded to include radio and television stations. The sanctuary was completed and later renovated to include an annex which was constructed in 1989 to accommodate the growing numbers.

² The praise team along with the worship leader remain in their place on the platform from the beginning of the service until the sermon begins. They sit in the congregation during the sermon and return to the platform for the singing that takes place after the preaching.

Love and Hope.” The two key components are *memory* and *bodily gestures*. In the following portion of this chapter, I will first consider how image of the congregation as “*An Oasis of Love and Hope*” was conceived and the essential interpretations of this concept as the preeminent embodiment of this local congregational identity. Following that, I explore the issue of *memory* which will address the matter of why what is being sung by the congregation is important in expressing and maintaining their congregational identity. The second element of *bodily gestures* which is addressed in the fourth section raises the question of the importance of particular motions of the body. Since these gestures are depicted while the congregation is singing they cannot be discounted. Instead, they will be examined as pointers which unfold further linkages between hymnody and congregational identity at the Assembly. In the fifth section of this chapter, I will make the case that it is the working together of these factors in a symphonic-like manner that supports the claim of the efficacy of hymnody upon the shaping of congregational identity.

4.2 The Assembly as “*An Oasis of Love and Hope*”

There is no escaping that this congregation has grasped its communal identity as an “*An Oasis of Love and Hope.*” These words are visibly portrayed on the Church’s sign board at the entrance of the property. They are also engraved on the pens given to visitors in the welcome package. Ushers and members greet each other with these words especially as visitors are being welcomed during which time a special welcome song is usually done.¹ The phrase is espoused constantly from the

¹ You are welcomed here, you are loved here
We’re all a part of God’s family.
The table is spread and you know that we care;

pulpit, as the pastor greets the congregation, and is also usually uttered as part of the closing benediction. But, for the members of the Assembly, what is their understanding of this phrase which has been given as their congregational identity? How was it interpreted among the members and pastoral leadership? To what extent can the claim be upheld that through the singing, which the congregation does, that the image and identity of the Assembly is being expressed and sustained?

In considering where this image for the congregation's identity would have originated, through interviews and discussions, I garnered that it was the current pastor who created this phrase for the congregation. According to Pastor Phillips, each congregation must have its own unique '*DNA*' which can be derived from the way in which the congregation functions. Recognizing that congregational '*DNA*' could be designed either intentionally or accidentally, he rationalized that the former was preferable. To that end, he determined that the Assembly must adhere to two fundamental strands of its *DNA* as an "Oasis", providing love and hope. For Phillips, the first strand is reflected in a community that is characterized by social equality and always striving to be "inclusive." Consequently, the primary issue is "not who's in the congregation but what's happening in the congregation."¹ Philips maintains that taking the congregation's *DNA* as a representation of its communal identity, the Assembly is best described as a "community of lovers."² For him therefore, the thermostat by which this principle is measured is how members in the community welcome and embrace not just each other but in particular those who are visitors to

Come on you are welcome; come on you are loved.

Come on you are welcomed in this place.

¹ Transcripts from interview done with Pastor George Phillips on December 1, 2010.

² Ibid.

the “Oasis”. The ultimate goal therefore of the Assembly is to foster a community where people are treated as “valuable beings” and respect is given to all.

According to the pastor, hope, the second strand of the “Oasis” *DNA* is rooted in the pre-eminent place that is given to the preaching of the Word of God. The preached Word is deemed to be a priority in the congregation. For Philips, the hope that is offered at the “Oasis” is not based on the stirring of emotions but by application of the Word. He advocates that one must “let the Word create the emotion, rather than the theatrics.”¹ The *DNA* of the “Oasis” identity as incorporating hope and love is intentionally being created within the Assembly so that “one cannot walk away without feeling a sense of love and the power of the Word.”²

It was evident that this interpretation of the Assembly as *An Oasis of Love and Hope* had been communicated throughout the congregation’s leadership and general membership. According to Pedro Williams, the administrator of the congregation, even though the concept of the community as an “Oasis” did not exist at the inception of the congregation, the ethos of the congregation was “oasis-like” when the congregation was originally founded. Williams maintains that the Assembly as an “Oasis” is germane to the cultural diversity of the congregation where native Virgin islanders, migrants from the islands of the Eastern Caribbean and persons from the Continental USA are all represented. So, in the same way that an “oasis” is a watering hole for different animals in the desert, so too the Assembly is to be understood as a gathering place for all peoples regardless of their ethnic or cultural background. Williams concludes that the Assembly is “*An Oasis of Love and Hope*” because it is a place of respite for many from the “harsh realities” of the living and working

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

conditions in the Virgin Islands.¹ This was especially the case for persons who had emigrated from the other Caribbean islands in search of improved living standards but instead encountered difficulties. Consequently, the congregation as an oasis became a haven, a place where they could find reprieve and spiritual refreshment. Williams understands the “Oasis” identity to be one that expresses “mutual accountability and caring for each other.”²

All the participants in the surveys during the group interviews attested that the Assembly was indeed a community that had become in many ways *An Oasis of Love and Hope* to them. They understood it to be a declaration of the essence of their Christian ministry and what they are called to do and be. This was not merely a label but was a definitive embodiment of the essence of the congregation’s identity. Among the participants in the survey there was the consensus that the image of the oasis precisely communicates the congregation as being a place where one is refreshed in the midst of a dry deserted location. Love and hope, the two tributaries of the oasis, were made evident in several ways. One member recounted being in financial difficulties and receiving assistance from others within the congregation which for her was a practical representation of their identity. Those who were not originally members of the congregation also noted how they were cordially welcomed and accepted into the community. Another member for whom English was not her native language recalled that because she was so embraced by the leadership and membership that she had decided to remain at the Assembly in spite of the language

¹ Transcripts from Interview with Mr. Pedro Williams on October 15, 2010. Williams is considered to be one of the key lay leaders in the congregation and serves in an administrative capacity. He can be described to some degree as an associate lay pastor within the Assembly.

² Ibid.

barriers. The sentiments which had been expressed by both the pastor and administrator were echoed during all of the group interviews.¹

However, the participants in the group interviews expressed that it was in the context of corporate worship where the identity of the congregation as *An Oasis of Love and Hope* became most poignant. It was as they sang together as a community and listened to the Word of God being preached that as a congregation their identity was being realized. Consequently, I will now explore two key elements that emerged in the congregation's singing to determine how in this case congregational identity is being expressed and sustained through corporate hymnody.

4.3 The Place and Function of Memory in Congregational Singing

I wanted to determine from the outset what value, if any, did the members place on what is sung during worship. To that end, I distributed a questionnaire which asked of the members to indicate the five most meaningful hymns/songs. The rationale behind these hymnic choices occupied much of the group discussions which later ensued. It eventually became obvious that *memory* was the predominant factor which informed the choices made. It was striking to note that meaning and significance in the hymns chosen went beyond the texts or even the manner in which the hymns were performed. Rather the root of the matter was the memory associated with what was being sung. But the importance of the hymns or songs was moored to two important variables. First, the *age* of the memory (the hymns which were attached to the older memories had a higher premium); and second the *nature* of the memory

¹ The following interviews were done among the study groups: March 7, 2011 (60 years – 71 years and over); March 8, 2011 (51 years – 60 years); March 22, 2011 (41 years – 50 years); May 3, 2011 (31 years – 40 years); and May 16, 2011 (21 years – 30 years).

(the extent to which it was life transforming). When both variables were equally balanced such hymns acquired an automatic stamp of ‘canonization,’ the excitement of which was clearly demonstrable even as persons recalled both the hymns and the associated memory.

A few examples drawn from the interviews will bear this point out. In one case, a participant noted that the hymn “*Will Your Anchor Hold*” was meaningful because of the memory of being on a fishing expedition as a youth in which the boat’s anchor got caught in the rocks. With deteriorating weather, a tragedy was averted only when the vessel’s captain dived to unhinge the anchor which had been wedged between some rocks. Another participant spoke of the chorus “*Your Grace and Mercy*” as being most meaningful because of a period in life when there was the sudden death of a little girl in the village. That song brought comfort to all who were impacted by the tragedy. In another group interview, one member recounted how meaningful the hymn “*There is a fountain filled with blood*” because it while that hymn was being sung she made a personal commitment to accept Jesus Christ as Saviour. Other participants related their individual memories associated with specific hymns thus highlighting their significance.

But how does the priority of memory as a key informant to congregational singing provide clues as to how this particular activity becomes a shaper of the community’s identity? Though the connection may be a bit obscure, it is my intention to show the correlations. Mary Warnock, in her exploration of memory employs two contrasting terms, *habit memory* and *conscious memory*. The former is to be seen as “skills, responses or modes of behaviour that are learned by human beings, non-human animals and even machines” while the latter is “recalling or recollecting past

experience.”¹ For Warnock, these are not two separate entities but instead can be viewed as a double-sided coin. Though both types of memories were exhibited at the Assembly, I contend that *conscious memory* predominates when these particular hymns or songs are sung. Admittedly, aiming to articulate how individual memory functions during congregational singing or any other worship activity can be a complicated issue in that there are other tangential matters lying beneath the surface.² However, as a representation of Warnock’s *conscious memory*, congregational singing at the Assembly can therefore be deemed as an anamnestic and mnemonic activity. The justification for this claim rests with the notion that congregational singing becomes an avenue through which members keep the memory of past major events alive through recollection.

This assessment of congregational singing raises further issues which also emerged in the group discussions at the Assembly. As an anamnestic and mnemonic action related to one’s memory congregational singing can depict one of two potential realities. Firstly, on the positive side, when hymns that are deemed meaningful and have strong associations with the individual’s memory are regularly sung, there is a buttressing of one’s memory. Conversely, when hymns that carry significance and meaning because of memories attached are either altogether removed from the congregation’s repertoire or not sung on a regular basis, then there is the erosion of

¹Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead (Eds.) *Theories of Memory: A Reader*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 3. This volume offers a comprehensive view of differing perspectives on memory beginning with the classical period and working through to contemporary issues. It offers to the uninitiated a sample of the most recognized contributors to the issue of memory.

² See Martin Stringer’s *Perception of Worship* in which he underscores how the stories of the hymns being sung overlap with Biblical stories and can contribute in helping individuals to better evaluate and understand their own faith. He hints at how memory is being worked in worship by underscoring that “hymns in this context almost become stories in themselves, or at least triggers for the recalling of stories.” (104)

vital individual and collective memory. That became very evident in the group discussions at the Assembly. The study revealed the existence of an underlying and on-going tension surrounding the selection of hymns for congregational consumption. Though there was the recognition by the worship leaders that achieving and maintaining equilibrium in the selection of hymns and songs was a priority, participants 50 years and over were opined that there was insufficient usage of hymns that had significant associations with memory that made them meaningful. Such void led those who were affected to see their position in worship as “disconnected”, “alienated”, “out of place”. Though they were not altogether antagonistic to modern hymnody or contemporary choruses, I realized that to infer that their predilection towards the older hymns was rooted in nostalgia would be an oversimplification of the issue.

Is there a likely rationale for this posture among the elderly participants towards the preservation of particular hymns which were tagged to aspects of their memory? Halbwach espouses the theory that generally speaking, “society, by giving old people the function of preserving the traces of its past, encourages them to devote whatever spiritual energy they may still possess to the act of recollection.”¹ For this constituency grouping, congregational singing then is the means whereby there is the recollecting of specific individual memories. As a result, in some way the hymnody that is a part of the congregation’s worship can be appropriately described as *conscious* memory. One consequence of this posture is that it leads to a tendency to believe that what was in the past is far more interesting than the present. A possible adverse outcome is that the creation of “the cult of the past, [where] far from binding

¹ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 48.

the hearts of people to society, [it] in fact detaches them.”¹ Clearly such sentiments were present at the Assembly. The strong desire to retain certain hymns voiced a yearning to more importantly preserve memory because there was the recognition that by so doing, “a sense of...identity is perpetuated.”²

Among the younger participants, on the other hand, manifestations of *habit* memory were more dominant than *conscious* memory. Participants within the 20 – 40 age categories primarily identified contemporary hymnody and worship choruses as their most meaningful and valued songs/hymns choices.³ Among this grouping there was the general perception that the inclusion of older hymns was primarily for the satisfaction of the older members.⁴ The preservation of hymnic memory was not the central issue for the younger participants in the study. Instead it was giving attention to the performance practise of repertoire in which there was a bias towards worship choruses. By giving priority to *habit* memory, the continued expansion of the congregation’s singing repertoire to incorporate newer worship songs was emphasized more among the younger participants than reinforcement of hymnic memory as captured in the use of the older hymns.

In a congregation where there is a diverse attitude to congregational singing and where two aspects of memory are at play, what stance is taken in the Assembly regarding its hymnic content? There exists what can be best described as “balanced

¹ Ibid, 51.

² Ibid, 47.

³ Ironically, among the younger participants whose early Christian nurturing occurred within a denomination where traditional hymnody was the staple for worship, some of the older traditional hymns were listed among what was most meaningful for them.

⁴ Though there was the recognition that the old hymns were vitally important for the more senior members of the community, the rationale for their preference was based on nostalgia. It became evident to me the younger members of the congregation, many of whom also were part of the worship team, were unaware of the valuable memories which were attached to these older hymns thereby making them meaningful to the older generation.

singing”. How is this related to memory? There are three pillars upon which this argument is based. First, “balanced singing” points to the fact that the singing repertoire at the Assembly is inclusive of both old hymns as well as newer contemporary songs. Second, as a result, all of the generations which form part of the congregation will find components within the worship to which they can connect whether it is through *habit* or *conscious* memory at work. Third, a corollary of the first two components, “balanced singing” in the Assembly opens up the discussion to incorporate features of collective memory at work. This would be a mute issue if the focus of the study was on how music shapes an individual. But such is not the case. This study is aimed at the singing associated to communal identity and consequently another aspect of the “balance” which has to be analysed is that between individual and collective memory. It is when “balanced singing” is achieved that hymnic choices, made on behalf of the whole, feeds into the individual memories whether they be of the *habit* or *conscious* type.

The emphasis thus far has been on the impact of congregational singing on individual memory, which has been shown to be etched in the associations between the hymns and the individual experiences of members. But to focus exclusively on individual memory would be to offer a lopsided analysis. Bearing in mind that there is a continuum between individual and collective memory, what then should be identified as the key factors which are central to the question of how the latter shape the Assembly’s identity? If individual memory was operational at the level of members’ association between the hymns and their stories, what could one identify as the embodiment of the collective memory of the congregation? I contend that collective memory is as actively involved in shaping the identity of the Assembly and

that the evidence of this is reflected in the existence of the congregation's electronic hymnal. I will argue that in moving from using the established denominational printed hymnals to a non-printed source of their own making, this became a reservoir of the congregation's collective memory. Because this electronic hymnal currently serves as the primary hymnic source for the congregation, then whenever it is utilized there is a concerted effort to achieve "balanced singing" since it is the source for both old and new hymnic repertoire. Consequently, it becomes a symbol of the "Oasis" which nurtures both the individual and collective hymnic memory of congregational singing.

Having earlier considered two key components of individual memory, what are the major variables of collective memory which could be applied to congregational singing within the Assembly? Though features of individual and collective memory intersect, one of the key differences is the matter of the location of collective memory. Individual memory is situated within the individuals themselves. However, collective memory, by its very nature must be situated or located in an event or entity that is embraced and accepted by the community. That is not always clearly perceptible because "collective memory...is not a given but rather a socially constructed notion. Nor is it some mystical group mind."¹ In considering how collective memory functions, it must be stressed that there are "individuals who remember, not groups or institutions...[and] these individuals, being located in a specific group context, draw on that context to remember or recreate the past."² Within the Assembly it is the electronic hymnal which serves as the collective memory bank, per se, in sustaining both the individual and communal memory of the

¹ Halbwachs, 22.

² Ibid.

congregation. It therefore stands as an essential component in assessing how this congregation is being shaped by what it sings.

But how did this electronic database emerge as such an all-important source within the Assembly? Since its inception the Assembly has used two printed hymnals. The first and second were published by the international denominational headquarters of the Assemblies of God (USA). The use of these official denominational hymnals can be seen as a concerted effort on the part of the founding leaders to ensure that the hymnic content of the congregation represented what was deemed to be consistent with the denomination's standards. Both of these hymnals represented the authoritative stance of the theology and ecclesiology of the broader Assemblies of God community.¹ Their use was a means to ensure that denominational orthodoxy was subscribed to especially in the initial years.

The recognition of the efficacy and the role of hymnals as a source of collective memory was evident even in the compilation of the denominational hymnals. For example, in *Melodies of Praise*, the first hymnal, it is stated that one of the objectives of the hymnal was “to produce an ideal, all purpose songbook [where] there are enough of the old songs to make the book rich in memory; enough of the newer songs to make it fresh and up to date. The selection of the songs is carefully divided to give good balance and to provide adequate numbers of all occasions.”² By the late 1970's the congregation began using a second denominational hymnal, *Hymns of Glorious Praise*. Though larger than its predecessor, this new hymnal reinforced the historical Pentecostal Assembly of God hymnic orthodoxy and underscored the

¹ The first hymnal was *Melodies of Praise* (Gospel Publishing House. Springfield: Missouri, 1957). It contains 341 entries. The second hymnal was *Hymns of Glorious Praise* (Gospel Publishing House. Springfield: Missouri, 1969). It contains 504 entries and an additional 57 selections of compiled Scripture Readings which addresses aspects of Christian doctrine.

² *Melodies of Praise*, i.

importance of utilizing songs that encouraged collective memory. As official denominational hymnals, the content reflected the singing emphases of the Assembly of God hymnody which incorporated “holiness songs, gospel music, and Charles Wesley’s majestic descriptions of Christian experience.”¹

The use and acceptance of both denominational hymnals would have contributed to the construct of the notion of the hymnals being a site where collective memory could be located. In addition to possessing their personal Bible, the other book which members brought to the worship was their hymnals. The owning of hymnals by each member would have made the hymnal and by extension congregational singing a unifying force within the community, thereby furthering the claim that the hymnals are a point of reference around which collective memory is built. The printed hymnals were a means of social construction in that they were held in common across the spectrum of the congregation. Both the older and younger members spoke in terms of endearment about their hymnals.² So the cohesion that is integral to collective memory in this context was pinned originally to the printed hymnals.

If at the Assembly, collective memory is bound to the congregation’s hymnal, would a change in format of hymnal have a direct correlation with the state of the Assembly’s collective memory?³ By drawing upon hymns and songs from its own hymnals as well as other sources to build its electronic hymnal database, the

¹ Edith L. Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture*. (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 92.

² As part of my ethnographic study I borrowed copies of both hymnals. One member was quick to urge to care for it because it was a prized possession.

³ The shift started in the 1980’s when the congregation initiated the use of transparencies to project the words of hymns and songs for congregational singing. This would have allowed for hymns that were not included in either of the hymnals to be incorporated in the congregational hymnic repertoire. Eventually that system was upgraded to the current multi-media system.

Assembly, in essence was creating its own hymnody. Unlike the previous denominational hymnals, there was no central committee to determine the content of this electronic hymnal. It can be said that the members of the Assembly themselves by virtue of what they chose to sing and the frequency thereof made the determination about what was to be included or for that matter excluded. Furthermore, whereas the previous hymnals were published completed texts, the electronic hymnal is structured in a format that allows it to be expanded continuously. Collective memory could not be unaffected by this paradigm shift.

Therefore, I propose that the congregation's collective memory was impacted in three ways. Firstly, the shift to an electronic hymnal would have benefitted the collective memory by broadening the choices of hymns and songs being offered through the expansion of the hymnic repertoire. The rationale is that with more options other than what would have been contained in the printed hymnals, there would be a greater deposit of different hymns into the collective memory bank of the congregation. Ideally, this would not mean less singing but more. The increased number of hymns translates into wider hymnic options since the amount of entries in the electronic database hymnal far exceeded the number of entries in each printed hymnal.¹

The compilation of its own electronic hymnal allowed the congregation to choose its own hymnic repertoire by determining what hymns/songs it would retain from the previous hymnals while also making choices about new material. By this, the

¹ I was granted access to the entries in the electronic data. Although not as organized as a published hymnal, the Assembly "Database Song List" indicated that there were 805 songs in the system. The list was divided in two sections. The first reflected both hymns and choruses with an emphasis on the choruses. Although the second section also contained both hymns and choruses, the majority of the entries were traditional and Gospel hymnody which were alphabetical order. There entries in the first section were not alphabetized. In both sections there was an attempt to also list the hymn/song authors. However that was not done for every entry.

congregation was exercising its power to determine what it would or would not sing. Clearly the choices made reflected those hymns and songs which had acquired a high currency in the collective memory of the congregation. The retention of the old hymns within the electronic hymnal can be seen as offering a stability of memory especially “in a postmodern, pluralistic, fragmented world, [where] many believers acknowledge the need for memory in Christian life and song.” Memory, whether individual or collective, “guides us and offers meaning that connects us to the past, relates to the present, and prepares us for the future.”¹ At the same time, the inclusion of contemporary hymns and songs underscores the willingness on the part of the Assembly to continually expand its collective memory. By so doing conscious and habit memory were given attention.

Whereas the two printed hymnals would have been embraced as denominational canonized sources, in creating its own electronic hymnal, the Assembly had created its own canon of Christian songs. For a group of people to keep alive their collective memory, then there must be some consensus or agreement about what is to be considered central to the group’s identity. That which is agreed upon is then canonized by the community. Don Quantz explicates that the two key principles in the process of canonization – stability and adaptability – though usually applied to the discussions on the Bible, are applicable to understanding the issues which emerge in congregational singing. The former speaks to maintaining the old hymns while the latter addresses the on-going effort to include contemporary hymns and songs. By creating its own hymnic canon, the congregation at the Assembly was given “survival power...helping them to maintain their identity and values within a mix of competing

¹ Don Quantz, “Canons in Collision: Hymns and Contemporary Church Music”, *Liturgy* 24:4 (2009), 35.

voices, cultures and narratives.”¹ Through its “balanced singing” the community at the Assembly has reflected both stability and adaptability of its individual and collective hymnic memory.

Secondly, the utilization of an electronic hymnal meant that members no longer brought their own personal hymnals to worship. Based on the premise that the hymnal is the location of the Assembly’s collective memory, would this absence and paradigm shift though be a contributing factor to causing the congregation to forget? And because individual memory is a subset of the collective memory, does the removal of the physical hymnal means the lessening or the loss of the individual memory associated with the hymns? What are the consequences that have been noted with the removal of the printed hymnal and the associated exclusion of particular hymns from the electronic hymnal? It depends to whom the matter is addressed. The older participants especially perceived this move as a threat to their “stability of memory” and mourned that certain hymns which anchored them to the worship community were being forgotten because of their non-usage even though they have been added to the electronic hymnal.

I have already established that hymn singing is an anamnestic activity. Furthermore, the corporate memory of the community is nurtured through repetition. However, possessing the hymnal only in an electronic format limits repetition and confines it only to public worship when the words are projected. The introduction of the electronic hymnal, therefore, represents a displacing of a tangible (hymn book) and replacing it with an intangible (electronic hymnal). Those for whom collective memory building was grounded in having a hymnal in their hands would have had to

¹Ibid, 35 - 36.

recalibrate their approach and understanding of the priority of not having a hymnal in hand. There are portions of the Assembly who, when the desire to sing outside of the time frame of public worship is stirred, revert to using their personal copies of the hymnals because they are readily accessible unlike the electronic copy.¹ Clearly accessibility to the old hymns reinforces “stability of memory”, thereby supporting the proposition that memory is buttressed by what is printed and can be readily repeated. Because the “focus has been on the final written form (stability)...[not] the process of development (adaptability),”² some participants still cling to the old printed hymnals as their source for collective memory instead of the electronic hymnal. In this case, the written form of the old hymns still carries tremendous influence in shaping the community’s corporate memory. The value of what has been canonized in the electronic hymnal is highly rated only in so far as it mirrors and closely reflects previous printed hymnals and by so doing contributes to the reconstruction of past memories.

It is precisely for this reason that the shift to an intangible electronic hymnal can be viewed by some within the congregation as a threat to memory loss. The printed hymnals represented a tangible frame of reference by which hymnic memory was created. With its removal and with the mindset that what is printed carries greater weight than what is not, the response of the elderly in the congregation can be better understood and appreciated. Halbwach’s perspective on collective memory again proves insightful in elucidating this point. He maintains that:

¹ In all of the study groups, members commented that they still had copies of the printed hymnals at home. There were some of the older members who brought their hymnals with them to the group meetings. In some cases, these members could recall not only the words of certain hymns from memory, but also knew the number of those hymns in the book.

² Quantz, 33.

We can remember only on condition of retrieving the position of past events that interest us from the frameworks of collective memory. A recollection is the richer when it reappears at the junction of a great number of these frameworks, which in effect intersect each other and overlap in part. Forgetting is explained by the disappearance of these frameworks or a part of them, either because our attention is no longer able to focus on them or because it is focused somewhere else....but forgetting, or the deformation of certain recollections, is also explained by the fact that these frameworks change from one period to another. Depending on its circumstances and point in time, society represents the past to itself in different ways: it modifies its conventions. As every one of its member accepts these conventions, they inflect their recollections in the same direction in which collective memory evolves.¹

When we consider the printed hymnals as frameworks then it can be seen how their removal and replacement by the electronic hymnal is in essence a shift in framework. Those for whom their hymnic memory is still attached to the printed hymnal would need to embrace the electronic hymnal as a new hymnic framework as a means of keeping the collective memory alive.

Thirdly, by making the shift from a tangible printed hymnal to an intangible electronic database hymnal, there was a commensurate shift in what can be labelled as the collective memory grid of the Assembly. Traditionally, the congregation has always had individuals leading its worship through singing. The transition from ‘song service leaders’ to ‘praise teams’ would have coincided with the shift from printed hymnal to the electronic source. In the former case, both the ‘song service leader’ and the singing community had mutual access to the hymn texts in the printed hymnals. However, in the latter case, that is not the situation and instead the singing community has to wait for the words to appear on the screen. As a result, the congregation as it sings, is fully dependent on the leader of the praise team to first indicate not only what is to be sung, but also which verses.

¹ Halbwachs, 172 – 173.

By virtue of the fact that the members of the congregation do not have immediate access to these words, then congregational singing can be limiting by being based entirely upon the discretion of the worship leader. Consequently, the recollection of collective memory too is limited in that the worship leader may choose to sing only one verse or part of the song. What is to say that the portion of the hymns which has been omitted may also be that which is deemed to be the most significant in keeping individual and collective memory alive? As a result, the pulse and expanse of the collective memory rests completely on the choices which are made by the leader of the praise team. This new trend in congregational singing has resulted in the reconfiguration of how the individual and collective dynamics operate as they govern the community's singing. Though singing has remained central to the congregation's understanding of its self as a community, with the shift to using the electronic hymnal, the hymnic memory grid of the community is trending more towards the individual memory superseding the collective memory. The congregation may be singing the hymns or songs that are stored in the memory of the worship leader who determines what is to be sung. In the final analysis, the absence of the printed hymnal has resulted in the removal of the hymnal itself as a major component in the congregation's memory source.

However, there is a solution to balance this trend and to ensure that the foundations of the collective memory of the Assembly are not fully eroded. Paul Connerton has suggested that the mutual sharing of autobiographical anecdotes can result in strengthening the community's collective memory. He asserts that "we all come to know each other by asking for accounts, by giving accounts, by believing or

disbelieving stories about each other's pasts and identities."¹ It is imperative therefore that every attempt be made on the part of those who lead congregational singing to have a greater knowledge of the hymnic sources that preceded the electronic hymnal. According to Connerton, the hymnic memory grid can be broadened beyond measure and best maintained when both worship leaders and members are opened to hearing each other's stories. That will fortify the collective memory of the community and further contribute to the goal of achieving 'balanced singing' within the congregation. The end result is two-fold, the preservation of memory and the discovery of the same.

What are some of the likely consequences if that factor is neglected? Peter Atkins in exploring the interconnections between memory and liturgy highlights the importance of sustaining corporate memory and how this is related to both collective and individual identity. His analysis offers further insights to our assessment of how corporate identity is sustained at the Assembly through their singing. Holding to the premise that "corporate memory is essential to our sense of identity,"² Atkins stresses that there is value in repetition. When hymns that have been embedded with the collective memory of a congregation are taken out or become more infrequent in worship then there is the associated risk of weakening of that collective memory.

¹Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989), 20. Using the French Revolution as his primary point of reference, Connerton shows how social memory is constructed through commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices. He mentions three classes of memory – personal, cognitive and 'habit-memory'. He pays particular attention to the last of these since it supports his hypothesis that social memory is based on the observance of commemorative ceremonies which are by nature performative. It is in this aspect of performativity that 'habit-memory' that the actions of the body become important. His most recent book seeks to respond to how quickly modern day society through its attitudes and actions is forgetting. See *How Modernity Forgets* by Paul Connerton, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²Peter Atkins, *Memory and Liturgy: The Place of Memory in the Composition and Practice of Liturgy*. (Hants: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2004), 74.

When “the corporate memory of a community begins to fade” then the “sense of belonging weakens”¹ concomitantly.

Atkins maintains that the sustaining of community identity requires the retaining of collective memory which is attained not only through repetition but by also ensuring that there is a sense of significance attached to what is being repeated. Clearly at the Assembly, the significance of many of the hymns that were noted by the participants is measured in the associated memories. This is in keeping with the position which Atkins advances in his postulation that

When music is added to the words of a hymn...the impact is even more profound. The memory weaves words and music together and links them with experiences of God’s comfort, strength and grace. The repetition of such hymns on a variety of occasions, linked to key life events, inserts those feelings deeper and deeper in the memory.²

In addition to that of memory, the other key factor by which the communal congregational identity of the Assembly can be evaluated is the exploration of bodily gestures associated with congregational singing.

4.4 Interpreting Bodily Gestures

In developing my argument that within the Assembly congregational singing is generative of congregational identity, I have established thus far that memory is the main factor to be considered in this dialogue. Part of that argument is the notion that congregational singing at the Assembly can be labelled as both an anamnestic and mnemonic activity. But what evidence was there to differentiate and categorize both sets of hymns since on the surface, there were no obvious differences in the singing between the hymns and songs that possessed specific anamnestic qualities and those

¹ Ibid, 72.

² Ibid, 122.

which did not? Yet the critical question was: How was one to determine when the content of congregational singing has made that connection between the hymn itself and the reliving and recalling of memory?

Memory is not ethereal, meaning that it needs a body to be fully functional. It is living persons who remember. But whereas the sources of individual memory are indefinite, in the case of collective memory, there are identifiable influential sources which have been mutually agreed upon and accepted. However, because the source of collective memory usually lies outside of the physical body, it can be deduced that the potency of memory is preserved when the physical body is engaged. By observing, therefore, the members' bodily response while singing, that could potentially provide some insight into how collective memory operates. It must be noted that it is through the body that habit memory is most vividly expressed. Once the singing of the hymn is ignited by *conscious memory*; then *habit-memory* does, with the body, what the body has habitually done while that hymn or song is being performed. One feeds off the other. The key to drawing associations between congregational singing and hymn singing as being anamnestic and mnemonic would be to analyse "bodily automatisms"¹ and to see these as barometers which measure whether or not a hymn is being sung from a memory-base.

I have already pinpointed the effects of the shift from using a printed hymnal to the electronic database and its impact on the Assembly's collective memory. However, this shift to the intangible electronic hymnal also directly impacted the bodily gestures in that it allowed for more engagement of the body as an expression of worship during singing. With the removal of the printed hymnal, congregational

¹ Connerton, 5.

singing became a 'hands-free' activity. Consequently, the congregation was motivated to employ the rest of their bodies in worship as they sang. The freedom achieved from no longer having a printed hymnal translated into making the congregation more mobile while singing.

Consequently, at the Assembly, congregational singing encompasses and engages the entire body. Some of the most notable bodily gestures included: (1) the raising of one or both hands and the clapping of hands to the rhythm of the music; (2) a spontaneous outburst of applause which is not merely the response towards human activity but more importantly directed towards God; (3) the closure of one's eyes which was usually coupled with raised hands; (4) the swaying of the body either from side to side or to and fro not necessarily in rhythm with the music and (5) dancing either in their places or within the aisle of the sanctuary. Not all of the songs were responded to with exactly the same physical motions. Over time it became apparent that the particular gesticulation was an indication of (1) how well the song was known, (2) the tempo of the hymn or (3) the mood which was created by the music.

However, there was one gesture that stood out as being an aberration to the above list. Because of its peculiarity it serves as a signal which declares to the rest of the congregation that the song being sung at the time the gesture is being performed is one that conveys deeper meanings in the worship. The following field notes entry which was taken during my first visit to the congregation elucidates this point:

The hymn *Will Your Anchor Hold* was announced to be sung. However when it first started the tempo was too fast. The pastor stopped the singing recognizing that the tempo was not working. The musicians restarted at a slower tempo using a vintage calypso rhythm. The congregation readily embraced this slower groovy tempo. Without any hesitation, two elderly ladies who were sitting at the front of the sanctuary started dancing, making their way down the centre aisle. Their dance motion kept apace with the music. They were singing lustily as they made their way down the aisle with banners

in their hands. I wondered why they waited until this hymn started to leave from their seats even though there were other hymns and songs which the congregation had been singing. When the hymn was finished they went back to their seats at the front of the sanctuary. It struck me that no one in the congregation seemed to be distracted by their actions.¹

Although this action is an anomaly to the other bodily expression, it was embraced by the congregation and attention was never drawn to the flag waving women as they danced around the sanctuary.² It had evidently been incorporated into part of the liturgical bodily gestures within the community.

What more can be made of the banner-waving women's bodily gestures? On the surface their actions can be deemed as simply an individual response to a particular hymn or song. However, I opined that these gestures point to a more profound reality. During the group discussions, it was underscored that the primary task of the worship leader in the Assembly was to move congregation figuratively from "the outer court to the inner court."³ That was the consensus even among those who were designated as worship leaders. I contend that the action of these worshippers is a reflection and indication of a spiritual movement that is taking place during worship so that the waving of the banners throughout the sanctuary is a signal which confirms a move towards a more intimate and potent worship encounter. By their actions, a figurative ideal is being tangibly represented to all in the Assembly. The gestures affirm that congregational singing is achieving this lofty expectation.

¹ Taken from Field Notes visit (March 21, 2010).

² During the field work I catalogued whenever either or both of these women danced down the aisle with banners in hand. I noted that their movement coincided with the singing of many of the old hymns that would have been included in the hymnals. Though they continued to worship exuberantly during the singing of choruses, this particular gesture only occurred when traditional Gospel hymns were being sung.

³ This was the expression that was voiced by one of the founding members. It encapsulates the anticipated movement that is to be expected during worship and is a reference to the Old Testament structure of Solomon's Temple. According to 1 Kings 6:6 there was an Inner Court which was also referred to as the Court of the Priests. That was separated from the Greater (outer) Court where people gathered for worship (cf. 2 Chron. 4:9 to Jer. 19:14; 26:2).

What can be made of the use of the body and its unscripted response within the framework of worship specifically as a result of congregational singing? Specifically, how should bodily gestures be interpreted, especially those which can be described as spontaneous and unrehearsed, that emerge specifically during congregational singing? What messages do these gestures send to the rest of the congregation? Through what interpretive lenses are these gestures viewed? What are these gestures a response to? Are they to be viewed primarily as revelation of the ‘Other’ or are these gestures triggered because of the memories which are associated with the particular hymns that come with them?

If we view their actions through the perspective offered by Connerton, then it can be argued that both women’s actions have assumed a *canonic* authority the same way that the printed hymnals did. Connerton describes how bodily practices reflect performativity in rituals associated with commemorative ceremonies through what he terms as “inscribing practices” and “incorporating practices.”¹ Both can be attributed as mnemonic devices. However, Connerton suggests that the former is more durable than the latter though they are valuable aids to memory. The rationale is that “incorporating practices” are “largely traceless and that, as such, they are incapable of providing a means by which any evidence of a will to be remembered can be ‘left behind’.”² On the other hand, “inscribing practices” are deemed to be “the privileged form for the transmission of a society’s memories, and we see the diffusion and elaboration of a society’s systems of inscription as making possible an exponential development of its capacity to remember.”³

¹ Connerton, 102 – 103.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Which of these is a more apropos application to the bodily gestures and their impact on the community's memory? I am opined that, because of the regularity with which they engage in this bodily gesture, that each time the women move up and down the aisle with banners waving that they are in essence inscribing on the collective memory of the congregation. Their movement underscores that what is assumed and expected within the Assembly is that the singing that is done during worship ought to facilitate a specific spiritual journey. If their gestures communicate that the journey to the inner court is unfolding, can it be deduced that when they do not move, they are then inscribing to the rest of the Assembly that the singing in worship has fallen below expectations? That may be somewhat of a presumption since the bodily actions are not prescribed and formalized but rather the result of individuals choosing to express a specific gesture.

However, it must be borne in mind that these actions have been a part of the Assembly's worship for years. This, coupled with the fact that these two individuals are vested with a degree of authority by virtue of their position in the Assembly, have attributed their movements with what can be best described as a 'sacramental-like' gait. Their bodily gestures support the position that the use of the body and its potency within the liturgical framework potentially "establish[es] communication and identity within a group."¹ But effective communication requires the meeting of meanings. Consequently, the meaning that the two women ascribe to their gestures must intersect with that which is present in the singing community. For sure, there is a commonality of meanings associated with these bodily gestures and their inscribing characteristics on the wider Assembly have been attained. One worship leader

¹ Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language: Introduction to Christian Worship: An African Orientation*. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 5.

expressed it best when he confessed that “when I see them move down the aisle with their banners then I know that I’ve got it right.”¹

The Assembly is a worshipping community which recognizes the value of the body in worship generally and embraces spontaneous bodily responses as normative. The bodily gestures though of these two women stand out among the myriad of gestures by which the congregation expresses itself during worship. Therefore, their dance within the Assembly reveals how bodily expression within a community can become *canonic*. Seen as a ritual activity, these gestures convey to the rest of the Assembly that congregational singing, especially of the older hymns, keeps the collective memory of the community alive. By the same token, their gestures also highlight the importance of particular hymns when associated with individual memory can trigger bodily gestures as well. Fundamentally, bodily gestures in the Assembly are highly valued for two reasons. First, they signal that the singing with which the gestures are associated is facilitating a spiritual movement in worship. Second, an examination of bodily gestures indicates that there is an overlap between gestures and individual and collective memory. I will now consider how memory and bodily gestures collaborate with the congregation to both express and sustain the identity which the Assembly has taken unto itself, which is “*An Oasis of Love and Hope*”.

4.5 Hymnody as Expressing and Sustaining Congregational Identity

Emerging from the data gathered during the interviews, it became evident that among the members there were two main elements which for them are critical to their congregational identity. They shared that their identity as an “Oasis” rested in (1) the

¹ Transcript of interview done with members of the praise team on March 4, 2011.

efficacy and positive influence of the preaching that is offered by Pastor Philips and (2) the intensity of the singing during worship and the freedom to express oneself wholeheartedly during worship. This underscores and supports the earlier argument that was made in the discussion on understanding the congregation's identity. In grappling with the question then of congregational identity and hymnody in this context I could not overlook the primacy of these two variables within the Assembly, viz. (1) the worship¹ (singing) and (2) the Word (preaching). Wyatt Tee Walker has identified three supporting systems as being operational in black worship which are "preaching, praying and singing."² In assessing the place of music and in particular singing in black worship, he maintains that because "music is an integral part of the liturgical mode of worship in the black religious experience... [then] a people's faith-music is a mirror of their sociology."³ Walker's comments can be rephrased in this instance to suggest that congregational singing (faith-music) provides some insights into identity (sociology). Since the emphasis of this study is on hymnody, I also observed the use of congregational hymnody by the pastor before, during and after his preaching.

Being careful to note every instance in which the congregation was singing within the Assembly as they worshipped, I contend that of the two major sources mentioned above, the identity of Assembly as "*An Oasis of Love and Hope*", is predominantly expressed and sustained through congregational singing above the preaching. However, I hasten to add that the influence of the pastor, especially his

¹ I use the term worship not only to reference the 30 or more minutes that are spent singing hymns and choruses at the start of worship but as a means of referring to the entire liturgical act of worship. In that sense it is an expansive and inclusive use of the word.

² Wyatt Tee Walker, "The Soul of Black Worship" in *The Landscape of Praise: Readings in Liturgical Renewal*, ed. Blair Gilmer Meeks (Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1996), 54.

³ Ibid, 59.

manner of preaching undoubtedly permeates as well the entire fabric of the congregational identity. How do I account for the choice between them both? There are three reasons which can be offered to support the argument that congregational singing was the more dominant factor in expressing and sustaining the congregational identity within the Assembly.

First, congregational singing is used to help the congregation to enter more fully into the worship experience and also as a buttress to the preaching of the Word. At the Assembly, the pastoral leadership has repeatedly made the most of congregational singing in two most notable periods during worship. Firstly, during the earlier part of the worship service after the worship leader and praise team have completed their assigned hymns and songs for the day, it was not uncommon for the pastor to continue leading the congregational singing. This would often serve as a prelude to his opening pastoral prayer. There were occasions in which he would continue with the same song that the praise team had just concluded. However, in many instances he would move to another hymn.¹ As an observer, it would appear that his choice was informed by his assessment of whether or not the congregation had reached the level of intensity that was achieved through the singing done by the worship leader and the praise team. Once his litmus test indicated that the spiritual atmosphere of the congregation was not achieved, the pastor utilized singing to attain readiness.

The second juncture of the service when hymns and songs were deliberately utilized by the pastor occurred after the sermon. All sermons were followed by

¹ During the course of the field work, Pastor Philips hymn of choice whenever he was leading the congregation in worship especially at the start of worship was "*How Great Thou Art*". Once this hymn was sung the congregation would respond immediately with overwhelming enthusiasm. As he led in the singing, he would often repeat the refrain and in particular the last line which emphasized the greatness of God.

congregational singing. Whereas the worship leader chose the songs and hymns at the beginning of the worship service, those that were chosen after the sermon were solely the result of the pastor's doing. However, there were times when he would continue singing what the musicians might have started to play. The primary task of the singing that occurred at this point was to assist the congregation to respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit based on the sermon.

The pastoral leadership at the Assembly understands the centrality of congregational singing and that it influences the vibrancy of worship. The pastor has strong opinions about how singing should be done and has openly expressed those thoughts. In my interview with Pastor Phillips he revealed his philosophy of congregational singing in that it must always be done with animation and a *joie de vivre* that reflects the basis of one's relationship with Christ. For him, when singing is morbid and lacking in enthusiasm it dampens worship and makes it difficult to fully enter into the experience and receive the full benefits to be had. Whenever he is leading the congregation in singing, he demonstrates his leadership skills by ensuring that the singing is done with a sense of conviction causing the singers to firmly grasp and appropriate what is being sung. By utilizing congregational hymnody at the start of worship and at the end, the pastor ensures that both the beginning and closing of worship meet his anticipated expectations. Anything less would be unacceptable. That there is the use of congregational singing at the two key points in worship where the pastor exercises pastoral agency by virtue of his office is a reflection of the supremacy of the act of congregational singing.

Second, the elevation of those who lead congregational singing to the status of being considered 'ministers' is an indication of the gravity that is attached to

congregational singing in the Assembly. That means that worship leaders and members of the praise team are in some way cast with the pastoral and other lay leadership within the congregation. Theirs is a status that is a reflection of the primacy that has been applied to leading congregational singing which was established from the inception of the congregation. The basic expectations were: (1) to choose hymns and choruses for the congregation to sing and (2) while leading congregational singing to ensure that worship takes the members on a journey from “the outer court into the inner court.” The two-fold task empowered the worship leader with assuming a great degree of responsibility in determining the direction that worship takes. For this centripetal movement to be facilitated, the spiritual condition of the life of the worship leaders and members of the praise team is of tremendous importance. What is expected of the pastor or preacher is also expected of such persons. They must be “prayed up” having spent hours before worship seeking to hear from the Holy Spirit. As a result, he/she is under divine direction in the choosing of congregational hymns and choruses. Though ultimately it is the work of the Holy Spirit to accomplish this centripetal movement, the move of the Spirit can be thwarted or facilitated by the actions of the worship leader and praise team as they are leading the congregation in singing.

That congregational singing is deemed to be the more dominant feature in shaping the congregation’s identity is also reflected in the fact that part of the duties of the worship leaders and praise teams is to ensure that the bodily gestures mentioned in the previous section are not impeded. Consequently, by their mannerisms and deportment, worship leaders and praise team members are expected to first embody the message that is contained within the hymns and songs that the congregation sings.

To ensure that the congregation while singing expresses bodily gestures that can be tagged as *canonic*, a large part of their function is not only to lead congregational singing but also to mirror to the congregation the appropriate physical responses to the hymns and songs. That could entail the lifting of hands or exuberantly dancing to the hymns. In this capacity, the worship leader and praise team then, because of their being placed at the front of the sanctuary, become a visible sample of the congregation at worship. They in essence are seen as the model of what it means to sing and worship God in this assembly. They model the community's identity.

In my interview with the participants who were 50 years and above, generally there was a clear understanding of the high expectations of the ministry offered by the worship leaders and praise teams. However, the issue of the manner of dress and general deportment was passionately discussed. It is clear that for the older generation, one's outward appearance is a mirroring of one's spiritual condition. Their dissatisfaction was an indication of the high regard in which they held worship leaders and members of the praise team. Ironically, in my interview with the members of the praise team, without my mentioning the comments of the older age group, the question was asked of me whether any concerns had been raised about how the members of the praise team dressed. This indicates that this is not a mute matter and would have been raised elsewhere. It is precisely because the members of the congregation have placed upon congregational singing such a high premium that they would not hesitate to voice their concerns when members of the praise team do not appear to be compliant to the unwritten standards of deportment. It is an attempt to preserve the integrity of the office and to ensure that the potency of the congregational singing which they lead is in no way eroded or altogether destroyed.

Third, congregational singing must be viewed as being the more influential factor because of the prevalence of music throughout the entire worship. In addition to the actual singing that is done by the congregation, instrumental music is also a prominent feature of worship at the Assembly. Each week, the band was comprised of five (5) musicians: two keyboard players (each playing two keyboards), two drummers (one on a congo set and the other on the drum set) and a soprano saxophone player. With the employment of four (4) keyboards, the players have intentionally voiced their instruments thereby creating the impression that the band is larger in size. This has had a direct bearing on congregational singing. By the arrangements of the hymns and songs that the congregation sings, the musicians, like the worship leaders and praise teams, indicate to the congregation how the singing ought to be done. Located at the front of the church, the sound of their instruments continuously bathes every aspect of worship from beginning to end and music is played softly when the congregation is not singing.¹ As a result, instrumental music is heard (1) during times of prayer (wherever in the service that prayer is being offered), (2) as background to the reading of Scriptures, (3) to facilitate the repeating of the verses of affirmation,² (4) while members came forward to the altar to give of their tithes and offerings,³ (5) for the period where there was the sharing of the elements for

¹ It is correct to conclude that once worship begins, the only point in time when the musical instruments are noticeably silent for any recognizable length of time is during the sermon. While there is usually musical accompaniment at the beginning or the end of the sermon, one indication that the sermon is nearing its end is that music begins to be played.

² There was the tradition of the congregation to repeat each week several verses of Scripture which they appropriated as God's promise to them at this stage in their collective spiritual journey. These verses were Psalm 89: 1- 8; Psalm 118: 1- 8; Jeremiah 17: 7 -8; Psalm 30: 4-5. While the congregation was repeating these verses, the keyboard players would seek to have these verses emphasized by repeatedly playing a pedal tone with a string voicing. This repetition coupled with a crescendo of different chords would increase the intensity of the congregation's reading, making the application of the truth contained in the Scriptures more tangible.

³ It was customary for the hymns being played by the band during this time to be of an infectious rhythm (calypso, reggae, Black Southern Gospel). Because of this members often didn't just walk to

Communion.¹ By choosing at these times to play hymns or songs that were known by the congregation and which eventually morphed into congregational singing, the musicians rightfully assessed the significance of tapping into the corporate hymnic memory of the congregation.

What has been said of the worship leaders and praise teams is also applicable to the musicians in that by their playing they too contribute in ensuring that the bodily gestures of the singing congregation occur. Their musical input forms a crucial part of the chain of individuals who collaborate to ensure that congregational singing at the Assembly sustains the community as it gathers for worship weekly. It is the musicians who by their instrumental initiatives determine at times what the congregation sings. More importantly, they play to establish *how* the singing will be done. The interconnections between worship leader, praise team, pastor, congregation and musicians require that all hold to a common understanding of what is to be expected of the worship experience, especially via the avenue of congregational singing. In collating the time allotted during the worship service between instrumental music and congregational singing, it can be approximated that an estimated much of that time is apportioned either to the singing of hymns or songs by the congregation, on the one hand, or hearing hymns or songs being played by the musicians. The deduction can be made that a community's identity is more likely to be expressed, reinforced and sustained by the activity they spend much time engaged with, like congregational singing.

the altar but often times would also be dancing their way to the front of the church and back to their seats. All the while they would be singing or greeting other members as they passed them.

¹ Similarly, whatever the band played while members came forward for Communion usually unfolded into congregational singing. Especially during the Communion the selections chosen were usually slower paced hymns and songs that created a sombre mood in keeping with the sacrament.

4.6 Conclusion

After 40 years, the congregation at the St. Thomas Assembly of God has established itself as a community that is “*An Oasis of Love and Hope*.” The members of the community have accepted and embraced that corporal identity. This chapter has shown that the “Oasis” is sustained primarily by means of the preaching of the Word of God and through singing. However, because of the prevalence of music and congregational singing the conclusion can be drawn that it is hymnody which expresses and sustains this congregation’s identity as an “Oasis”. This has been accomplished by tapping into the individual and corporate hymnic memory and working towards balanced singing. By so doing, the hymnic memory of the community is sustained while at the same time being expanded through the inclusion of new hymns and songs via an electronic hymnal. However, it is through the bodily gestures which are evident in the “Oasis” and which serve as signifiers that congregational singing is keeping the “Oasis” at a level which the congregation has come to expect.

A study of congregational singing at the Assembly, therefore, has clearly demonstrated that this congregation as a community is nourished and sustained primarily by what it sings. That is accomplished by giving due consideration to the individual and collective hymnic memory of the community and by taking into account the impact of bodily gestures which emerge when particular hymnic memory has been accessed. Although there is the expectation that the preaching of the Word of God within the Assembly is an integral aspect of the community’s identity, the congregation has shown that it is the congregational singing that is engendered by the pastor, the worship leaders and praise teams, and the musicians which moves the

worshipping community from “the outer court to the inner.” As this spiritual movement unfolds through the singing of hymns and accompanied by specific bodily gestures, the St. Thomas Assembly of God as a congregation is expressing the fundamentals of its identity as “*An Oasis of Love and Hope*.” Through its singing, especially of certain hymns, the congregation at the Assembly is demonstrating the value of the hymns it sings as containing “an important record of the past spiritual experiences of the believing community.”¹ In the singing of these hymns, not only is congregational identity being expressed but the Assembly, through its congregational singing also sustains its identity as “*An Oasis of Love and Hope*.”

¹ Richard J. Mouw & Mark A. Noll, xv.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ROLE OF CARIBBEAN HYMNODY IN RESHAPING THE IDENTITY OF THE CARIBBEAN ECUMENICAL CHURCH

5.1. Introduction

The publication of the Caribbean hymnal *Sing A New Song No. 3* would not have been accomplished were it not for the launch of the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) in 1973. As a regional ecumenical body embracing all of the major Christian Churches in the Caribbean, the formation of the CCC was a watershed moment in 20th century Caribbean Church history. As the premiere ecumenical institution, the establishment of the CCC speaks to the resolve of the Caribbean Churches to overcome at least three challenges: (1) the deeply entrenched roots of denominationalism that existed; (2) the rise of national identities through political independence and its accompanying proclivity towards insularity; and (3) a prevailing pessimism and suspicion towards the formation of pan-Caribbean entities, especially in light of past failures of similar political enterprises in the region. O. Nigel Bolland has lauded the CCC for bringing “together people of the Caribbean who, despite their different languages, religions and nationalities, share common concerns and who feel that, *as Caribbean people*, they can work better together than they can separately.”¹

The CCC itself expressed this conviction best by affirming that:

Our people have been separated from each other by barriers of distance and sea, of history, language and culture, of class, race and religion, yet we found

¹ O. Nigel Bolland, *The Birth of Caribbean Civilization: A Century of Ideas about Culture and Identity, Nation and Society*. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2004, xvii.

an underlying unity peculiar to the Caribbean and identified common problems which the world outside has imposed upon us.¹

The formation of the CCC went beyond the bringing together of Christian denominations within the Caribbean. It was also a bold move to unify the Caribbean, a reality that was not forgotten by the delegates to the Ecumenical Consultation who “dared not evade the challenge facing the Christian community in every Caribbean country to unite in every possible way.”²

From its inception, the CCC adopted a policy which emphasised that its mission would be two-fold, namely, development and renewal.³ This was facilitated through an organizational structure that had as its foundation two main commissions: (1) the Christian Action for Development in the Caribbean (CADEC) and (2) Action for the Renewal of the Church (ARC).⁴ According to Robert Cuthbert, development was understood to be concerning “the whole person – social, economic, religious and political.”⁵ Renewal reflected a desire and intention to have the Church in the Caribbean “create a new image which is Caribbean [and] promote the work of Christ.”⁶ In expressing the rationale for the CCC, one newspaper contributor surmised that the CCC was designed,

¹ “Report on a Consultation for the Planning of the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) Held in Trinidad, November 1971” in *Called to Be*. 1972, 37.

² Ibid.

³ Robert Cuthbert. *Ecumenism and Development: A Socio-Historical Analysis of the Caribbean Conference of Churches*. (Bridgetown: Caribbean Conference of Churches, 1986). He outlines the various programs and policies that governed the functioning of the CCC.

⁴ Under CADEC as the development commission, there were several agencies and programs. These included: Project Development Program; Appropriate Technology; Land and Food for People (LAFFP); Education for Development; Caribbean Community Appeal; The CEDAR (Christian Engagement in Development and Renewal) Press; CADEC Audio-Visual Service; Documentation and Research Program; Caribbean Christian Communications Network (CCCN) and Caribbean Contact. The renewal commission had its own agencies and programs: Caribbean Church Women (CCW); Caribbean Ecumenical Youth Action (CEYA); Education Renewal Agency (ERA); Family Life Education; Caribbean Commission for Theological Renewal (CCTR) and Caribbean Church Music Program (CCMP).

⁵ Cuthbert, 10.

⁶ *Called to Be*, 7.

To promote the cause of unity, renewal, and joint action; to stimulate programmes of reflection, action and research; to encourage the growth of human beings in the region in terms of their culture, experience and needs; and to share information and insights among Churches, national and international Councils.¹

In many ways, the CCC was unique from other emerging regional organizations because both its agenda and programmes were being implemented through the interpretative lenses of the Christian Gospel. In commenting on the work of the CCC, Kortright Davis, a noted Caribbean theologian and scholar, observed that,

They chose to adopt a more progressive stance in their public concerns and pronouncements, becoming the social conscience for the region and organizing themselves to provide catalysts for social change... The churches were also challenged to become totally engaged in the process of Caribbean development and to make every effort to bring about greater unity in the Caribbean.²

As part of fulfilling that two-fold mandate, the CCC led the charge in the cultivation, construction and articulation of a new Caribbean theology. Renewal and development within the region necessitated the Church in the Caribbean finding new means of expressing its theology. To that end, the Caribbean Commission for Theological Renewal (CCTR), one of the agencies of the CCC, was specifically “charged with the responsibility for carrying out research in the whole area of Theological Language, forms of Worship (including the possibility of the production of a Caribbean Hymnal), Evangelism and Stewardship.”³ Through the untiring efforts of the Caribbean Church Music Program (CCMP) this possibility became a reality when in 1981 the Caribbean hymnal – *Sing A New Song No. 3* – was finally produced. This hymnal is distinctive for two reasons. First, although the published resources that emerge from the CCC are near interminable, they produced only one Caribbean

¹ Editorial “What is CCC?” *Caribbean Contact*, September 1977, 10.

² Kortright Davis. *Emancipation Still Comin’*: *Soundings in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 1990), 47.

³ *Called to Be*, 39.

hymnal. Second, all of its content is original and all of the hymns' text and music can be credited exclusively to persons from within the Caribbean region, making it 100% indigenous. What then is the significance of these factors when assessing the role of Caribbean hymnody in the reshaping of Caribbean ecumenism?

As I continue to delve into the hypothesis that congregational identity as communities of faith are shaped by what they sing, in this chapter it is my contention that Caribbean hymnody as captured in the hymnal, *Sing A New Song No. 3*, contributed to the shaping of the Caribbean ecumenical community identity by voicing a Caribbean theology. Through its organizational structure, the CCC was cognizant that even though the production of a Caribbean hymnal was considered to be a musical project, yet it was also deemed to be a theological enterprise since the CCMP was placed under the charge of its Commission for Theological Renewal. Clearly, the CCC, being mindful of the enormity of its mandate needed to utilize whatever arsenal at its disposal. Patrick Prescod, the editor of *Sing A New Song No. 3*, insightfully captured the understanding that Caribbean hymnody would have in the work that was the CCC's. He postulates that:

In the Caribbean Church, music and singing play a very prominent role. It is important therefore that through this medium, the essence of that change and renewal for which the CCC stands should be understood, expressed and realized, thus enabling the Caribbean Church better to meet the needs of the Caribbean man of the eighties and beyond.¹

Evidently, the CCC was well aware that hymns could potentially serve as a potent means through which the emerging Caribbean theology which was aiming to bring about renewal and development could be expressed. The premise of this chapter is informed by this position and aims to develop the hypothesis that in giving

¹ Patrick Prescod, "Caribbean Church Music", Unpublished Paper from Personal Archives of Patrick Prescod.

congregations of the member communions under the umbrella of the CCC new hymns and songs to sing there were two concomitant actions unfolding. First, there was the creating of a new genre of hymnody that could be labelled as Caribbean. Second, there was the simultaneous echoing of a new and emerging Caribbean theology that was being formulated through these hymns. I am opined that it is in the articulating of this new Caribbean theology through the local hymnody that the reimagining of the churches in the Caribbean was accomplished.

So as to develop this argument, firstly, I will first show how the Caribbean hymnal *Sing A New Song No. 3* emerged. Attention will be paid specifically to seeking to determine how this hymnal has contributed in helping to formulate a general understanding of the characteristics of a Caribbean hymnody. Secondly, I will revisit an earlier concept of lyrical theology as espoused by Don Saliers and highlight what I consider to be the main themes of a Caribbean lyrical theology as captured in the hymns contained in *Sing A New Song No. 3*. In the conclusion I will offer a rationale for Caribbean hymnody to be considered as the doing of local theology which is also a contextual theology. This will fortify the premise of this chapter that Caribbean hymnody, by virtue of being an avenue whereby a local lyrical theology was voiced, would have contributed to the reshaping of the Caribbean ecumenical community.

5.2 Caribbean Hymnody and *Sing A New Song No. 3*

The roots of *Sing A New Song No. 3* go back a decade earlier before its 1981 publication date. At first there was a small volume of hymns called *Sing A New Song*.¹

¹ As early as 1973 (August 23 – 26) a seminar was convened in Trinidad at which there were twenty-seven (27) Caribbean Church musicians representing ten countries in the region. As a result of that

This collection of 24 hymns included i) Traditional Folk Music; ii) Original Words and Music; iii) Words written to traditional folk music; iv) West Indian pop; v) West Indian words set by West Indian musicians but in a European idiom.¹ Robert Cuthbert, the then General Secretary of the CCC, in highlighting the significance of this first book emphasized that “a people need to sing their own songs and through this little collection we hope that voices around the Caribbean will blend in new songs which express the souls of Caribbean man.”² It is obvious that the leaders of the ecumenical movement understood the value of local hymns as vehicles of empowerment which would play a major role in the overall mandate of development and renewal within the region.

By 1977, a slightly larger volume of Caribbean hymns and songs was published.³ The compilers and editors of this second volume maintained that their goal was to offer “to our member Churches...material to sing praise to God on every occasion and in every situation in which our people are moved to praise Him.”⁴ There was never the intention for *Sing A New Song No. 2* “to replace the traditional hymnal used in...various Churches...[but] as a supplement.”⁵ By placing itself in this accommodating position, the CCC was in essence declaring its affirmation of the inherent value of the current corpus of hymnody being used. However, by pressing for this collection of local hymns to be used even as a supplement, the CCC was also advocating for an embracing of locally constructed hymns to be used especially to fill

meeting, the first collection of Caribbean Church music was produced by November 1973 in time to coincide with the launch of the Caribbean Conference of Churches.

¹ *Sing a New Song No. 2*. (Bridgetown: Caribbean Conference of Churches, 1977), ii.

² Ibid.

³ *Sing A New Song No. 2* contained forty (40) entries and was edited by Mr. Noel Dexter and Rev. Father Paschal Jordan.

⁴ *Sing A New Song No. 2*, ii.

⁵ Ibid, i.

the void created by the exclusive use of traditional hymnody. The rationale for the embrace of Caribbean hymnody alongside traditional hymnody argued that the former could more readily reflect “songs and hymns to speak to our Caribbean people’s situation and predicament.”¹ The renewal of the Caribbean Church could be accomplished through the use of local hymnody because congregations now could extend their hymnic repertoire to include songs which reflected “many of the social concerns and issues of our times.”² Furthermore, one of the main purposes of Caribbean hymnody was vividly enunciated with the publication of the second collection of hymns which was “the liberation of our emotions and our lives from all that cripples, disfigures, retards, imprisons and oppresses.”³

The full implication of that purpose was eventually realized with the publication of the more comprehensive Caribbean hymnal – *Sing A New Song No. 3*.⁴ As the first and only complete Caribbean hymnal, this final volume signalled the coming of age of Caribbean hymnody. But the publication of this hymnal raises the questions: What can be identified as the general characteristics of Caribbean Church music separate and apart from Church music *in* the Caribbean? Stated differently, how does this hymnal contribute to creating what is labelled as Caribbean hymnody?

¹ *Sing A New Song No. 2*, ii.

² Quoted from a memorandum sent to the hymnal committee by the then General Secretary of the Caribbean Conference of Churches, Dr. R.G. Neehall in *Sing A New Song No. 2*, ii.

³ Ibid.

⁴ There are 133 hymns divided into three broad categories: (I) **Liturgical**, (II) **The Christian Life**, and (III) **Seasonal & General**. Each category is further subdivided into smaller sections. The following summarises the number of hymns in each section within the broad categories. In the first category – **Liturgical**, there are seven (7) sections: *Entrance – Approach to Worship* (5); *Mass or Eucharistic Texts* (6); *Offertory* (1); *Communion* (6); *Psalms & Scriptural Texts* (21); *Praise & Thanksgiving* (6) and *Intercession* (10). In the second category – **The Christian Life**, there are three (3) sections: *Repentance* (3); *Faith and Hope* (12) and *Love and Commitment* (14). In the final category – **Seasonal & General**, there are eight (8) sections: *Advent & Christmas* (13); *Lent, Passion & Easter* (5); *Harvest* (9); *God’s Rule* (5); *The Holy Spirit* (5); *The Church* (2); *For the Young* (12) and *Weddings* (3). Unlike the two previous collections, which were single volumes, *Sing A New Song No. 3* was published in two volumes: (1) words only and (2) music with first verse. Also, while many of the entries in the first two editions were scored with just melody lines and guitar chords, in this final installation, all of the pieces were completed with full piano reduction as well as guitar chords.

For that matter, what makes this hymnal authentically Caribbean? A consideration of this matter is important since those charged with assembling *Sing A New Song No. 3* understood that their task was not simply “to compile a collection of music used in the Caribbean Churches, [but] a book of Caribbean Church Music.”¹ In considering this question, I wish to highlight three key factors which make Caribbean hymnody unique.

First, through this hymnal Caribbean Church music is not limited to just one language and so is more *eclectic* than the traditional hymnals in use within the Caribbean. Although the vast majority of the content of *Sing A New Song No. 3* is primarily in English, like its predecessors, the final volume included submissions which reflected the major regional language groups of the member churches of the CCC.² Though the percentage of non-English hymns might be deemed to be negligible, it is not insignificant. The inclusion of Spanish, Dutch and Papiamentu hymns³ alongside English hymns was a novelty in itself in that the hymnals of the member churches of the CCC would not have reflected such a reality. Added to this, *all* of the texts and music were written, composed and arranged by Caribbean people employing images and idioms of Caribbean language and music. In describing the people of the Caribbean region, historian Professor Rex Nettleford had advanced that “we in the Caribbean would regard ourselves as part African, part European, part Asian, part native American but totally Caribbean...heterogeneity is a principle of

¹ Pamela O’Gorman. “Caribbean Church Music: Some Problems”. Unpublished Paper, Patrick Prescod Personal Archives.

² In *Sing A New Song* there were three (3) non-English entries while all of the content of *Sing A New Song No. 2* represented the English speaking Caribbean. Of the 137 hymns in the *Sing A New Song No. 3* collection, ten (10) are non-English coming from Spanish and Dutch countries.

³ These include - # 9 *Padre Nuestor*; # 13 *Come, Bebe*; # 18 *Hesus Bo t’Invita*; #19 *Al Abrigo del Altísimo (El es mi Rey)*; # 22 *Camino del Templo*; # 40 *Alabanza (Al caer la lluvia Resurge)*; # 55 *Palabra di Dios (Senjor, Bo cu a pone nos na mundu)*; #67 *Refleshon (Mi Dios, mi, n’sa kiko Bo tin pa)*; # 73 *Kende, Si Ta Mi Ruman?*; # 111 *Ami Ta Rey*.

social organization as we see it.”¹ The eclecticism that is part of the fabric of Caribbean culture has also been filtered into Caribbean hymnody. The eclecticism which is evidenced in this Caribbean hymnal reflects the very substance of the Caribbean reality and serves as a marker of understanding the nature of Caribbean hymnody.

Second, this hymnal portrays that in addition to Caribbean hymnody being eclectic that it is not intended to be limited to or confined to any one denomination but was crafted to serve a primarily *ecumenical* purpose. Caribbean hymnody that is illustrated in *Sing A New Song No. 3* goes beyond the parochial denominationalism. Patrick Prescod,² the editor for the hymnal, stressed that it was “intended to serve as an ecumenical hymn book and a supplement to existing denominational hymnals...suitable for use at ecumenical gatherings, conferences, national occasions, Church meetings, services of worship etc. and should meet the needs of the children, youth and adults of members Churches.”³ The advantage of constructing a Caribbean hymnody that would be catholic in its appeal fits wholly with the essence of the CCC as the premiere Caribbean ecumenical organization. Yet even as this hymnal was being constructed, there was the recognition because of catholicity of Caribbean hymnody that it would garner an ecumenical appeal beyond the Caribbean region. Pamela O’Gorman, a music educator, captured this widely held opinion when, in speaking about the future of Caribbean Church music as captured in *Sing A New Song*

¹ Rex Nettleford. Round Table: Dialogue Among Civilizations: United Nations, New York. 5th September, 2000. (Provisional Verbatim Transcription).
<http://www.unesco.org/dialogue/en/nettleford.htm>. Accessed November 17, 2010.

² Patrick Prescod is a native of St. Vincent. I did a series of interviews with him over a two day period (July 13 – 14, 2010). In addition to the interviews, he also allowed me access to his personal archives. These included letters and reports of the three year period that he served as Director of the Caribbean Church Music Programme from 1979 – 1982.

³ Patrick Prescod, *Suggestions for Specific Themes*, Unpublished Paper, Personal Archives of Patrick Prescod.

No. 3, she affirmed that

The Christian Church is coming more and more to realize that, in order to remain strong and universal it must absorb and use the material of those cultures it was guilty of neglecting – even suppressing – in the past. And what we possess today must, at some time in the future, be considered as part of the New World contribution to the enrichment of that universal Church.¹

This prediction proved true as Caribbean hymnody has eventually reached beyond this region and has appeared in other nondenominational and denominational hymnals.²

Third, Caribbean hymnody is *contextual* in that it sought to bring about “an increase in the use of relevant Caribbean material in the churches.”³ As a result, *Sing A New Song No. 3* presented to the Caribbean churches a new hymnic template. By producing this Caribbean hymnal the CCMP brought “to life a whole body of Caribbean Church music [and] to them set our own criteria of what we consider the best and most representative of what we have to offer.”⁴ By emphasising the utilization of identifiable textual images and musical idioms in the hymns, Caribbean hymn writers had created their own “canon of judgement” which would measure their hymns. It was a bold and original move akin to putting new wine both into old and new wine skins (Luke 5: 33 – 39). By creating a genre of hymnody that can be defined as contextual, *Sing A New Song No. 3* achieved the renewal and development mandate of the CCC by fostering “a new understanding of oneself and one’s relationship to God and one’s neighbour.”⁵

¹ O’Gorman, *Caribbean Church Music: Some Problems*.

² The hymn *The Right Hand of God* from this has been printed in the *Moravian Book of Worship* (1995) and another hymn *Lord Thy Church on Earth is Seeking* has appeared in *The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration* (1996).

³ Prescod, *Caribbean Church Music*.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Patrick Prescod, “Music to Renew ‘Caribbean Soul’” in *Caribbean Contact*, Vol. 6, No. 12, April 1979, 10.

One of the noted outcomes from Caribbean hymnody being contextual that was acknowledged was its ability “to liberate...from inhibiting prejudices, and allow us to express ourselves naturally and freely and with artistic integrity in song, poetry and dance. A people can worship as fully and meaningfully as they understand themselves, their relation to God and to the fellow-men.”¹ In the latter portion of this chapter, I will develop further this argument and show how Caribbean hymnody encapsulates and represents a Caribbean contextual theology. At this juncture, it is suffice to reinforce, though, that Caribbean hymnody being contextual was an asset to the goal of the CCC in that, “while preserving and strengthening the faith, our Caribbean hymns could relate in a more meaningful way, to the Caribbean Christians experience of twentieth century living, and to the history and culture of the Caribbean society.”²

In spite of these three definitive features which I have identified that can be generally applied to Caribbean hymnody as a genre, these hymns were not comprehensively embraced by the churches within the region. The CCMP did institute programs to encourage churches in the Caribbean to become more accepting of these indigenous hymns. The ultimate goal was to have member churches sing them with the same zeal and enthusiasm as they did their traditional hymns. But for that to happen, attitudes needed to be changed. However, these attempts to have congregations in the participating denominations were met with some direct challenges.³ This task was by no means unproblematic for it required the undoing of

¹ Ibid.

² Prescod, *Caribbean Church Music*.

³ These included insufficient creative time spent at workshops so as to ensure highest quality of materials, obstacles associated with the distribution of new materials, lack of enterprise on the part of local committees to carry on the work between workshops and the inability for the Caribbean Church

long held biases towards what is considered legitimate hymnody which for centuries was part of the worship fabric of the member churches. It was noted that there remained those who did not readily embrace Caribbean hymns for they “resist[ed] any departure from tradition.”¹ In spite of the hurdles to overcome, the compilers of this hymnal were convinced that “God [was] calling us out of separateness and divisiveness, which have been the cause of so much of the under-effectiveness of the work of the Church of Christ in the Caribbean area, so that we may fulfil our calling together as the People of God.”² Since these hymns were new to the hymnic repertoire of the Churches, it required a paradigm shift in the congregations’ hymnody and to some degree the Church’s liturgy. Wherever these hymns were embraced, the resulting embroidery impacted the fabric of other parts of the liturgy³ of the entire Christian Church in the Caribbean.

In order to buttress my argument that Caribbean hymnody contributed to the reimagining of the ecumenical Christian community by posturing a new Caribbean lyrical theology, I will now explore in the next section two major themes of a Caribbean lyrical theology that are advanced in Caribbean hymnody. These themes permeate the hymns in *Sing A New Song No. 3* and as such influence the reshaping of the Caribbean Church’s ecumenical identity.

Music Programme itself to include under one cover a publication that would cater to all of the needs of the CCC membership (language mix, denominational theological biases and age barriers).

¹ Prescod, *Caribbean Church Music*.

² Ibid.

³ There was the recognition that renewal of which the CCC was aiming to achieve included new liturgical renewal as well. At the 1971 Consultation in Trinidad, one of the recommendations called for the crafting of “a truly Caribbean liturgy and the use of local arts and crafts in church buildings.” *Called to Be*, 5.

5.3. Themes in Caribbean Lyrical Theology

In the Introduction, I established that theology is expressed through hymnody. In this portion of the study I will explore in greater detail how Caribbean hymnody can also be described as voicing a Caribbean theology. Prescod is of the view that this is the case as he acknowledged that there were two worthwhile benefits to be had through Caribbean hymnody: “(i) the emergence of a new theology and (ii) the... [integrating of] popular rhythms and musical forms of everyday Caribbean life into the worship and usage of the Church.”¹ It is significant that he draws a correlation between hymnody and the formulation of a Caribbean theology. By so doing, he maintains that it is in the integration of the familiar cultural features into the hitherto unseen and unfamiliar landscape of worship which “represents conscious and unconscious efforts to involve our real and truest selves in our reaching out to God and to our fellow-men.”²

As the editor of the hymnal and director of the CCMP, these observations provide a window into the particular mind set which governed how the hymns were perceived and what was the anticipated outcome from the singing of the same. If, as Prescod rightly claims that in the writing and singing of Caribbean hymns, Caribbean people “express what we are, and know, and understand,”³ then Caribbean hymnody, as represented and articulated in *Sing A New Song No. 3*, must be seen as a lyrical manifesto reflecting key principles of Caribbean Christian theology and by extension an articulation of Christian identity. With every decision that was made in deciding

¹ Prescod, *Music to Renew ‘Caribbean Soul’*.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

what hymn would be allowed or disallowed,¹ *Sing A New Song No. 3* became for Caribbean people an instrument of Caribbean identity formation that “helps us to know and worship God better, to realize our real selves and all our potential...”²

Having identified three general characteristics of Caribbean hymnody and considered that hymnody is a conduit through which theology is known, in the next section of this chapter, I will propose specifically the two dominant images of ecumenism that are advanced by Caribbean hymnody. These two factors provide an answer to the query: what are the fundamental attributes of a Caribbean lyrical theology that is contained within the pages of *Sing A New Song No. 3*? It is my contention that an analysis of these hymns will unearth a Caribbean lyrical theology that promotes the reimagining and refashioning of the Caribbean ecumenical community by advancing that this is a community that is (1) *united*, and (2) *empowered*.

I am opined that it is through the formulation of such a Caribbean lyrical theology that Caribbean hymnody made an impactful contribution to the overall mandate of the CCC which was the renewal and development of the Caribbean ecumenical community. I surmise that the writing, composing and singing of local hymns is to be recognized as accepted and perceived as the doing of theology locally, and it is through this process that Caribbean lyrical theology plays a role in the reimagining and reshaping of the Caribbean ecumenical community.

¹ The Rev. Knolly Clarke, an Anglican priest from Trinidad, was given several Caribbean hymns to review. From his comments to Prescod, his responses support the proposal that the aptness of the hymns was tied to the question of whether they matched the underlying intention of representing a new Caribbean identity. To the hymn ‘*Father now with Joy*’ – “Good but not very original”; to ‘*Here We toil together*’ – “A lack of Christology – who is the hero in the Hymn – Manley – Burnham – William – Shah – Sleage – Jagan”; to ‘*In the Stillness Shone the Star*’ – “This Hymn does not help people to celebrate a Caribbean Christian – Not very original”; to ‘*You who made me Woman*’ – “Good”; to ‘*Sing to the Lord A Song*’ – “Fair – but it could be sung by a Muslim or Jew – No Christology.”

² Prescod, *Music to Renew ‘Caribbean Soul*.

5.3.1 A United Community

The first theme that can be identified in Caribbean hymns in the construct of a Caribbean lyrical theology is the notion that the ecumenical community is united in spite of the cultural and denominational diversity. It is noteworthy that the case was not being made for the region to work towards creating unity. Rather, the issue was beseeching the Caribbean community to recognise and take full advantage of the unity that already existed even though such was not immediately obvious. The goal, therefore, was to capitalize on the unity that had already been forged because of a common history. With this premise, then, the realities of being a united community were achievable. This conviction was clearly articulated by the leaders of the ecumenical movement, who were convinced that

Our people have been separated from each other by barriers of distance and sea, of history, language and culture, of class, race and religion, yet we found an underlying unity peculiar to the Caribbean and identified common problems which the world outside has imposed upon us.¹

It was critical to reinforce this particular image of the ecumenical community especially in light of the failure of the attempt at political integration with the demise of the West India Federation.² Consequently, the delegates to the Ecumenical Consultation from the various Churches in the region “dared not evade the challenge facing the Christian community in every Caribbean country to unite in every possible way.”³

¹ *Called to Be*, 37.

² The most noteworthy of regional political and economic integration was the West Indian Federation of the 1950's. The Federation was short lived and its demise assured when Trinidad, under the leadership of its then Prime Minister, Eric Williams withdrew its support. With the failure of the Federation, many of the larger English speaking territories pursued the path of self-determination through political independence from Britain.

³ *Called to Be*, 37.

Mindful of the fragility of fostering and maintaining a united ecumenical movement, I postulate that the hymns contained in *Sing A New Song No. 3* reflect the ideals of both the Church and the Caribbean region as a united community. In addition to the points already noted concerning partial success at regional integration and the intention of the CCC to create a single voice for the Christian Churches in the Caribbean, the motivation to foster unity in the region was fuelled with the acknowledgement that there were still factions of the organized Church that were not fully supportive of the CCC and its ecumenical mandate. In examining the hymn texts, we will explore (1) the nature of the union being advocated as a model for the Caribbean Church; (2) the features of this model as a united community which make it distinct, mindful of the failure at regional integration on other fronts.

In Eustace Thomas' hymn *We Are Called*,¹ he presents what can be deemed the basis for the model of the Church as a united community. Unlike political and economic unions that were fused based on expediency and survival, Thomas pinpoints that the union of the Church is based on the Church seeing itself as a body. He draws on the Pauline image of the Church as the Body of Christ with Christ as its head. This means that all who are in the body are intricately connected in a familial relationship where "we are called to form one body / with Christ the head of our family." This suggests that the bonds of unity are based on a spiritual kinship that is not accomplished through any human effort. Mindful of the nature of this unification, it finds practical expression in how members of the church community express their love for each other. Thomas advocates that love in a united community is demonstrated in that "loving one another, we must live as sister and brother / caring

¹ Hymn # 82 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

for each other everywhere / sharing all our pains and all our joys, together.” In many ways this type of community mirrors a utopian ideal where “We are called to change from I to We / Building up our lives and our community.” In Thomas’ hymn a united community makes obvious its unity by taking a “stand for justice, and together search for peace,” and expresses “love in Action... for everybody.”

Clyde Hoyte has two hymns which express a similar theme about what is to be expected from a Church that is a united community. The first of his hymns *See God in All*,¹ offers several poignant reminders which underscore and capture the expectations associated with a united community. Based on the premise that the union is spiritually based, a united community is pigeonholed not by self-preservation but instead by assigning priority to the needs of others. Consequently, it is a community where its members are “channels rich and flowing free” ensuring that “every need shall be supplied.” The posture of others above self is reaffirmed with the determination to “pass not human need and woe / bounteous, true compassion show.” The teachings of Christ which addresses that as a community we should give attention to serving the less fortunate in society are grasped in the words: “Let our Father’s judgement be: / ‘You have done it unto me’.” This hymn promotes that a core principle of a united community is that it sees “God in all, in you, in me.”

In his other hymn *That All be One*,² he lauds the benefits of being a united community. However, Hoyte expands the vision of oneness to incorporate those beyond the boundaries of the Christian community. By moving outside the myopic perspective of the organized Church to highlight the oneness of the extended community, Hoyte reveals the benefits that can be derived as a united Church seeks to

¹ Hymn # 78 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*

² Hymn # 80 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

be united with and to likewise unite the community in which it is placed. With that conviction then “all hate and strife be gone / from this verdant land so fair.”

Additionally, a community that is united with the Church has a multiplicative effect in that “united hearts are strong.” Taken within this context, the hymn affirms that the social ills that plague the wider community have a direct impact on the Church community. Hence it lends credibility to the stance that the Church community is not detached from the wider community.

Phyllis Hosten underscores the benefits of the model of the Church as a united community in her submission *Hymn of the Caribbean*.¹ Beginning with the premise that God is “Lord of the nations great and small,” throughout the hymn, the Church in the Caribbean is reminded of features that should lead to the conclusion that God’s “goodness smiles upon the Church within these isles.” Hosten’s hymn supports an earlier point that the Caribbean already shares a measure of unity that merely needs to be acknowledged. For her it is reflected by the abundance of the Caribbean’s natural “wealth of sunshine, healthful air” which ought to lead to “how grateful should we ever be / Who share this Caribbean Sea.” Hosten reiterates that the Church is the people by declaring “and who the Church, but we, O Lord.” It is precisely because the Church is people centred that its primary task is to “to seek, to serve, to help, to heal, / And each other’s ills to feel.” But the unity of Church and the wider community is threatened both by the “clear blue waters that divide / our lands,” and “envy, strife and falsehood.” The hymn therefore summons the Church not to ignore the factors that threaten to further divide the Caribbean but rather to obtain a vista wherein though in the Caribbean there are “many nations, all are one.” When the goal of a

¹ Hymn # 49 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*

Caribbean unity is accomplished, then all of society benefits as they come to “know that perfect peace” and “the saving power of Jesus’ blood.” That the mandate of the CCC cannot be achieved without a united community is best captured in the petition of the final couplet:

Lord, help to live unity
Our Caribbean community.

The desire to have the unity secured is captured in Father Aloysius Church’s S.J. hymn *Lord Make Us One*.¹ The hymn is structured as a prayer of intercession with the response being “Lord make us one.” In this well-crafted hymn, Church delineates the hurdles which hinder the attainment of unity. He bemoans the condition where “blind leads blind and our footsteps wander, / Off our way” and where “nations fight and...hate each other.” But in spite of these issues within a united Church “we desire to help our brother.” The nature of that assistance goes beyond praying for each other and includes seeing to “our sickness caring / All our sinful burden bearing” and “our struggle sharing.” As with the other hymns, the unity being spoken of is by no means superficial or patronizing. The hymn appeals for an authentic union while being mindful of the obstacles that exist. By utilizing a petition structure, the hymn concedes that lasting unity is ultimately accomplished by God. Yet it is balanced with the notion that there is a part to be played by those living in community.

In *Lord God of all the Nations*, Victor H. Job is by no means subtle about his descript of the factors which contribute to the disunity both among the territories in the Caribbean region and the Churches as well. He is very forthright in spelling out first that

Our islands are divided

¹Hymn # 51 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*

By land, by air, by sea;
By race, by creed, by culture,
Political decree.

In so far as the Church is concerned he laments that “the Church too is fragmented / And full of enmity.” But in spite of such stinging criticism, the hymn also offers the solution that “God calls us together / To work for unity.” Once again the concept of a united Church community is highlighted and seen to be a vision yet to be realized. The delay of the fulfilment of this goal for Job is attributed to the Caribbean people being “surrounded by hatred, greed, and lust; / By poverty, oppression, / Injustice and mistrust.”¹

But the attainment of unity is not dismissed even though the divisive factors are acknowledged. The hymn therefore offers a confident assurance by recalling how God has acted in the history of the Caribbean when God “broke the chains and shackles / And set your people free / To save our lands and people / From sin and misery.” With that vivid reminder, the hymn seeks to offer the assurance that God’s intervention to bring unity in the midst of disunity can be expected. In some ways the hymn communicates the subliminal message that God is again acting in history by the “new vision” through the formation of the CCC. Therefore, as God’s agents, the creation of a new Caribbean community is encapsulated in the commitment collectively “To fight for human justice, / For love and liberty, / For unity and concord / And human dignity.” Once again the model of the Church as a united community not just for the sake of its own unity is reiterated. Job like the other hymn writers contends that a united Church triggers a united community.

¹ Hymn # 57 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

The hymns further depict that an indispensable attribute of a united Caribbean community is that it is inclusive and not exclusive. There is the notion that this renewed image of the Caribbean church is an idealised society in which the socially constructed barriers have been removed especially within the context of worship. This sentiment is captured in Father Richard Ho Lung's hymn *Enter Into Jerusalem* where he boldly declares that the community at worship in its celebration now includes "the wealthy and the sick / the worker and the weak"; "the young and the old / with the little and the large"; "With your papa and your mama / with your uncle and your aunt." Because there is the gathering of all as they "go to God's house", then as the celebration begins, it calls the community to

Praise the name of the Lord on high
Praise his name in song.
Praise the Lord with a heav'nly song
With a heav'nly song,
With a heav'nly song
Praise the Lord.¹

Paschal Jordan in his hymn *Return to the Lord* serves as the conscience of the community when he asks "When will you share your bread with the hungry? / when will you welcome in the homeless poor?"² The question is not *if* but rather when which implies that it is an action waiting to be accomplished. There are other hymns which also serve as a reminder that this united community is inclusive of the outsider. This is highlighted through the hymn that draws on Jesus' parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15: 4 – 7). In the hymn *One Hundred Sheep in the Wilderness*, the chorus echoes the theme of inclusivity:

Rejoice my brother, he's coming for you!
Rejoice my sister, he's coming for you!

¹ Hymn # 2 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

² Hymn # 34 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

Rejoice you lost one, he loves you too!
Poor and little, weak, despised,
God's love is for you.

The subliminal message is that the Church realizes that its unity is deficient until like the Good Shepherd they “seek the stray who fell away / From flock and tender care; To bring one back to join with all / To live in love aware.”¹

Barry Chevannes underscores this aspect of the united community being inclusive of the outsider too in his hymn *Ruth and Naomi*² which is a retelling of the Old Testament story of Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1). A similar sub theme of celebrating with the foreigner is reiterated in George Mulrain's *There Was a Man Named Jonah*.³ In this hymn, Mulrain retells another Old Testament narrative, that of Jonah (Jonah 1). In the story, Jonah's disobedience to God is fuelled by his resentment of the Ninevites, Israel's enemies. These two hymns underscore that within a united Caribbean ecumenical community, the concept of a 'foreigner' is not a feature to be embraced and highlighted.

Intentionality in making room for those who do not think that they belong in the community is the substance of the message which is communicated in Alban Henry's hymn, *Bring Them In*. To ensure that a united community embraces everyone, the hymn calls upon “Christians everywhere, / leave [their] sleep, time to reap, harvest time is here.” But the expected harvest is not one of fruits and vegetables. Instead it is the result of the Church's action to “go gather the people, bring them in to the Lord” because “there's room at the table.” The table is symbolic of a feast that is yet to take place. The celebration around the table is nonaligned and again highlights the inclusion of the “weak ones and the strong, / young and old to the

¹ Hymn # 32 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

² Hymn #35 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

³ Hymn # 38 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

fold.../ unbelievers and backsliders...”¹ Henry’s hymn points to the teachings of Jesus captured in one of his parables in Luke 14:16 ff. Garfield Rochard in his hymn, *Gather Christians*, makes a similar proposition in somewhat of a cheer leader style with “gather, Christians, let’s now celebrate.” He pinpoints that one of the reasons for celebrating when there is such a gathering that is fully inclusive, is that it is being done “as one community.”² A united community is one that is also a celebrative community and one of the *raison d’être* for its celebration is its unity.

The collection of Caribbean hymns also reflects that women were not to be neglected or overlooked in the reconstruction of the Caribbean ecumenical community that was united and inclusive. In the decades of the 1960’s and 1970’s with the issue of women’s liberation and the emergence of Feminist and Womanist theologies, it is commendable that the hymnal would have recognized the trend and affirm that a renewed Caribbean community would also acknowledge the place of women as having a prominent place in the community. That was the essence of Doreen Potter’s hymn *You Who Made Me Woman*.³ She celebrates that God in making her woman “made me strong / in mind and body to sing your song.” By calling attention to the fact that womanhood is a reflection of God’s “beauty in every form,” she rebuts any male chauvinism that seeks to reduce women merely to being objects to satisfy male sexuality. By so doing she raises the bar and draws attention to the identity of the Caribbean Church as working towards a unity which was gender sensitive.

¹ Hymn # 103 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

² Hymn # 3 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

³ Hymn # 84 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

Although Potter's hymn is the only one that explicitly references womanhood, its presence points to a general trend that was emerging in the 1970's. One of the most impactful women's groups that emerged in the Caribbean was a theatrical group in Jamaica called Sistren. The group is best known for their use of the patois language, children's games, metaphoric use of rituals, employment of music and rhythm and by depicting the male roles themselves.¹ By intentionally including Potter's hymn which celebrates the dignity of womanhood, *Sing A New Song No.3* can be attributed to participating in awakening the consciousness of the Caribbean church that the place of women in the community was not secondary to that of men.

The hymns contained in *Sing A New Song No. 3* sought to address the issue of disunity and its negative impact on the Caribbean Church while at the same time laud the benefits to be accrued from functioning as a united community. To that end, these hymns aim to foster a unity among the Churches in the region fuelled by the conviction "God [was] calling us out of separateness and divisiveness, which have been the cause of so much of the under-effectiveness of the work of the Church of Christ in the Caribbean area, so that we may fulfil our calling together as the People of God, in the peculiar situation in which our common history has placed us..."² Having explored the theme of being a united community within the hymns of *Sing A New Song No. 3*, we will now consider how Caribbean hymnody would have portrayed the ecumenical Caribbean Church as an empowered community.

¹ See *Sistren-Jamaica: Women's Theatre for Cultural Decolonization* by Cornelia Fichtl (265 – 271) in *History and Histories in the Caribbean* ed by Thomas Bremer / Ulrich Fleischmann; Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2001.

² Prescod, *Caribbean Church Music*.

5.3.2 An Empowered Community

In considering that Caribbean hymnody advanced the notion of a theology of empowerment, I propose that this was accomplished as we evaluate the issue from the perspective of language. However, in this case, I propose that we consider the language of the hymns via two avenues: textual and musical. I contend that the construct and compilation of Caribbean hymnody as a genre of sacred music in and of itself also underscores that the ecumenical Caribbean community had reimagined itself as a community that was emboldened and empowered to express its theology in a manner that was uniquely Caribbean. The reality of having these hymns and making them accessible to congregations to sing is the act of a community that obviously would have seen itself as being empowered to do the unprecedented. In essence, power was exhibited through the avenue of language. Caribbean hymn writers were demonstrating a reality that Maryse Conde had already articulated when she declared that “language is a site of power: who names, controls.”¹ If we accept that language is an integral aspect of the expression of power, then how it is used or not used for that matter, reflects the stance that is being taken to the operation of this particular framework of power. Caribbean hymnody, therefore, reflects the might of the pen to reimage and refashion an ecumenical community.

An examination of the hymn texts draws attention to God’s creative power in these Caribbean lands. The text themselves underscore the power of God at work within the Caribbean community. They highlight that God’s power is at work both in the Church itself and in the Caribbean community. Furthermore, they also reveal the

¹ Maryse Conde, “Creolite Without the Creole Language?” in *Caribbean Creolization: Reflections on the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature, and Identity*. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 102.

nature of God's power that is represented in creation and more especially through the person of the Holy Spirit. The hymns communicate that the creative power of God is reflected in the beauty of these Caribbean lands and the richness of their productivity. There is the suggestion that the same creative power of God which is displayed in the creation continues in the work of the third person of the God-head. Because God's power is visible in nature then God's people who live in these lands share in and have access to that power. As such the community's sense of power rests not in the hands of its political leaders but ultimately power resides with God. Since God is present, then the hymns call on the ecumenical community to both recognize this power and to ensure that it is activated in their living.

Additionally, through their innovative use of language, the hymns rebranded the Caribbean lands and peoples as a location that is beautiful and bountiful. The tilling of the earth with all of its negative associations with slavery was now being celebrated for the richness of its produce which is a main supplier of food. The beauty of the Caribbean lands was being promoted not just for the enticement of tourists and visitors but also to highlight the power of God in creating this archipelago of tropical islands.

A textual analysis of the language of the hymns underscores this proposition. In Patrick Prescod's hymn *The Right Hand of God*, the metaphoric 'right hand' – a biblical symbol of God's power, is declared to be at work in varied ways within the Caribbean. Each verse specifically demonstrates what God is doing and how God's power is manifested in the Caribbean church. Through the creative use of repetition, Prescod paints an image of God that conveys six specific actions of God's divine engagement (*writing, pointing, striking, lifting, healing and planting*) within the

region. The community is invited to partner with God and share in the exercise of God's power as the last verse asserts "In these Caribbean lands / Let His people all join hands / And be one with the right hand of God" (See **Appendix Four**).¹ The church community therefore becomes the symbolic 'right hand of God' being empowered to do all that God is doing in the Caribbean.²

Garfield Rochard continues the same theme in his hymn *With A Mighty Hand*. The imagery of God leading the nation of Israel from bondage in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land is borrowed and reapplied to God doing the same in the Caribbean. However, Rochard in his hymn Christianizes his biblical reference with the lines

With a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm
He died on Calvary.

Like Prescod, Rochard advances the community's confidence of God's providential sovereignty proclaiming "God is moving through the land / He is moving with his mighty hand; / From Calvary to eternity, / God is leading us on." And in the later verses he heralds that the empowered community having been "Nourished by the Word and Bread of Life," it then goes "from here to everywhere, / Proclaiming the Gospel of Christ."³ An empowered community that believes God to be the source of its power is emboldened to do what it has been called to do – present the Gospel of Christ. Consequently, there is no timidity but rather a bold resolve to be engaged in this divine mandate.

¹ The audio file of this Caribbean hymn is Track #1 on the CD.

² Hymn # 114 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*. It was especially written for the first general assembly of the CCC.

³ Hymn # 115 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

It is that boldness which comes to the fore when one examines the hymns that endorse the Holy Spirit's power at work within the ecumenical Caribbean community. Two hymns of Birchfield Aymer reflect this characteristic of the Holy Spirit. In *The Holy Ghost Power is Moving* he presents the Spirit's power to be "moving like a magnet;/ It's moving here, it's moving there, / Just like the day of Pentecost." In the following verses he continues the theme of the Spirit's power at move and that it is moving "all through the nations" with the result that "it wins men here, wins men there,/ Saving them from sin and fear." When the Spirit continues to move "right through the campus" (which points to the work of the Spirit even among Caribbean academia) it directs people "into the Way, the Truth and Life." In the final verse as it moves "here in our worship," it prompts those who are in the worshipping community "to bring our lives to Jesus Christ."¹ This hymn affirms that with every move or act of the Holy Spirit's power there are demonstrable results within the community.

The theme of the Spirit's power is re-echoed in another of Aymer's hymns – *O Let the Power Fall on Me*.² The prayer for the Spirit's power to fall on every individual in the community is developed further. The other verses reflect the need for the power of the Spirit to cause the community to "live as one" and that through the prayers and intercessions for others, "may the Spirit make us one." Through this hymn, the Spirit- powered community is one that has received the "promised Comforter" thereby causing "our hearts be filled with love...when the Spirit come like a Dove." There is a connection here in that an empowered community is also united and vice versa. There is an added sense of immediacy with the plea for the "power

¹ Hymn # 120 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

² Hymn # 118 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

here and now” to be the desired community which has received the “power of grace and peace and love.”

Hugh B. Sherlock’s hymn, *A Song of Renewal*, is another example of the Church being an empowered community through the work of the Holy Spirit. Sherlock itemizes what is expected of a Church that has been renewed as it engages in the mission of spreading the Gospel of Christ. That mission requires the power to do the following:

Freedom give to those in bondage,
Lift the burdens caused by sin;
Give new hope, new strength and courage,
Grant release from fears within.
Light for darkness; joy for sorrow;
Love for hatred; peace for strife;
These and countless blessing follow
As the Spirit gives new life.¹

Caribbean hymns therefore are in line with orthodox ecclesiology which recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit as the true source of power in order for the Church as a ‘called out’ community to achieve what it could not do on its own.

In another of Hugh Sherlock’s hymn, *God of the Earth and Sky*, cites the many features of the lands in the Caribbean, which ought to trigger us to celebrate what nature has provided. He holds that the Caribbean is located ““Mid dancing azure seas, upheld by thy command, / Our lovely islands rise in tropic splendour planned.” And yet the hymn offers a stern reminder that we are simply “stewards” of all that God has deposited in the Caribbean lands. With that understanding, there is the readiness to acknowledge “Thine is the fruitful field, the broad-leaved plantain thine, / Banana, slender cane, tall palm and lowly vine.” Understanding the position of being stewards and not owners, the gifts of the earth are given back to God as an offering. These gifts

¹ Hymn # 121 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

include “Star –apples, purple-dyed, their leaves of bronze and green, / With ackees scarlet-hued, gay citrus gold is seen.” Considering the vastness of the natural beauty that has been deposited in the lands in the Caribbean, Sherlock fittingly ascribes to God the title of a “matchless Artist!” who in creating the beauty of the Caribbean also makes the region a vista by which God’s “own eternal beauty” can be seen.¹

Sherlock’s hymn, *Lord Behold Our Glad Rejoicing*, develops further this theme. The reasons for the celebration are many but they are all centred again on the Caribbean “land with all its treasure” that “yield its crops in fullest measure” which include “citrus, pears, bananas, cane.” Sherlock draws our attention to “the glory of the sunshine / Giving warmth to all our days” whilst not forgetting “our lovely palm-fringed coastline” and the “host of flaming flowers” which “set our gardens all ablaze.” Not only do the radiant flowers of “red hibiscus” and “poincianas” tell “of Creation’s wonder,” but he draws attention to the “mountains [standing] in awesome grandeur / Valleys [lying] serene below.” While acknowledging the beauty of the land which God has created and which is to be celebrated, Sherlock affirms that the same God will “make our people lovely too.”²

In *Harvest Canticle*, Therenia Nicholls offers a nearly comprehensive litany of all that should be engaged in celebrating being in the Caribbean. She invites “all the Caribbean, bless the Lord” and that includes “North and South...East and West...all the many races...young and old.” From there she develops her theme by pinpointing what is included in her “all”. So for Nicholls the rejoicing that ought to be manifested

¹ Hymn # 104 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

² Hymn # 107 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

does not only include elements of nature and people but also institutions.¹ Though initially this list may appear to be preposterous, it points to a shifting perspective which advocates that there is no aspect of Caribbean life that is too unsophisticated to ignite a sense of the sublime.²

One final hymn that utilizes language to place on a pedestal the natural resources of the Caribbean lands is Lena Kent's *With Thankful Harvest Song Lord*. Like the other hymn writers, Kent admonishes that we give thanks "for fruits and flowers...for crimson dawns, for sunsets." In the hymn, she draws attention to agricultural products and by so doing reminds us of how generous and plentiful these lands are. We cannot help but picture "the glowing orange / hang on laden bough" or "the breadfruit in its season, / which nourishes and cheers" and the "bright ackees scarlet-painted / and green and purple pears." The hymn draws the conclusion that being mindful of God's generosity to the Caribbean lands, the response ought not to be "ungrateful."³

The demonstration of language as expressing the boldness of an empowered community is most striking through the use of Caribbean patois in the hymns. It must be noted that by the 1970's the use of aspects of the Caribbean creole languages as a symbol of empowerment of the Caribbean person was popularized. Within the field of theatre, literature and the performing arts, the use of these elements of Caribbean

¹ The list includes: mountains, rivers, bauxite plants, spreading mahogany, sea and sky, oil refineries, ackee trees, hummingbirds, little ground doves, marigold, coloured hibiscus, coffee beans, pimento berries, waterfalls, pounding surf, cricket matches, city crowds, reggae music, steelbands, raspberry, bananas, sugarcane, Queenbee honey, coconut milk, sugar apples, oranges, fuzzy ducklings, silk cotton, soft grass, billowy clouds, rose thorns, bougainvillea, cow itch, razor grass, caves and gullies, peaceful valleys, beautiful sunset, soft moonlight.

² Hymn # 106 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

³ Hymn # 110 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

culture was becoming normative though not altogether embraced.¹ With the emergence of the Black Power Movement, and the quick expansion of the Ras Tafari Movement – two social realities that successfully exploited the Caribbean creole language and music as instruments of agency – the utilization of the same for Caribbean hymns could not be avoided. Its presence though, as was earlier mentioned, was not altogether embraced within the Church. After all, the utilization of Caribbean patois (and associated cultural musical idioms) had hitherto not been deemed sophisticated enough to be used in liturgical spheres in addressing the personhood of God. But now Caribbean hymnody, with its application of the patois, was being advanced as a vehicle for uttering key elements of the Christian faith. By using components of indigenous patois language (and music) in Caribbean hymnody, the Caribbean Church too was exercising the same power which others in the community were now doing.

An examination of this anthology of Caribbean hymns would uncover a sample of such hymns which through their use of the patois reflect the sense of empowerment that was evident among the contributors. One hymn that epitomizes this component is Barry Chevannes' *Blak Up*² (**See Appendix Five**). Within Jamaican society, when an individual is drunk, the person is said to be "blak up". Chevannes, being Jamaican, wittingly applied this phrase to capture and retell the events of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2 in which the Spirit filled believers were falsely accused of being intoxicated (Acts 2: 13).³ Another example is the Antiguan, Everton

¹ Louise Bennett (Mis Lou) emerged in Jamaica as a story teller utilizing the creole. There were similar personalities elsewhere – Pauls Keen Douglas in Trinidad and Alfred Pragnol in Barbados. In addition to Sistren, Caribbean theatrical productions such as Pantomime in Jamaica also popularized Caribbean creole. Author V. S. Naipaul also expressed the creole in his novels.

² Hymn # 116 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

³ The audio file of this Caribbean hymn is Track #2 on the CD.

Joseph's *Cum Dung to All a We* (See **Appendix Six**).¹ The creole phrase 'cum dung' can be translated 'come down' or 'come here.' However, when 'cum dung' is used it is a directive and very forceful command. It is by no means suggestive. The term would be used by a parent to summon a child where the expected response is that the child would move with haste. Consequently it is usually uttered with a commanding tone which yields to a definite response in the affirmative. Others include *Me Alone*² (See **Appendix Seven**); George Mulrain's *There Was a Man Named Jonah*;³ and Richard Ho Lung's *Knew You Before All Times*.⁴

The power of the text in language usage is clearly reflected through the application of aspects of the vernacular. Through their actions, Caribbean hymn writers can be said to have portrayed a form of "linguistic subversion."⁵ That is to say that through these hymns the ecumenical community was being called to actively access and partner with a God whose power had been revealed and whose power had been deposited within the Church in the Caribbean. All of these Caribbean hymn writers and those unmentioned have revealed that "through a transformed language and the creation of new techniques, styles, syntaxes, images, rhythms, and meanings – Caribbean [hymn] writers have overcome cultural displacement and exerted control over their own creation."⁶ That can only be said of an empowered community.

¹ Hymn # 88 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

² Hymn # 30 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*. This is a traditional Jamaican folk melody and the text paints an image of the believer's journey through the 40 days of Lent in the same manner as Jesus.

³ Mulrain, a Trinidadian, recounts the story of the Old Testament prophet Jonah and his disobedience to God.

⁴ Hymn # 74 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*. Ho Lung, a Jamaican, paints a scenario of an individual's everyday life, both good and bad. He undergirds that with the assurance that the eternal and omniscient God was mindful of these realities and offers of the assurance of God's presence and love.

⁵ Conde, 103.

⁶ Balutansky and Sourieau. *Caribbean Creolization: Reflections on the Cultural Dynamics of Language, Literature, and Identity*. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 10.

By expressing the essence of the Christian faith through such texts, Caribbean hymnody is to be celebrated because it signalled the elevation of that which hitherto was deemed unworthy of expressing divine truths within the context of corporate worship. In finding a new language, the Caribbean hymn writers were engaged in a cultural revolution indeed and through their efforts an imagined Caribbean ecumenical community was being advocated. They were now empowered to reshape their ecumenical identity but this time from within.

What then is to be made of utilizing the local language in Caribbean hymnody of *Sing A New Song No. 3*? By introducing and including hymns written in patios, the contributors and writers took what was regarded as debased and gave it power and new value. Consequently, Caribbean hymns were revolutionary in their move to utilize Caribbean creole and also to position them alongside traditional hymnody which were void of such expressions. That was avant-garde!

The other means by which one can assess the language of Caribbean hymnody as advancing the theme of the Caribbean ecumenical Church's identity as an empowered community is through the music. Music is an integral aspect of Caribbean language if we understand language to be a means of communication and expression. Any discussion of Caribbean hymns therefore would be incomplete without also focusing on the music. In describing the nature of Caribbean sacred music, O'Gorman is convinced that "West Indian music is remarkably free of bitterness and self-pity. It proclaims its religious sentiments simply and directly, in a language that developed countries have long ago lost. That innocence today is priceless."¹ The issue that emerges repeatedly is that music's power lies in its ability to empower those who are

¹ O'Gorman, *Caribbean Church Music: Some Problems*.

making the music to see this as an expression of themselves and as a way of determining their own destiny and identity. Simon Frith posits this view by holding forth that “the issue is not how a particular piece of music or a performance reflects the people, but how it produces them, how it creates and constructs an experience...that we can only make sense of by taking on both a subjective and a collective identity.”¹ He concludes that from a communal perspective “making music isn’t a way of expressing ideas; it is a way of living them.”² So then the music of these hymns emerges from a people who understand that they possess the power to use their own music. In the making of their music they are in fact exercising that power and are also participating in the power that is released through their musical language .

Peter Manuel and his co-authors, in exploring the musical landscape and identity of the Caribbean, have proposed that the Caribbean as a region is most marked by its music. They conclude that in the region “music...is the most visible, popular, and dynamic aspect of Caribbean expressive culture,”³ while contending that it is a crucible that draws from several sources: Indian, African and Europeans heritages. Specifically, Caribbean music lies somewhere in the midst of this blend. It is precisely because of this complexity drawing from many sources, that they apply the term *creolization* as the most appropriate categorization to define Caribbean music. As with creole language, *creolization* “connotes the development of a distinctive new culture out of the prolonged encounter of two or more other

¹ Simon Frith. “Music and Identity” in *Questions of Cultural Identity* eds. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay. (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 109.

² Ibid, 112.

³ Peter Manuel with Kenneth Bilby and Michael Largey. *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 2.

cultures.”¹ Further, they contend that *creolization* entails a ‘self consciousness’ process which from a Caribbean musical perspective entails some measure of “hybridity...[leading to] dramatic sense of rupture with the inherited, unquestioned traditions from the past.”² One of the key characteristics that is repeatedly highlighted is that Caribbean *creolization* in all forms reflects Caribbean people’s “ability to combine premodern African and New World features, [and] the extraordinary expressive power of Caribbean arts, especially music.”³

Little wonder that, with the complexity of Caribbean music and its intricacies, that noted Caribbean theologian Kortright Davis has boldly asserted that “music, to be sure, is the Caribbean voice of God”⁴ I concur with Davis’ position. When that is placed alongside the perspective offered by Frith and Manuel et al, it can be induced that in the act of singing Caribbean hymns, they serve then as divine utterances. The implication of this position is illuminating. Through the use of Caribbean musical moulds, Caribbean hymns were declaring to the Caribbean Church not just a resolve to sing a new song but more emphatically to sing *our* songs and *our* way. In the process the Church became a prophetic instrument calling the region to perform its own hymns which retell its story and cause all to hear and understand more clearly God’s voice. That is reflective of an empowered community. What is to be affirmed is that Caribbean hymnody through employing the essentials of Caribbean music, has given God’s voice a different timbre. If we accept Davis’ standpoint then it can be claimed that through Caribbean hymnody, God finally got a Caribbean *twang* (accent) that reflects and embodies a Caribbean lyrical theology.

¹ Ibid,15.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Davis, 44.

The musical crossbreed that is evident in Caribbean music generally is also reflected in the music of Caribbean hymnody captured in *Sing A New Song No. 3*. It cannot be overstated however, that the majority of Caribbean hymns reflect elements drawn from the African heritage.¹ The two most obvious features of this heritage in the music of the Caribbean hymns are (1) collective participation and (2) the predominance of rhythm. In Caribbean sacred music the melodic contour is generally simple and balanced in its architectural structure. Much of the rhythm though is syncopated. Consequently, in many Caribbean hymns which utilize indigenous musical styles, the scored music should be seen mainly as a road map guiding the performance. Because the essence of the music is still represented largely orally, there are nuances of the performance that cannot be captured by traditional musical notation. This of course, is a dilemma for those whose origins are from without the Caribbean. As with folk-based music, the authenticity of the music itself is maintained when those who are the creators also become the performers. In so doing there is a sharing of not just music or words but also the sharing of aspects of one's cultural and religious identity. With that comes the potential to *re-present* identities which have been hitherto historically misrepresented.

The following are some examples of the broad scope of musical rhythms that are represented in *Sing a New Song No. 3*. The *mento* rhythm is applied to Enter into Jerusalem (#2 **See Appendix Eight**), May the Lord Bless You (#52) and The Lord's Prayer (#10 **See Appendix Nine**). The *castillian* governs Glory to God in the Highest (#6), Sing a Song of Joy (#94) and From East to West (#89). The use of the *calypso* is

¹ Manuel et al identified four features of the African heritage that are still visible in Caribbean music: (1) *collective participation* in that there is no distinction between performers and listeners; (2) *emphasis on rhythm* as the primary parameter guiding the performance; (3) *call and response* which reinforces the first proposition of collective participation and (4) use of *repetition* or *ostinato*, which offers to the performers the necessary freedom to interpret and improvise the piece as it unfolds.

reflected in There was a Man Named Jonah (#38), Cum Dung to All O' We (#88), The Holy Ghost Power is Moving (#120) and Send A Youthquake (#133). In addition to original compositions, Caribbean musical idioms were also applied to the settings of the Psalms. Two psalms that are noteworthy are Psalm 23 (The Lord is My Shepherd)¹ and Psalm 150 (O Praise Ye the Lord).²

5.4 Conclusion

In answering the question 'what form should theology take,' theologian Stephen B. Bevans has suggested that contextual theology has shown that some of the most important theological proclamations have been made through the traditional 'discursive' form. There is the admission though that "great theology was also written in the form of a hymn or a poem."³ Further he asserts that "the contextualization of theology – the attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of a particular context – is really a theological imperative."⁴ Bevans, in exploring his six models of contextual theology,⁵ does so on the premise that the "move to understand all theology as contextual is also a move to recognize the complex reality of theological pluralism."⁶

Two other noted advocates of contextual or local theology are Robert Schreiter and Clemens Sedmak. The former pays particular emphasis to the rapport between three variables: gospel, church and culture⁷ but speaks more of local theology rather than contextual. Like Bevans, Schreiter maintains that at the core of

¹ The audio file of this Caribbean hymn is Track #3 on the CD.

² The audio file of this Caribbean hymn is Track #4 on the CD.

³ Stephen B. Bevans SVD, *Models of Contextual Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 17.

⁴ Ibid, 3.

⁵ The six models are: Translation, Anthropological, Praxis, Synthetic, Transcendental and Countercultural.

⁶ Ibid, 140.

⁷ Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*. (London: SCM Press), 22.

local theology is a theological posture which takes the local context seriously. Yet in this shift in theological perspective, determining where to begin the process is not a straightforward issue.”¹ Whereas Bevans highlights six likely models for engaging in contextual theology, Schreiter identified three broad models in the construct of a local theology.² Sedmak’s approach to contextual theology is somewhat different in that he brings the doing of theology from the realm of the professional theologian and makes it the task of any and everyone in the faith community. In addressing a different approach to doing local theology, Sedmak’s presents fifty theses and then expands on each with stories and examples.³

What is the relevance of highlighting these proponents who advocate for the construction and exploration of doing theology locally? They draw me to the conclusion that Caribbean hymnody is the manifestation of doing local theology in a form that is different from the traditional discursive model. The theological issues raised in these hymns are in line with those raised in the voluminous treatises on Caribbean theology that have been published over the past three decades.⁴ However, what makes *Sing A New Song No. 3* unique is that it brings to the fore that Caribbean hymns are authentic expressions that capture the essence of Caribbean Christian worship experience.⁵ Furthermore, by paying close attention to the theological content

¹ Schreiter presents three options: “previous theologies...the culture...or from church tradition (26).

² He explores the (1) translation, (2) adaptation and (3) contextual approaches to doing local theology.

³ See Clemens Sedmak, *Doing Local Theology: A Guide for Artisans of a New Humanity*. (New York: Orbis Books, 2002).

⁴ Some examples include Lewin Williams, *Caribbean Theology*. Peter Lang, 1994; Ashley Smith, *Real Roots and Potted Plants: Reflections on the Caribbean Church*. Eureka Press, 1984 and *Emerging from Innocence: Religion, Theology and Development*. Eureka Press, 1991;

⁵ See C. Michael Hawn *Gather Into One: Praying and Singing Globally*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2003). Hawn examines how context has been a driving force in the creation of new hymnody especially in places where these new hymns have spread globally. The places and individuals he identifies are drawn from Asia, Latin America, South Africa, Zimbabwe and the Iona Community. It is unfortunate that the Caribbean region was overlooked though there is often the temptation to consider the Caribbean as part of Latin America. That is not the case.

of these hymns, it moves the theological enterprise out of the domain of the professional academics and places it as an activity that is accessible to a broader constituency. By considering these hymns as embodiment of a Caribbean lyrical theology, they show that “local theologians should be able to speak the language, sing the songs, and recite the poems of the people they live with and the culture of which they are a part.”¹ Consequently, Caribbean hymn writers and musicians too in their writing of local hymns and their composing of appropriate tunes are in fact doing theology.²

Frantz Fanon has rightfully stated that “each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it, or betray it.”³ The generation that emerged in the mid 1970’s gave birth to the ecumenical movement in the Caribbean for whom the development and renewal of the Caribbean church was a priority. Through the visioning of the CCC, *Sing A New Song No. 3* came into fruition. Clearly the aim of this hymnal went beyond offering Caribbean churches different hymns to sing. As a project that was being supervised by the CCC, its intention matched that of the ecumenical body which was to refashion the image of the Caribbean and the Church in the Caribbean. Though the hymnal was just one arsenal in the convoy of the CCC, its presence corroborates the substance of this thesis that the act of singing ultimately impacts the identity of those who sing.

The Caribbean hymns found within the pages of the hymnal *Sing A New Song No. 3*, sought to reshape the image of the ecumenical Caribbean Church by advancing

¹ Sedmark, 15.

² Ulston Patmore Smith posits the view that this theology can be categorized as ‘polyrhythmic’ in that it captures and embraces a plurality of musical and rhythmic forms. See *The Caribbean Church, Caribbean Hymnody and Caribbean Identities* (D. Min Doctoral Dissertation: The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 2013).

³ Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin Books, 1967), 166.

a Caribbean lyrical theology that presented the Church in the Caribbean as a united and empowered community. As the embodiment of a contextual lyrical theology, these hymns avoided the trap of mixing “Christianity and culture in a way that does not enhance but compromises and betrays Christianity.”¹ The publication and promotion of these new Caribbean hymns was ground-breaking. Through the singing of new hymns of Caribbean origin there was also the reshaping of the identity of the Caribbean ecumenical community and the Caribbean region. In that regard, Caribbean hymnody, as captured in *Sing A New Song No. 3* can be deemed to be representative of a Caribbean theology that is both emancipating and liberating.

¹ Bevens, 22.

CHAPTER SIX

HYMNODY AND IDENTITY: A DIALOGICAL ANALYSIS

6.1. Introduction

In each of the three case studies, I have questioned the relationship between Christian hymnody and congregational community identity. In the first instance, attention was drawn to the 18th century Moravians and the primary focus addressed the place of hymnody and its contribution towards the establishment of a Moravian ‘*gemeine*’ at Fetter Lane. That chapter examined the question in light of the three main forms of worship services in which hymn singing was the central feature, namely the Lovefeast, Singing Hour and Communion. In Chapter Four, I presented an ethnographic investigation in which I examined how a local Pentecostal congregation’s collective identity might be expressed and sustained by its hymnody. In order to address this issue, I studied the hymn singing practices of the St. Thomas Assembly of God, a congregation in St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands. This ethnographic study revealed that congregational singing is one of the main means by which the congregation sustains its communal identity as an “*Oasis of Love and Hope*.” In the final case study, I considered how, through the efforts of the regional ecumenical body, the CCC sought to reframe the ecumenical identity of the Caribbean Church with the publication of the only Caribbean hymnal – Sing A New Song No. 3. By examining the rationale which guided the compilation of this hymnal, I argued that the hymnal itself can be seen as demonstrating the ideals that were espoused by the CCC. In giving attention to the textual and musical content of this hymnal, I proposed

that this Caribbean hymnal attempted to reshape the identity of the Caribbean ecumenical community by envisaging a renewed self-image which asserted that the Caribbean Church as a community was (i) united and (ii) empowered.

Each of the above case studies sought to address the issue of hymnody and identity from a different perspective. In the first instance the emphasis was more of a historical nature. The second was grounded in a participant/observation mould through the application of ethnography, while the third approached the matter from a textual slant. Having presented these three perspectives, I now return to the overarching question which has guided this research: how congregational identity is constructed by means of the hymnody utilized by congregations? At the core of this is the wider question of how hymnody can be viewed as a source of Christian identity.

Holding this broader issue before me as I considered the evidence that was generated from the case studies, I was forced to consider another closely related matter. At the outset my focus was to examine primarily how hymnody might be utilized specifically in shaping congregational identity. However, the data gathered has led to my considering the possibility that the utilization of hymnody may be regarded as not limited only to the shaping of congregational identity but also as expressing the same. In the case of the latter, hymnody can be said to be mirroring or representing the values which form the building blocks of the corporate identity. As such the hymnody then serves as a vista into describing the key components of the community by which their identity is informed. By viewing hymnody in this light, it required considering how hymnody might be a symbolic feature of the community's identity. Was the hymnody serving as a symbol that captured an integral component of congregational identity? Or maybe the symbolic assessment of hymnody lay not in

the hymnody itself but, beyond that, to how the congregation as an entity responded to the singing of hymns. It was this which led to an analysis of the physical gestures which were manifested and triggered because of the singing. Did these gestures possess symbolic elements which reflected the identity of the community? The thought of hymnody then as expressing congregational identity raised the question of what meanings might the community be conveying about its communal identity.

On the other hand, to uphold the original proposition that hymnody is shaping identity is to intimate that communal identity is generative of hymnody. The substantiation of the claim necessitates re-examining the nature of identity and how it is constructed. Thereafter a determination has to be made which addresses this question: Can it be shown through the evidence presented from the preceding case studies that the use of hymnody accomplishes this feat? In this final analysis, the goal is to review, from the case studies presented, a broadened understanding of the identity – hymnody interchange. Central to this discourse, therefore, is the examining of both aspects of the relationship between hymnody and identity. This means that one has to consider deducing whether hymnody as it is employed by congregations can be said to be shaping identity, expressing identity or possibly both.

A dialogical analysis is the most fitting format that will allow for the assessment of the multiplicity of possible linkages between hymnody and identity. In holding hymnody and identity in tension, there are three broad themes that I will highlight. Within each of these mega themes there are other sub-themes that will also emerge along the way. First I will give attention to hymnody *as* identity. The crucial question to be answered is how might hymnody be said to be a source of identity? Consequently, having established at the outset an understanding of the scope of

identity, does the evidence show that hymnody, as was presented in the three case studies, be a means whereby identity is either shaped or expressed? In order to make such a determination I will elaborate on three avenues by which the utilization of hymnody can be perceived as expressing congregational identity.

Having established the potential of hymnody to be a viable aspect of identity, the second emphasis of the dialogical analysis will draw attention then to the notion of hymnody as *performing* identity. There are two factors that are essential building blocks of hymnody: text and music. The premise of this argument is that through the performance of both the text and music of hymns, there is a parallel *performance* of sorts in terms of identity. I will propose that through hymnody there is the reinforcement or the formulation of certain characteristics of identity. When these are voiced then it can be said that identity is being enunciated. The proposition rests on the ground that both the texts and music of hymnody can be seen as expressions of language. I will therefore engage primarily with aspects of the performative language theories of British philosopher J. L. Austin. The analysis will consider how in the singing of congregational hymnody the words and music may also be said to *be doing* or *performing* identity.

The third important element of the dialogical analysis will bring to the fore the issue of the interplay between hymn singing and identity upon the actual formation of congregational identity itself. Having established both that hymnody is a source of identity and that the theory of performativity supplies a means whereby this is attained, then one must account for how congregational identity could be a by-product of the hymnody of congregational singing. At issue is the question, what process might be offered as a means to explain how the identity of the congregation is being

shaped, reshaped or expressed through the practise of congregational singing? Are there social or theoretical models that can be applied to a congregational context which will offer an explanation of how hymnody can be said to be impacting congregational identity? In engaging with this aspect of the discourse, I will propose some workable concepts that may be applied to explicate the hymnody / identity interplay.

6.2. Hymnody as Source of Identity

The first point to be explicated is that hymnody is a means whereby congregational identity is constructed and reinforced. Though congregational hymnody is a central feature of Christian worship, I am not in any way suggesting that it is the primary source of congregational identity. However, might one be able to show that the hymnody which a congregation uses provides an insight into its identity? At the outset of this thesis, I highlighted that in the Handbook on Congregational Studies, the authors explored various means by which congregational identity can be analysed. These included the congregation's history, heritage, world view, symbols, ritual, demography and character.¹ Though there is no direct mention of what a congregation sings as functioning in this light, I am opined that an analysis of congregation's hymnody can deepen one's understanding of congregational identity. Not all of the above classifications, though, need be applied to the consideration of hymnody as a source of identity. I will, therefore, give particular attention to the following three classifications drawn from the Handbook and show how hymnody can be considered as a means of congregational identity. They are: (1)

¹ Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley & William McKinney eds., *Handbook for Congregational Studies* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 23.

hymnody as expressing heritage identity; (2) hymnody as one of the symbols through which identity is expressed; and (3) the use of hymnody as a demonstration of a congregation's ritual identity.

6.2.1 Hymnody as Heritage Identity

To speak of heritage as an indicator of congregational identity, is to focus principally on the past bearing in mind that the congregation's identity has been shaped primarily by events of the past. It is that part of its identity which "comes to it out of its past by inheritance... what a congregation considers to be its sacred deposit from its total past."¹ Furthermore, the Handbook lists the many avenues through which this heritage is received. It cannot be overlooked that hymns are mentioned as an example of one such means.² The argument is made that heritage as identity can be thought of at two levels. The first broadly encompasses the range of beliefs and practices that can be appropriately labelled as Christian as opposed to other religions. But on a parochial level we can also make out elements of a congregation's heritage that are unique to that local congregation.³

Heritage as a tributary of identity stresses the strong influence of the past upon congregational identity. In cases where hymns have proven to be paramount in establishing a congregation's denominational identity as well as concretizing the broader Christian characteristics, then hymnody acquires a level of prominence that may not be applied to the other traditional means by which heritage is usually considered. For example, if the use of hymns proved more effective than, say, the

¹ Ibid, 25.

² Others include Scriptures, creeds and confessions, church councils, writings, liturgies and stories, 25 – 26.

³ Seen as such, they then apply Robert Redfield's concept of "great tradition" and "little tradition" as complimenting the working out of the different types of beliefs and practices that emerge as a result of the workings of heritage. The former underscores the essentials of the universality of Christianity while the latter is associated with aspects of heritage that are limited to local congregation.

formulation of creeds or other writings, then it is more likely that a congregation's heritage identity will be more dependent on what it sings as being vital to its beliefs and practices.

The Moravians at Fetter Lane were cognizant that central to its identity was a heritage that had placed a high premium on Moravian hymnody. The successful establishment of the early Moravian *gemeine* in central Europe by 1727 on Count Zinzendorf's estate had already proven that the regular singing of hymns by the congregation would facilitate the construction of these communities. Clearly by 1742 with the arrivals of the Moravians at the Fetter Lane Society, it had already been proven that the ideals of Moravian community identity which were captured in the concept of the *gemeine* could be achieved by placing the emphasis on hymnody.

When speaking of congregational identity and heritage as a conduit of the same, one also must consider that even though heritage is a backward glance to the past it still dictates how the congregation presently understands its current identity. The heritage of the past colours the current world view, the ritual practices and even the interpretation and understanding of symbols that are in operation. Seeing hymnody as a carrier of heritage identity is to also accept that hymnody allows the congregation to firmly anchor its identity to some reality in the past which has proven to be worthwhile in that it has withstood the test of time. Once the hymnody can be said to have contributed to sustaining the identity which resides in the congregation's heritage, then the reapplication or reusing of the same corpus of hymnody becomes common place. In that sense the congregation therefore is reaffirming the hymnic traditions which are part of its heritage identity.

However, there are some pros and cons of hymnody as heritage identity. One advantage is that of continuity of the fundamentals of the congregation's identity especially if the same are clearly captured in the hymnody. This helps the congregation to associate its identity with previous generations. Another is that the utilization of hymnody which encapsulates heritage identity also keeps the 'little' traditions of the congregation active and maintains the collective memory of the congregation. The Moravians at Fetter Lane, therefore, would have seen their identity as a *gemeine* not as an isolated reality but as part of the 18th century global mission phenomenon.¹ This would also account for the retention of certain hymns within the electronic hymnal by the St. Thomas Assembly of God congregation. The advocating for the inclusion of the older hymns on the part of the elderly members in that congregation can be attributed to their efforts to maintain their heritage identity.

On the other hand, hymnody as heritage identity, because it relies so heavily on the inheritance of the past, can be the death knell of new hymnody which does not possess the same rootedness with the congregation's past. This would account for the less than enthusiastic attitude of the elderly congregants at the St. Thomas Assembly towards some of the newer entries in the assembly's electronic hymnal. In the same token, the lack of connection with the congregation's past on the part of new hymnody might serve as a basis which would explain the failure of some of the congregations under the ecumenical grouping of the CCC in utilizing the Caribbean hymns in Sing A New Song No. 3. Whereas the Caribbean hymnal points to the attempt to redirect a region's ecumenical hymnic heritage and identity, the consequence of attempting to acquit a community's collective heritage identity by

¹ It was noted that on Prayer Days, hymn verses were sung as prayers for the various mission places around the world where Moravian missionaries were stationed.

stripping away the essentials of its hymnody was the fate of the Moravians in England in the latter part of the 18th Century. Such is the argument that Yohan makes in his dissertation. He laments that because of the ‘Sifting Period’ in which the Moravians made sweeping changes to their hymnody there was a direct correlation to their identity. When the Moravians “bowed to the pressure to readjust itself according to respectable Protestant standards; [and] in doing so, it sacrificed much of its own unique identity; and that in the end, refined, enlightened Christianity ultimately penetrated and permanently altered even this most essential aspect of the Zinzendorffian religious model.”¹

A congregation’s hymn singing heritage is also a reflection of an important component in its worship tradition. As such, tradition therefore can be viewed as a building block of heritage. This implies that by valuing tradition there is an affiliated valuing of one’s heritage. The hymn singing traditions of a community are also the means whereby the heritage of that congregation is maintained. Atkins has highlighted that “tradition has the value that it carries the continuity of memory...[it] allows the individual to participate in the corporate memory which gives a sense of continuity.”² Since heritage is inclusive of both past and present, then traditions, especially those associated with the congregational singing cannot be ignored. To abandon or ignore a congregation’s hymn singing traditions as a means whereby heritage is kept alive is also to abandon a congregation’s collective memory which will eventually fade into oblivion.

The notion of hymnody as an element of heritage identity brings to the foreground as well how the possession of the hymnal itself is an integral part of that

¹ Yohan, 150.

² Atkins, 124.

heritage. Just as there are other tangibles that have been assigned a position of authority in defining congregational heritage identity (ex. denominational seal, weekly bulletins, the Bible), the hymnal itself represents that same authority. It is connected to congregational heritage identity because it is the primary source from which its hymns are drawn. In each of the case sites presented in this study, the argument can be made that the congregational attitude towards the hymnal (or supplemental hymnal in the case of Sing A New Song No. 3) is an indicator of how the actual hymnal and its content forms part of the heritage template which informs congregational identity.

The seriousness which was evident among the 18th century Moravian community in publishing and distributing its own hymnal is a reflection of this aspect of heritage identity. The absence of a hymnal would have been perceived as unthinkable. Could it be that among some members of the Caribbean ecumenical movement, the impact of the Caribbean hymnal and its message was not as effective because of its content itself but rather because it had yet to be pushed further up the pyramid as a credible source of congregational heritage identity? Consequently, could a less than enthusiastic embrace of the new Caribbean hymnal, be the result of the hymnal being viewed as a ‘supplementary’ confirming its secondary position to the many denominational hymnals against which it was competing? That the elderly members of the St. Thomas Assembly still referred to the number in the printed hymnal and that the congregational singing, which triggered the movement of the two elderly ladies, typically drawn also from the old hymnal points, too, to the predominance of tangible printed hymnals as a significant source of congregational heritage identity.

To propose that hymnody is a source of heritage identity within a congregation is to suggest that for that faith community it can be argued that the hymnal, like the Bible, has been afforded an unmatched position where it is able to speak forcefully and directly to inform and impact the spiritual and heritage identity of the congregation.¹ Furthermore, one has to ask, upon examination of the other major facets through which the heritage identity of the congregation is maintained, has the congregation created its own “hierarchy of credibility”²? And in so doing where it is determined that congregational hymnody occupies a primary place then it can be deduced that in such instances the tangible possession of a hymnal is critical because the hymnal most likely holds a place that quite likely may be paralleled only to the Bible.

6.2.2 Hymnody as Symbolic Identity

In suggesting that hymnody be viewed as symbolic identity requires first having an understanding of the nature of symbols. Simply stated, “a symbol stands for something else.”³ To advance the notion that congregational hymnody be viewed as depicting a congregation’s symbolic identity is to attempt to isolate just one aspect of a “highly complex system” that is “built largely on words, gestures, and their combinations.”⁴ After all, the exploration of hymnody as a source of the congregation’s symbolic identity also acknowledges that situated within that same frame are other aspects of the congregation that also inform their identity. Included among the other possible sources of symbols within a congregation are: its

¹ Anthony Reddie, *Working Against the Grain: Black Theology in the 21st Century*, (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2008), 51.

² Anthony Reddie, *Dramatizing Theologies: A Participative Approach to Black God Talk*, (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2006), 10.

³ Jackson W. Carroll et al., 35.

⁴ Ibid, 35.

architectural design, the placement of icons or other images, logos etc., the seating configurations both within the body of the congregation as well as on the altar. The chief purpose for the unraveling of this complex maze of interlocking factors is to comprehend what meaning(s) are associated with a particular symbol and how the same serves as a source of identity.

Consequently, in the context of a congregation engaging in public worship, to bring to the fore what it sings and to propose that it be viewed as symbolic in nature is to infer that the hymnody is pointing towards something else. I am opined that elements of a congregation's identity are represented through its hymnody. To intimate, though, that there is a single meaning that can be attached to hymnody as symbolic identity of a congregation would be an oversimplification of the issue. For to speak of hymnody as a symbol is also to consider what anthropologist Victor Turner has said about the nature of symbols. In his study of the Ndembu ritual, Turner maintains that "a single symbol, in fact, represents many things at the same time: it is multivocal, not univocal."¹ This implies that symbols potentially point to more than one referent. It therefore means that hymns, like other symbols, could possess a multiplicity of meanings when considered from the individual perspective. The range of potential symbolic meanings, therefore, of congregational hymnody could be as wide and varied as the number of persons engaged in singing at any one time.

In spite of this reality, is it still possible to advocate that hymnody can also serve to present a collective identity to the congregation as a single referent? In that case then, the collective symbolic meaning which the hymnody yields is not altogether detached from the individual referents. Martin Stringer has proposed that in

¹ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 52.

considering how individuals communicate and assess symbolic meaning to the hymnody they sing, one should give attention to the individual stories that are associated with these hymns. There is the acknowledgement that these personal stories can trigger associated memories of biblical stories. The placement of individual stories alongside the biblical stories can serve as an interpretive lens through which meaning of worship is perceived. Hymnody therefore can be categorized as a symbol of both individual and collective narratives. Stringer argues that it is in the merging of the various stories that there is the unfolding of “that which was unknowable in worship” and that this is accomplished primarily via experiential means.¹ The highlighting of hymnody as experiential motif, according to Stringer, bolsters my argument of hymnody as an aspect of symbolic identity within a congregation.

In the *Handbook for Congregational Studies*, a clear distinction is made between signs and symbols. Though they both “stand for something else,” signs make their points with low emotional stimulus but with high specificity about their referents,” while symbols do so “with high emotional stimulus and low specificity about what that something is.”² The higher the emotional stimulus, then, the more heightened is the experiential factor. Congregational identity is not attained in a vacuum, but is measured against the ‘Other’. Given that the congregation’s perception of the ‘Other’ in worship is communicated through hymnody as well as other aspects of the worship, then hymnody as expressive of symbolic identity can be regarded ironically as being both fixed while at the same time moveable. A congregation through its hymnody can be reaffirming its collective Christian identity on the one

¹ Stringer, *On the Perception of Worship*, 106.

² Ibid.

hand while at the same time perpetuating the individual's personal identity through the associations of the stories related to the hymns. The reality of symbols' "low specificity" allows for there to be within the same congregation a plurality of meanings associated with the same common hymnody. Yet even though there may be individual interpretation, I contend that it is possible to articulate a generally accepted meaning(s) of congregational hymnody as a collective symbolic identity which serves as a unifying force that feeds into the congregation's communal identity.

The embrace of hymnody as symbolic identity situates it within the extended discourse on the role of the symbolic within the liturgy. Consequently, to assess the place of hymnody as a facet of symbolic identity necessitates incorporating aspects of the ongoing dialogue which addresses various arguments of a larger debate of how the liturgical practices can impact congregational and even denominational collective identity. For example, in considering the changes that have been made to the new Book of Common Prayer on the identity of the Church of England, David Martin, recognizing that the liturgy is akin to a "forest of symbols" argues against the changes that have been made. He rationalizes his position by affirming that within the original Book of Common Prayer the "form and rhythm drive home the stake of meaning and establish identity."¹ For Martin, the wholesale changes that have been made are likened to the removal of a "forest of symbols" which, having been cleared away had resulted in the "lost markers of identity." Eventually, the Anglican Church goes "from being a church with roots, possessing identity and conferring identity....[to] a featureless international sect."²

¹ David Martin. "Personal Identity and a Changed Church," in *No Alternative: The Prayer Book Controversy*, ed. David Martin & Peter Mullen (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 15 – 16.

² Ibid, 22.

To classify hymnody as an exemplification of symbolic identity might best be justified in exploring how hymns as symbols can be said to trigger bodily gestures upon the singing congregation. Congregational identity, at its core, is concerned about the congregation's sense of being. So then to make out that hymnody is an aspect of the congregation's symbolic identity is to reason that the singing of hymns, to the congregation, become symbols which "are seen primarily as assurances of being, but they are also instrumental in representing changes in congregational identity."¹ Given this particular stance on the interrelation between symbol and identity, then the argument can be made that the emotional response of the congregation which is expressed bodily is an embrace on the part of the congregation to hymns which they have assessed to be expressing and encapsulating their sense of being or their identity.

In the debate on the revision of the Book of Common Prayer, in addition to David Martin, I. R. Thompson offers an analysis on that matter which, I am opined, could also add some clarity to this discussion on hymnody as symbolic of congregational identity. Thompson argues that when we consider the purpose of the language in the prayer book that it must be noted that it raises the broader question of the Gospel as either message on the one hand or manifestation on the other. When language is seen as latter it is buried etymologically in the Greek *phanerosis* which is to make something visible. However, there is somewhat of a contradiction because that which is being made visible through manifestation is also at the same time concealed. Manifestation, he suggests, occurs in two forms: expression and impression. As opposites, the former is the "outward sign" while the latter is "inner grace." There must therefore be the understanding that "manifestation by expression

¹ Jackson W. Carroll et al., 37.

occurs whenever the Church discloses Christ in realistic symbols, that is, symbols which convey what they signify and which render visible the power of the invisible world. Manifestation by impression occurs as the result of grace working in the individual.”¹ In proposing that hymnody be deemed as a means of congregational symbolic identity, it is my contention that hymns be embraced as expressing this manifestation just as art, architecture or icons which all alike “possesses to a remarkable degree the capacity to render truth visible or, in the case of music, to embody truth in the physical properties of sound.”² I will elaborate further on the place of the sound of hymn singing in identity formation later in the chapter.

To view hymnody through the symbolic framework, then, is to propose that via a congregation’s hymnic repertoire, that which is hidden and which is received by faith breaks open a revelation of otherness. If we accept that what a congregation sings forms part of the liturgy and that the liturgy utilizes religious language which has the primary function of manifestation, then “it requires a language which, like the language of art or poetry, is complex, potent, rich in suggestion and in the ability to enshrine hidden truth. It must be capable, as it were, of manifesting the glory beneath the symbol.”³ Hymnody, it can be said, makes use of language which as a symbol manifests and makes Christian truth visible which at the same time expresses and forms Christian congregational identity. By proposing that hymnody be labelled as a sample of symbolic language that achieves manifestation, then as such a symbol type, hymnody “does not hide in order to obscure; it hides in order to reveal.”⁴

¹ I. R. Thompson. “Gospel Message or Gospel Manifestation” in *No Alternative: The Prayer Book Controversy*, ed. David Martin & Peter Mullen (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 26

² Ibid, 28.

³ Ibid, 29.

⁴ Ibid, 31.

The validity of hymnody as expressing and capturing a congregation's symbolic identity is affirmed when we step back and consider more broadly the general use of symbols in Christian worship. Patrick Byrne in addressing this matter maintains that "symbols in the liturgy are action and signs whose meaning comes from the inspired word of God. Symbols are images in action."¹ Byrne argues that in Christian worship symbols and symbolic actions are necessary because the divine mysteries that are being expressed in worship are too complex to comprehend. He presents an array of symbols in worship as well as symbolic actions recognizing that they "carry many layers of meaning"² as was earlier noted.

For Byrne, the priority that ought to be afforded to congregational singing to reinforce the efficacy of the symbolic within the liturgy is without apology. Referring to how effective the singing of responses in the Eucharistic prayer could be, he asserts that "when the prayer has no singing within it, its effectiveness as a symbolic action is lessened."³ This begs the question: how much more might we uncover of congregational identity by embracing the potency of the hymnody as a means whereby symbolically how the community defines itself is being represented through the hymns? This would be revelatory especially if we hold to the stance as Byrne does that because already so much of the recognizable symbols in worship "are referred to in the hymns, psalms, canticles, and anthems that we sing. Wedding these symbolic actions with our singing can make their meaning become more evident."⁴

What then does the hymnody of the Moravians at Fetter Lane and the Pentecostals at The St. Thomas Assembly of God reveal about the identity of these

¹ Patrick Byrne, "Symbolic Actions in Christian Worship," in *Liturgy and Worship: Lifetime Learning*, eds. Robin Leaver and Joyce Ann Zimmerman, (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 70.

² Ibid, 72.

³ Ibid, 81.

⁴ Ibid, 100.

congregations? How might the above positions be corroborated from the case studies? Among the Moravians at Fetter Lane the congregational identity or ‘being’ was generally accepted to be that of a ‘*gemeine*.’ From the teaching of Zinzendorf, the chief proponent of this concept, it was clear that every aspect of the community was geared towards reinforcing that identity. As was stated in Chapter Three, that included the social ordering of the members of the congregation into ‘*choirs*’, the living accommodations and the overall patterns of worship. In the same way that these other factors can be seen as components of the symbolic identity of the Moravian ‘*gemeine*’, so too was the hymnody. Earlier I established that the ‘*gemeine*’ was a “daily system of God” in which the ultimate goal was not simply to bring someone into the congregation but to communally join a soul to Jesus Christ. Consequently, when the diarist highlights the heightened emotional and physical responses that were characterized with the singing of Moravian hymnody at Fetter Lane, one can surmise that through the singing of these hymns, there was the voicing of the ideals of the congregational identity. The visible bodily responses then can be seen as an external affirmation that hymnody as a symbol is conspiring to fortify in this case the referent of the ‘*gemeine*.’ As a symbol, the multivocality of Moravian hymnody resulted in introducing the unconverted to life in the ‘*gemeine*’, the fusing of German and English Moravians and bringing about the attaining of the spiritual pinnacle of being joined with Christ through the side-wounds.

Hymnody as a measure of symbolic identity is also evident at the St. Thomas Assembly of God congregation. Overall, the gestures of the congregants as they sang can collectively be said to reflect a communal symbolic identity of the ‘oasis’ imagery. By this I mean that as members danced, clapped and raised their hands – all

actions which are triggered because of the singing – then their bodies become conduits by which the collective identity of the congregation as an “Oasis of Love and Hope” is being manifested. However, the bodily action of the two elderly women waving their banners up and down the aisle during the singing of particular hymns, because of its uniqueness, can be considered to be more potent representation of hymnody as a collective symbol identity. Whereas the individual members’ bodily response to the singing can be a measurement of how the hymn itself may be reinforcing an individual Christian identity, I submit that it is the physical response of the two women to the hymnody that reinforces the congregation’s singing as a representation of collective symbolism of the “Oasis” identity.

To infer that hymnody is a means of symbolic collective identity which can be most readily attached to bodily gestures is to make a case that the associated gestures are normative within the community and have been incorporated as part of the community’s general symbolic framework. The hymns, as they ignite emotional responses and associated gestures, demonstrate that such gestures are rich with symbolic meanings that are appropriated by the community. Speaking to this matter, Stephen Marini has suggested that “if a literary work, visual image, or ritual gesture enjoys exceptionally wide circulation in a religious community, it may properly be assumed to hold important religious meaning.”¹ The religious meanings that are associated with a congregation’s hymnody are unearthed through the gestures which are triggered in the singing of the hymns. Such gestures in turn become part of the congregation’s forest of symbols upon which their identity is either constructed or expressed.

¹ Stephen Marini, “Hymnody as History: Early Evangelical Hymns and the Recovery of American Popular Religion.” *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 71: 2 (2002): 278.

6.2.3 Hymnody as Ritual Identity

As its most fundamental level, a ritual is “repetitive action that has more than utilitarian significance.”¹ Specifically, “it is a form of nondiscursive, gestural language through which a group acts out meanings and relationships that are of enduring significance to its life.”² The sphere of anthropological studies has helped in our understanding of the nature of rituals. Because of the contribution of anthropologists such as Victor Turner, we have been made to comprehend ritual as a “*transformative* performance revealing major classifications, categories, and contradiction of cultural processes.”³ Turner emphasises his interpretation of ritual by offering a distinction between ritual, on the one hand, and ceremony on the other. Ceremony, he is opined, is “linked with social *states*” while ritual is “associated with social *transitions*.”⁴

The implication of embracing this position is that ritual then is seen as a particularized act, the axis of which results in changes or modifications within the lives of those actively engaged in the ritual. Arnold van Gennep, like Turner, gives particular attention to ritual’s ability to be transformative. Consequently, he advances that rituals, seen as rites of passages, can be classified and subdivided into three types: (1) separation rites (preliminal); (2) transition rites (liminal); and (3) incorporation rites (postliminal).⁵ The notion of liminality is also central to Turner’s taxonomy in his development of the concept of *communitas* which I will discuss later in this chapter. At this point, it is suffice to state that a congregation that is engaged in

¹ Jackson W. Carroll et al., 37.

² Ibid.

³ Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1986), 157.

⁴ Ibid, 158.

⁵ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 11.

worship is also participating in a ritual activity. Seen in this way, all that constitutes worship can also be analysed in light of the three categorizations listed above.

Given that collective identity is about the articulation and expression of what a community considers itself to be or not, I view the congregation's worship as ritual to be a major part of the matrix by which communal identity is achieved. By emphasising that the substance of ritual is geared towards transition and transformation then it implies that through ritual, identity is both attained and reinforced. Having established earlier that the nature of identity is such that it is not fixed, the transitory and transformative characteristics of ritual are congruent with the essence of identity formation. Where hymnody, therefore, is central to a worship as a form of ritual, then the assertion can be made that hymnody as a part of the community's ritual acts "function analogously to various creedal statements and symbols...[and] communicate meanings and relationship that express a congregation's identity – either what its identity actually is (or once was), or what its identity is becoming."¹

Separate and apart from rituals comprising rites of passages, Carroll et al. highlight that congregational identity is also informed by what they term as 'rites of intensification'. Such rites, they maintain, can reinforce both the larger catholic traditions of Christianity and the little traditions that are peculiar to a particular congregation. Though they itemize other rituals by which congregational identity can be assessed, it is this feature that I find most appealing to our discussion. In addressing rites of intensification, they advocate that such rites can "help disparate groups within the congregation experience their oneness as a particular people and as

¹ Jackson W. Carroll et al., 37.

members of the Body of Christ.”¹ Furthermore, they argue that through such means a congregation can transmit from one generation to another the main core of its heritage identity. These particular rites of intensification are critical for without them “the congregation’s identity would not likely be maintained.”²

How then can we evaluate and adjudge hymnody and identity in light of the abovementioned? Hymnody itself is not ritual. But where congregational hymnody is central and pivotal to the execution of a particular congregational ritual to the point where the purpose of the ritual would be compromised and its meaning lost, then hymnody cannot be viewed as an extra nonessential component to the ritual. Where this is the case, then hymnody can be regarded as being a source of congregational ritual identity.

If liminality is the hallmark of rites of passage where the ritual is geared towards the transformation of the participants in the ritual; then when at Fetter Lane Moravian hymnody is utilized, for example in a Lovefeast, to bring individuals who were not a part of the *gemeine* to be joined to the community, then hymnody is demonstrating liminal attributes. Similarly, the format of the Moravian Singing Hour in which, as a ritual, hymns are the only components, means that hymnody again is made to portray liminality within the community. The continued use of Moravian hymnody throughout all aspects of Moravian worship can be said to be geared towards the three liminal phases associated with ritual. Of course, for the Moravians, the ultimate expression of the transformational power of hymnody in ritual is attained when hymnody is made to cause the community to be joined with the side wounds of Jesus during the Communion. The employ of hymnody as being woven into the

¹ Ibid, 39.

² Ibid.

Moravian worship as rites of intensification is also noticeable. For it is through the continued singing of Moravian hymns, especially sung from memory, that the central features of Moravian heritage identity captured in the utopian concept of the *gemeine* is understood and transmitted especially to the emerging Fetter Lane congregation.

Hymnody as an intermediary of ritual identity is also discernible when we examine the singing practices at the St. Thomas Assembly of God. Unlike the Moravians, the congregation at the Assembly did not have a worship ritual format in which the content was exclusively hymns. However, the case can likewise be made for hymnody to be viewed as integral to ritual identity. As already noted, worship at the Assembly was constructed on two basic principles: singing and preaching. The question then is how might congregational hymnody, seen in light of ritual identity, can be said to have contributed to the overarching congregational identity of “An Oasis of Love and Hope”? What evidence lends credence to hymnody facilitating either rites of passage or of intensification? It was within the Assembly that there was a general understanding that the goal of the worship leaders as they led the congregation in singing was to move them from “the outer court to the inner court.” This figurative movement is a reflection of liminality in that in the same way hymnody among the Moravians was aiming to have members be joined to Christ’s wounds and as a spouse, so too at the Assembly, the goal of congregational hymnody was to attain a heightened spiritual state.

When we examine more closely the relationship between congregational identity and congregational hymnody at the Assembly, the overlap between ritual and symbolic hymnic identity becomes pertinent. But one cannot overlook the place of the sermon in this sequence. I purport that the sermon be considered as sandwiched

between the two major periods of congregational singing – the first at the beginning of worship and the second that occurs at the end after the sermon. Might it be more precise then to consider these three components of worship at the Assembly to be mirroring the following status: preliminal (singing before sermon), liminal (sermon) and postliminal (singing after the sermon)? In light of this stance, then it underscores that a rightful view of hymnody as ritual and symbolic identity within the Assembly requires incorporating both of the primary features by which the community expresses and sustains its identity, viz. singing and preaching.

Yet, I contend that the physical movements of the two elderly ladies during the singing of particular hymns at the Assembly cannot be overlooked to be symbolic in that their actions is a window through which there is an outward manifestation of a liminal transfer, ritually speaking, that is occurring within the congregation as it sings. Little wonder then that the worship leaders have recognized the value of selecting hymns from the congregation's repertoire which will bring about the specific action of these ladies moving up and down the aisle waving their banners. Further, by having the congregation repeat the hymns without having predetermined the frequency is an indication that the worship leaders are facilitating hymnody as an aspect of the rite of intensification (preliminal). Can it be presumed that the purpose of repetition of congregational hymns is to raise the level of the 'oasis' to a perceived level where the liminal movement from outer to inner court is attained? Might it not also be that the instances where the pastor takes over the leading of the worship and then chooses other hymns for the congregation to sing is his way of declaring that the preliminal movement has not yet been achieved, based on his perception as the spiritual leader of the congregation? On his part, the utilization of hymnody as a response to his sermon

is geared towards achieving the postliminal movement. This time though the goal is not to move into the “inner court” but to move even further spiritually to accepting the offer of salvation.

The crux of my proposition is that hymnody, though not a ritual per se can determine the shape and outcome of the liminal actions which are associated with a particular ritual. Because Christian worship is a ritual activity, then it follows that the hymnody that is incorporated into worship does have a bearing on the outcome of the worship. The degree to which this is the case is based on the place which hymnody occupies in the particular worship tradition. Whilst I did not observe or record any congregation engaged in worship while singing the entries from the Caribbean hymnal, based on the musicological analysis offered in the previous chapter, it is still possible to make some substantial conjectures in terms of the ways in which Caribbean hymnody too can be depicted as a means of ritual identity.

Clearly the advocates for Caribbean hymnody were not blinded to the potential effect of Caribbean hymnody and its likely impact on the Caribbean worship ritual. Can it be said that they were aiming merely for some cosmetic adaptations or were the goals more substantial? Bearing in mind that the Caribbean hymnal Sing A New Song No. 3 was an ecumenical undertaking, then clearly the target was not to restructure the various denominations and their little traditions associated with their individual worship rituals. Rather, the emphasis was to formulate a regional Caribbean ecumenical identity. Caribbean hymnody then was seeking to offer to the churches in the region hymns that were not confined to the usual Euro-centric identity branding of Methodist, Moravian or Anglican hymnody. All of these were couched in the particular heritage of those denominations and bore the historic fabric of their

Christian traditions. Consequently, I am opined that Caribbean hymnody sought to provide, first and foremost, a new corpus of hymnody, the labelling of which could not be confined to any one particular denomination. This hymnody was to be known primarily for being Caribbean more so than Moravian, Methodist or Anglican, etc.

In providing a new body of hymnody that was not aligned with any particular denomination but rather to a regional ecumenical initiative, Caribbean hymn writers also provided, to the churches in the region, more than just new Caribbean hymns to sing. They also furnished what may be best described as a thread that was strong enough to bind together a church that was historically divided along denominational borders. The singing of Caribbean hymnody became the main glue which connected Caribbean Christians who did not want to feel as though the pursuit of regional ecumenism meant abandoning their parochial identity. As a result, it was the singing of Caribbean hymns which became the centre piece in worship rituals which saw the gathering of Caribbean Christians from different denominations.¹ Though there were theological, ecclesiastical or polity differences which seemed insurmountable among the Churches in the Caribbean, Caribbean hymnody emerged as the voice that was common among all factions. In this sense, it is also emblematic of hymnody as heritage and symbolic identity.

In the previous chapter, I argued that Caribbean hymnody sought to reframe the regional ecumenical identity by postulating that the Church in the Caribbean was united and empowered. Further, I suggested that the means whereby this reimagining

¹ This was particularly striking when there were national ecumenical worship occasions. These included national celebrations such as instances where Caribbean islands observed the anniversaries of their political independence with a national worship service; the regular meeting of the Assembly of the CCC or the annual meetings associated with the local Christian Councils; inter-faith worship occasions in which the focus was either celebrating national achievement or commemorating or remembering national tragedies.

was attempted was through the formulation of a Caribbean lyrical theology. The implication is that, especially within the ecumenical sphere, Caribbean hymnody – not the difference of opinion over sacramental theology, the explication of a particular stance on a theology of worship or for that matter the articulation of a major theological issue governed by Protestant or Roman Catholic perspective – can be said to have been accredited and ascribed with liminal attributes. The popularizing of Caribbean hymnody for ecumenical worship rituals created a spiritually charged environment where Caribbean worship was characterized as being (1) celebrative, (2) contextual, (3) transformative. The successful utilization of these hymns within that ecumenical framework eventually led to their embrace in the worship rituals within the various denominational settings. It is through this trickle down effect in the use of these indigenous hymns from the regional to the parochial level that accounts for Caribbean hymnody as a source of ecumenical ritual identity.

6.3. Hymnody as Performing Identity

Having considered hymnody as a source of heritage, symbolic and ritual identity, I will now give attention to how through the actual performance of hymnody, one could also offer some justification of hymnody as performing identity. The central question of this study is: How might congregations as they sing might also be said to be articulating their communal identity? Of concern, therefore, was not just the corpus of congregational hymnody as a body of literature or sacred texts to be analysed. My aim was to discover specifically what associations might be made on how the actual singing of hymns by congregations would have a direct bearing on congregational identity. Consequently, it is the performance of hymnody that has

occupied my attention. In giving attention to the performance of hymns, one can make the congregation's response to what it sings as the focal point. In addition, emphasis can be placed on the performance practise of the congregation in terms of instrumentation that accompanies its singing and how these may contribute to the overall performance. However, as I seek to explore the core question of this study, I am opined that the examination of the performance of hymnody from a textual perspective provides significant links between hymnody and congregational identity.

Since my focus is on the performance of hymnody, then the context or framework within which that performance takes place cannot be immaterial. It is the collective public performance of hymns within the context of worship, a ritual, and how that shapes and expresses identity that concerns me. The performance of hymnody then must be pegged as part of the broader issue of the dialogue of ritual as a performance. Although I have already referenced the key aspects of Victor Turner's position on ritual in the previous section and how hymnody might be seen as a source of ritual identity, Turner's thinking on ritual as performance is also an appropriate lens through which one may views the performance of hymnody as part of a ritual performance. The implications are noteworthy.

To begin with, Turner suggests that when we examine rituals, dramas or other "cultural performances" like carnival that they do more than simply "reflect[s]" or "express[es]" how the society has constructed its social order. Rather he proposes that the performance should be seen as a "critique, direct or veiled, of the social life it grows out of."¹ Furthermore, he advances that it is during the performance that those who are engaged in the act hold up "mirrors" which do more than just reflect features

¹ Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, 22.

of the culture. The reflection in these “mirrors”, as they overlap and intersect, results in the formation of a new level of consciousness within the community. This is an “ongoing social process” and typically leads to a state where “people become conscious, through witnessing and often participating in such performance, of the nature, texture, style and given meanings of their own lives as members of a sociocultural community.”¹ However, the achievement of such levels of consciousness does not mean that the performance has necessarily resulted in meaningful change. For that to be realized, Turner proposes that there must be what he terms as “performative reflexivity.” This is:

A condition in which a sociocultural group, or its most perceptive members acting representatively, turn, bend or reflect back upon themselves, upon the relations, actions, symbols, meanings, codes, roles, statuses, social structures, ethical and legal rules and other sociocultural components which make up their public “selves”...not mere *reflex*, a quick, automatic or habitual response to some stimulus. It is highly contrived, artificial, of culture not nature, a deliberate and voluntary work of art.²

I regard the corporate public worship in which a congregation is engaged as an example of Turner’s “performative reflexivity.” An analysis of the case studies that are indispensable to this study presents a perspective which supports this position. Be it the ethnographic-based data from the St. Thomas Assembly of God or the ethno-histographic details which were uncovered in the Fetter Lane diaries, it is clear that Christian worship when evaluated as a sample of cultural performance can be labelled as demonstrating “performative reflexivity.” By highlighting specifically the place of congregational singing in worship, this study hoisted congregational hymnody as a variable in shaping collective identity. The question therefore which now comes to the fore is how to reframe, as it were, hymnody so that it too might be categorized as

¹ Ibid, 22.

² Ibid, 24.

possessing the same ilk of “performative reflexivity” as the worship ritual in which it is located. How might hymns be said to possess performative qualities which bear upon the conscientization of the socializing process of those who are engaged in the performance of hymns? In other words, how do hymns become reflexive so that in the performance of the hymns there is a crystallization of the meanings, symbols and other facets which inform the community’s identity of its collective public self?

To propose that worship in essence possess performative properties is to suggest that hymnody, as an integral component of worship, possess similar qualities and can be seen too as performative. Judith Marie Kubicki explores this matter by considering how the music of Taize could be interpreted in light of the performative theory of language.¹ Kubicki’s application of J. L. Austin’s performative language theory to a specific type of liturgical music is revelatory. Can similar deductions be made in applying Austin’s philosophy generally to congregational singing? Based on the data gathered from the case studies, what are the implications for hymnody as a means whereby congregational identity is attained? Is the performance of hymns by congregations more than merely a musical performance but also a performative reflexivity through which a congregation’s identity is formed and sustained? Although I will rely on Kuybicki’s analysis, I wish to begin the assessment of hymnody as an example performative language by reviewing some key components of Austin’s theory.

6.3.1 The Fundamentals of the Speech – Act Theory of J. L. Austin

Austin is recognised as the originator of the speech act theory or performative language theory. The premise upon which Austin’s theory rests is that we can do

¹ Judith Marie Kubicki, *Liturgical Music as Ritual Symbol: A Case Study of Jacques Berthier’s Taize Music* (Bondgenotenlaan: Peeters, 1999).

things through the use of words. Austin's concepts were presented in his seminal book How To Do Things With Words, based on a series of lectures given at Harvard University in 1955. He argues that words are not merely expressions that we utter. Rather there are certain announcements which when uttered are also accomplishing a particular action. According to Austin, not all verbal expressions can be categorised as possessing this unique quality though. Some can be said to be descriptive in that they either report a matter or verify if something is either true or false. These words are considered as *constatives*. It is those which when uttered go beyond describing or reporting and are actually 'doing' which occupy his philosophical construct of language. He cites several examples such as when someone says "I do" as part of a wedding ceremony; "I name this ship..." in the launching of a vessel; or "I give and bequeath..." as in one's will. Similarly, when a priest utters "I baptise you" in a christening rite can also be deemed as one example. For Austin, the uttering of such statements "is not to *describe* my doing of what I should be said in so uttering...or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it."¹ Because of the peculiarity of such utterances in that they signal "the performing of an action...[and] not normally thought of as just saying something," then they are classed as *performative sentences* or '*performatives*.'²

But the performative utterance can be made invalid if the prescribed conditions are not right. Therefore the legitimacy of the performative rests upon ensuring that one who utters the performative is empowered so to do (external validation), and that the inner moral state of the parties involved in making the utterance is agreeable (non-physical). However, if all of the conditions are not met,

¹ J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 6.

² Ibid, 6 – 7.

the utterance is not negated. Instead, it simply means that the utterance has been appropriated in *bad faith*. The utterance then is not false but rather *unhappy* and such performatives are seen to be *Infelicities*.¹ Because the inward condition of those participating in the performative cannot be seen or measured, then for Austin the outward action associated with the utterance must be seen as a fact.

Another aspect of Austin's philosophy that is noteworthy for the purposes of our discussion is the distinction he makes between the types of performatives. Firstly, there is the *locution* which is the type of speech through which an act is performed. This can be said to be the most impactful or forceful kind of speech act. Secondly, an *illocution* categorizes speech act in which it is not as direct and explicit. Austin underscores that the understanding of *illocution* is best grasped when it is seen in light of the *locution*. Consequently, the associated action, though indirect, can be seen as being more suggestive. Such statements reflect the "effect the speaker intends the utterance to produce in the hearer."² Thirdly, *perlocution* speech is the weakest of the three and brings to the fore how the performative may or may not achieve the desired or intended act upon the hearer. In developing his theory further, Austin classifies utterances into five broad categories based on their illocutionary force. Though he is "far from equally happy about all of them," they are listed as (1) *Verdictives* – the rendering of a decision; (2) *Exercitives* – bringing your influence to bear upon something; (3) *Commissives* – pledging or avowing; (4) *Behabitives* – related to societal conduct; and (5) *Expositives* – how words are used generally in an argument.³

¹ Ibid, See Lecture II (12 – 24).

² Kubicki, 149.

³ Ibid, See Lecture XII (148 – 164).

There are some specific elements to Austin's theory which I have deemed necessitous for the purpose of this discussion.¹ After his death, one of Austin's students, John Searle, sought to further crystalize and adapt some of the key elements of the colloquy on the speech-act theory. For the purposes of this chapter, I draw attention to Searle's set of taxonomy of illocutionary acts which he advances as an alternative to Austin's. Searle's classification includes (1) *Assertives* which "commit the speaker...to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition;"² (2) *Directives* – where the speaker is attempting to have the hearer accomplish something specific; (3) *Commissives* – requiring of the speaker to perform an action sometime in the future; (4) *Expressives* – captures the "psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content;"³ (5) *Declarations* – these include statements in which the success of their performance is directly related to the condition of the one who is making the declaration.⁴

Searle pinpoints the weaknesses of Austin's taxonomy and underscores why his is more comprehensive. The foundation of his validation rests on his proposing that there are at least twelve variables which should be borne in mind that serve as distinguishing markers when considering illocutionary acts. It is noteworthy that whereas Austin in his theory highlights primarily illocutionary verbs that Searle places more emphasis on illocutionary acts. His premise is that "illocutions are a part

¹ Some of Austin's key philosophical principles were published posthumously in the collection *Philosophical Papers*, edited by J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961).

² John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 12.

³ *Ibid*, 15.

⁴ For further discussion see Chapter One "A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts" (1 – 29) in *Expression and Meaning*. Searle offers a rationale for the components of his speech act classification compared especially to that of Austin.

of language as opposed to particular languages.”¹ By focusing on illocutionary acts and not just illocutionary verbs, the scope of the speech act discourse is broadened. For the purpose of our discussion, I will highlight four. Searle, for his part, singles out the first three as fundamental. However, in light of the focus of this study, I am opined that to ignore this fourth aspect would limit the analysis.

First, Searle suggests that one has to consider the purpose of the illocutionary act. Though this is not to be confused with the related matter of the illocutionary force of an utterance it is central nonetheless. So then according to Searle, one has to bear in mind what he calls the *illocutionary point* associated with performatives. Second, attention must be paid to the *direction of fit* accompanying the point of the illocution. This can be in either one of two directions: *world-to-word* or vice versa *word-to-world*. In the former the purpose is to have the “world to match the words” while in the latter it is clearly about getting the “get the words...to match the world.”² Promises are examples of the first while *assertives* or *directives* can be examples of the latter. Third, Searle highlights that the psychological state of the one who is making the utterance cannot be overlooked. At issue is the ‘*sincerity condition*’ of the illocutionary act. These psychological states find expressions in four ways – *belief*, *intention*, *desire* (or *want*) and *pleasure*.³ Fourth, Searle establishes that the validity of certain illocutionary acts is tied to the existence of what he terms ‘extra-linguistic institutions’. For example, one cannot declare a couple to be married unless one has been authorized by an institution in which such authority rests. The legitimacy of the performance encompasses the authorization of a duly recognized organization.

¹ Searle, 2.

² Ibid, 3.

³ Ibid, 5. All of the twelve features which Searle mentions are vital in informing his illocutionary taxonomy are highlighted in the opening chapter (2 – 8).

In her book, Kubicki utilizes the principles of Austin's performative theory in her analysis of the liturgical music of Taize. She grounds her assessment by first highlighting how Austin's theory was utilized in the analysis of general liturgical language. The three authors whom she draws upon are Wade T. Wheelock,¹ Joseph Schaller² and Jean Ladriere.³ In the case of the first, she notes that Wheelock's conclusion on the matter rests on the purpose of liturgical ritual language. The objective of such language "must be primarily understood and described as *situating* rather than *informing speech*."⁴ The classification of hymnody therefore as liturgical language means that it is an enabler to congregational identity for as text it "represents the situation, expresses and actually helps to create the situation, and/or facilitates the recognition of the situation...has the capacity to constantly repeat the transformations it brings about."⁵

Schaller sees the value of the application of this theory to liturgical language because it results in the examination of the correlations between *meaning* and *text*. In this regard, it underscores the view that in the liturgical ritual context, language is perceived "more as "doing" than simply communicating *about* a state of affairs. Rather a state of affairs is *established* in communicating."⁶ Again to consider hymnody as a conduit through which as hymns are being sung the congregation can

¹ See Wade T. Wheelock, "The Problem of Ritual Language: From Information to Situation." *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50 (1982): 49 – 71.

² See Joseph J. Schaller, "Performative Language Theory: An Exercise in the Analysis of Ritual." *Worship* 62 (September 1988): 415 – 432.

³ See Jean Ladriere, "The Performativity of Liturgical Language." In *Liturgical Experience of Faith*, ed. H. Schmidt and David N. Power, 50 – 62. Concilium series, no. 82. New York: Herder and Herder, 1973.

⁴ Kubicki, 152.

⁵ Kubicki, 152-153.

⁶ Ibid, 155.

be said to be establishing a state of affairs is to propose that identity is generative of hymnody. I will explore this point further in the chapter.

Kubicki draws attention to Ladriere's assessment of the importance and relevance of Austin's philosophy to liturgical language by highlighting three components of the performativity of liturgical language. She pinpoints that Ladriere argues for liturgical language to be seen as (1) an "existential induction; (2) an "institution" and (3) as "presentification."¹ In the first instance, language is not merely describing a particular attitude. It goes further and "makes the attitude exist by virtue of the illocutionary act underlying its enunciation."² The second variable is significant especially in light of the focus of this study on the interrelations between hymnody and the formation of a congregation's communal identity. As institution, liturgical language "not only disposes individuals to welcome that which it suggests, but by the same means, institutes a community...it is the location in which and the instrument by means of which the community is constituted."³ The bracketing of hymnody with the other components in the ritual of worship means that its attributes are akin to other features of liturgical language which are usually emphasized. In the third, Ladriere identifies "repetition, proclamation and sacramentality"⁴ as means whereby liturgical language achieves presentification. This is best understood as the ability of liturgical language to cause the reality which is being articulated in worship to be imbibed by those who are engaged in the liturgy. Liturgical language as performative language makes the substance of the liturgy real to the participants.

¹ Ibid, 153.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, 154.

With this background and balancing these perspectives with the foundational position of Austin and Searle, Kubicki establishes that the Taize chants can be seen as liturgical singing in which there is “doing” of something because of the illocutionary force of language. Further, she claims that these chants can also be viewed not just as means of informing but more importantly as situating. Finally, she argues that the musical syntax (stress, intonation etc.) that are presented in the chants themselves do weigh on the illocutionary performative.¹ Can similar conclusions be drawn based on an analysis that is broader in scope than the single case study of the genre of the liturgical chants of Taize? In broaching the notion of the performative reflexivity of the language of hymnody and its ability to fashion and / or express congregational identity, I will consider in this section two of the three principles of Kubicki. The third principle which addresses how liturgical language contributes to situating and creating a community will be looked at in the next section. Specifically then, I am attending at this juncture to two claims: (1) that hymnody too can be deemed as performative language in which by giving attention to the hymn texts it can be said that there is also the “doing” of something; and (2) that the musical texture of hymn tunes is an important component in facilitating the performative “doing” that is occurring in the hymn text.

6.3.2 Hymn Texts as “Doing”

Generally speaking, hymns as texts are atypical. Two distinctive features set them apart. First, hymns are crafted in a textual form that is strophic, as opposed to being prosaic. Consequently, they can also be adjudged as literary textual constructions which imply that they can also be examined using other interpretative

¹ Ibid, 159 – 168.

tools. It is in seeking to understand more precisely how hymns work as poetic constructs that led J. R. Watson to boldly declare that a hymn “is not an easy subject for a literary critic.”¹ My goal at this time is not to assess hymn texts as literary constructs but instead to view them as textual constructs which can be assessed through the perspective of the philosophy of language. How might the application of aspects of certain components of the speech-act theory aid in our understanding of how what a congregation sings can potentially shape and influence its identity as it sings?

I am opined that when congregations sing, it is an illocutionary act. To label congregational singing as an illocutionary act is to emphasise how the words of hymns can be assessed as words in which specific actions are accomplished as they are uttered. It is to advance the notion that hymn texts as a unique subset of liturgical language is performative in nature. Therefore when I make the claim that hymns, as written texts, possess illocutionary attributes, it is to advocate that they are texts which when voiced are in essence also doing something. In light of that, I agree with Searle’s position that generally “making a statement is as much performing an illocutionary act...[since] any utterance will consist in performing one or more illocutionary acts.”² Although according to Searle all statements can be said to be illocutionary to some degree, Kubicki proposes that in regarding the performative nature of liturgical singing that it ought to be categorized more as behabitives based on Austin’s or Searle’s taxonomy mentioned earlier. She makes such a claim because specifically for her, “the action of singing is fundamentally confessional because, in

¹ Watson, 1.

² John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 18.

the context of the liturgy, it speaks or expresses faith in God and in the possibility of a relationship with him.”¹

What then are the implications of this and how do the data from the multiple case studies reflect and support the claim that hymnic language is performative. Following the pattern of Kubicki who drew her conclusions from the case study of the Taize chants, I will demonstrate how hymns can be assessed to be performative by considering them to be illocutionary representations. I will reference specifically a sampling of three hymn texts that would have been sung at Fetter Lane during the 18th Century. I will not emphasise too much the text of the Caribbean hymns since I would have already set forth a textual analysis of the content in the Caribbean hymnal Sing A New Song No. 3 (Chapter Five). However, I will provide some reference to the practice of congregational singing within the St Thomas Assembly of God congregation to demonstrate the wider principle of the illocutionary attributes of the texts of hymns.

To ask what the text of a hymn is “doing” is to consider essentially what is its illocutionary point. Is there a single purpose or message being communicated through the text or are there several? This means considering what the hymn is telling the hearer to do. What is the congregation being asked to perform through the hymn? And when the hymn text is studied what is the illocutionary force of the performative? Can it be shown that the hymn texts reflect either the taxonomy of Austin’s or Searle’s or quite possibly a combination of both? Whether the analysis follows the classification of the former or latter, the larger issue is acknowledging that hymns as text possess an illocutionary purpose or point.

¹ Kubicki, 159.

This approach towards the textual analysis of hymns could potentially unlock some new capacities whereby meanings could be extracted when juxtaposed to the traditional evaluative methods that have already been advanced. For example, S. Paul Schilling has postulated that hymns cannot simply be adjudged on the basis of the individual's subjectivity of likes or dislikes. Though this is often inescapable, the evaluation and analysis of hymn texts call for the application of more objective criteria. Schilling recommends at least seven (7) "pertinent questions to ask of a particular hymn."¹ He further argues that because hymns are theological in nature then they must be evaluated at least through four (4) lenses: Scripture, tradition, experience and reason.² Schilling suggests some criteria by which a hymn's text could be evaluated. These are (1) a theology that is in accordance with the basic tenets of the Christian faith; (2) the use of poetic and metaphoric images that are consistent with Christian doctrine; (3) conformity to current scientific knowledge; (4) inclusivity and universality of hymn texts.³ To that I propose adding another category which is to assess hymns in light of their illocutionary point and to have this evaluated in light of the other criteria applied to hymn texts.

To illustrate this point, I will examine two Moravian hymns that appeared frequently in the Fetter Lane diaries of the 18th century.⁴ The first hymn was *We Kiss*

¹ See S. Paul Schilling *The Faith We Sing: How the Message of Hymns Can Enhance Christian Belief*, pages 42 – 51. Schilling argues that hymns are 'lyric poetry' and so his 7 questions approach the hymn from a poetic stance. As such they seek to address issues such as the internal structure, aesthetics, language use and suitability of the text as a hymn.

² Ibid, 43.

³ Ibid, 45 – 48.

⁴ With so many hymns mentioned in the diaries, I established the following as the criteria to be used to determine which two hymns to be referenced: (1) the diary must have clearly stated that the hymn was sung as part of the specific service; (2) the discovery of not just the verse which was sung but of the entire hymn so that the particular verse could be viewed in light of the entire hymn; (3) being able to match the tune that would have been associated with that hymn and securing the musical score. The search for the various hymns began by first locating the hymn text. The following seven Moravian hymnals were consulted: 1742, 1746 (Parts I & II), 1754, 1769, 1789 and 1849. That oftentimes

*Each Other in the Side*¹ – an example of a hymn that would have been sung at a Moravian Lovefeast at Fetter Lane. What if Schilling’s criteria were applied to this hymn? Several conclusions can be drawn. The centrality of Scripture as a pillar to Moravian 18th century hymnody is undeniable. Although all of Scripture would have served as a tributary feeding into the source of Moravian hymnody, there was an unusual emphasis on the New Testament and specifically the accounts of Jesus’ death and its meaning in the life of a believer. A closer examination of the hymn’s text reveals a central emphasis on the imagery of the wounds of Jesus. The hymn then can be assessed as having as its illocutionary point the goal of establishing a spiritual reality in which being a part of the Moravian *gemeine* meant becoming one with Christ by entering through his wounds. The quality of this union is likened to that which occurs between a husband and wife where there is a oneness that cannot be severed.

Analysing this hymn through the lenses of Searle, it can be determined that the hymn as an expression of performative language displays *assertives* – “My Soul and Body, Enter thou / Into the Side-Hole now”; *directives* – “With thy Side’s Blood quite cover me / And wet me thro’ and thro’” or *expressives* – “To live and work and sleep therein / I’m heartily inclin’d.” On the other hand, if the choice is made to apply Austin’s categorization of performatives, then the claim can be made that the hymn employs *exercitives* – “A Side-Hole’s Diver will I be / O Side-Hole I will sink in thee” and *commissives* – “There in one Side-Hole’s joy Divine / I’ll spend all future Days of mine.”

necessitated working backwards from the latest to the earliest especially since the later hymnals had completed indexes. Of the more than 30 hymn verses mentioned in Chapter Three, twelve hymns and their accompanying tunes were found covering the three orders of worship services discussed. It is from that list that the final two hymns were chosen. Where there was an earlier version of the hymn text or tune, that was intentionally used in keeping with the seven year period under review.

¹ See Appendix Ten for the full text of the hymn.

This hymn establishes its illocutionary point primarily through the use of two very striking images. First and most obvious being is the side wounds of Jesus. This wound is deemed to be the ‘Queen’ of all of the other wounds which would have been inflicted on Christ in his suffering and death. The second image is that of the church as the Bride of Christ. These two images complement each and capture the two elements of Moravian theology during the Zinzendorf years – seeing Christ as Husband and the supremacy of the side wound. The bridal imagery suggests a depth of intimacy which is represented with the side wound as being a bride’s ‘Chamber’. That is reinforced with the very direct action on the part of the members within the congregation who in the opening line are invited to ‘kiss each other’ – a very direct reference to the intimacy of marriage. The hymn concludes by reaffirming its illocutionary point that the most desirable place to be, where life is enriched spiritually, is no other place than the side-hole of Christ. Undoubtedly the analysis of hymn texts through the lens of the illocutionary point offers new vistas and reveals textually what the hymn is “doing” at another level.

Another Moravian hymn *Thou Death-Sweat Mix’t With Blood*¹ that was repeatedly sung, especially at Communion services at Fetter Lane, reveals similar elements of a hymn’s illocutionary qualities. This hymn, written by Zinzendorf, epitomizes the essence of his theology on the wounds of the Lamb which was central to the Moravian *gemeine*. The image of the Christ as the suffering and dying Lamb of God is painted here with an almost unimaginable eye for detail. The text embodies Christ’s suffering by paying particular attention to two fluids which would have been coming forth from his body: blood and sweat. Although one can expect that closer

¹ See Appendix Eleven for the full text of the hymn.

attention is usually paid to the spilling of Christ's blood, here Zinzendorf creatively enhances the image of the suffering Lamb by bringing to the fore that in addition to the blood there was sweat. It is the mixing of these two fluids that gives the hymn such a striking opening line and immediately jars the singer to pay close attention to the figure on the cross through new eyes. The text points not only to Christ's death but also brings the singer to recall when he was in the garden of Gethsemane praying before his crucifixion. The Gospel accounts record that the intensity of the coming suffering caused his sweat to become like drops of blood (Luke 22:44).¹

As the hymn develops Zinzendorf, like an artist, deliberately paints a striking image of the suffering Christ. Beginning from the head, attention is given to the forehead, eyes, face and hair. The singer is being drawn closer to see the dying Christ suffocating while struggling to take a breath. This reinforces the image of the severity and intensity of the moment. The picture being painted by the hymn writer is expanded as he pulls the singer to now view the place where the spear would have punctured Christ's side. An irony is declared in that even though this wound is only a few inches, what it produces is a river whose flow reaches even to hell. The image of the flowing river which is gushing forth from the Lamb is welcomed by the Lamb's wife (the Church). The final verse is both a plea and a declaration. The plea is for the river of blood and sweat mixed together to be realized in the gathered community. The declaration affirms that it is in the 'meal blest' that what is anticipated and expected will be received.

The text depicts some of the illocutionary indicators of Searle's taxonomy. For example, there is the element of a sincerity condition when it assures "Thou Corpse's

¹ "In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground." [New Revised Standard Version]

Air! Come, come / Thro' this Hand into th' Bread / When kneaded with thy Fume /
 'Twill make the members dead." The intensity of the image of the suffering Christ expands as the hymn develops this theme of focusing on the many wounds from which blood is gushing. In the final verse, there is another representation of the aspect of Searle's directional fit which can be either word to world or world to word. In this instance, the force of the illocutionary point is for the words of the hymn text to cause change in the world view of the congregation. This is epitomized with the words "Flow in this Hall with Haste / That thy church wet it render; / And that (in this Meal Blest), / God's Mandhood depth so tender."

When we examine the text of the Caribbean hymns, I hold to the view that the force of the illocutionary point generally speaking of Caribbean hymnody is geared towards the reframing of a Caribbean ecumenical identity. This was the key line of argument in the previous Chapter. Having already examined the illocutionary force of the text of Caribbean hymnody, I wish to underscore here that the illocutionary point of Caribbean hymnody can be considered as primarily possessing a directional fit in which there is an emphasis on word to world movement rather than world to word. As word to world directional fit, Caribbean hymnody utilized language which asserts the historical unity within the region and declares this reality already existed. By and large, the force of the illocutionary point of Caribbean hymnody affirms and articulates a specific reality and then develops this theme by drawing attention to how such realities can be depicted within the Church. For example, in *Hymn of the Caribbean* in Sing A New Song No. 3, the following declaration is made: "And who the Church, but we, O Lord, / Committed by your works, and word, / To seek, to serve, to help, to heal, / And each the other's ills to feel / That all may hear and know,

for good, / The saving power of Jesus' blood.”¹ As word to world fit, this example epitomizes Caribbean hymnody to be demonstrating its illocutionary point by offering (1) novel descriptions of God; (2) the people of the region with their language and music; and (3) the broader Caribbean community.

But it is also possible to see Caribbean hymnody as it seeks to make its illocutionary point to also be advocating a world to word directional fit. In such instances, we can highlight the texts of the many Caribbean hymns which aim to cause churches in the Caribbean to promise to maintain the unity which already existed within the region. As world to word directional which is primarily through promises, Caribbean hymnody requests of the Caribbean Christian community to promise to exercise the power which God had already bestowed upon them to confront and deliberately counter the long held misconceptions which had informed the identity of the Church in the Caribbean. For example, in the hymn *A Song of Renewal*, found in Sing A New Song No. 3, the text implores the Caribbean Church to promise that “In the slums of every city / Where the bruised and lonely dwell, / We shall show the Saviour's pity, / We shall of His mercy tell. / In all lands and with all races / We shall serve, and seek to bring / All mankind to render praises / Christ to Thee, Redeemer, King.”² When we take into account that Caribbean hymnody as a genre of Christian hymnody possesses this attribute of bi-directionality as an illocutionary act, it bolsters its efficacy as a means whereby a Caribbean lyrical theology is formulated and embraced.

Can the argument also be advanced that the “doing” of the illocutionary purpose or point of the hymn texts might actually be conveyed beyond the actual text?

¹ Hymn # 49 in *Sing A New Song No. 3*.

² Hymn # 121 in *Sing A New Song No 3*.

Can it be said that through the gestures which are displayed in the congregation as they sing that we also can detect what the hymn may be “doing”? That is to say gestures can be looked at more than just being symbolic. They in fact are related to the illocutionary point in that they add the illocutionary force to the hymn text. The application of this principle means therefore that the bodily gestures that were observed at the St. Thomas Assembly of God can be seen as manifesting illocutionary point. Consequently, when the banner-waving women move up and down the aisle of the sanctuary within the Assembly, the claim can be made that their bodily gestures have been triggered by the force of the illocutionary point or purpose of congregational singing. Viewed in this light, then the gestures can be seen as a constituent of the hymns’ illocutionary point which causes the worshipping congregation, as it sings, to exhibit a prescribed behaviour which reinforces the community unique communal identity.

Similarly, among the Moravians at Fetter Lane when the singing of hymns during the Lovefeast, Singing Hour or Communion prompts members in the congregation to fall prostrate or even to exhibit other emotional responses, then might these too be seen as indicators of the hymns’ illocutionary point? This suggests that the illocutionary intent of a hymn goes beyond wanting the congregation to believe a particular desirable spiritual position. Through expressing particular gestures, the Moravians at Fetter Lane were being moved to actualize the illocutionary point of its hymnody, which was for the community to be in union with Christ through his wounds. Generally speaking, the force of the illocutionary point “is produced not simply by the words or the word order, but also by deep syntactic structure, stress, and

intonation-contour.”¹ However, when we consider gesture as part of the discussion on the force of the illocutionary point, then it amplifies the overall analysis on how hymn texts can be said to be “doing” something as congregations sing.

Can the matter of directional fit, sincerity condition or any of Searle’s other illocutionary indicators be applied as well to bodily gestures that result when congregations sing? The Pentecostal congregation at the Assembly as they were singing involved their bodies in an assortment of gestures. I purport that the specific action of the waving of banners by the two women in that congregation plus the other bodily responses observed within the congregation can be pointing towards a word to world fit. Through their bodily actions associated with their singing, the members are making a statement. Collectively the bodily gestures embody a communal signifier which is directly and indirectly declaring not just that they remember the songs or that the singing is enjoyable. The physical responses that are witnessed have occurred because of the singing. It therefore suggests that what the body does in singing is connected in some way to the illocutionary point of the hymns. The illocutionary force of the hymn texts when associated with the individual and collective memory of the congregation is so deep-seated that like molten lava which must force its way to the earth’s surface so too the force of the hymns’ text compel the bodies to respond. However, the bodily gestures are not choreographed or synchronized as when a congregation is instructed to collectively engage in a communal gesture (kneeling for prayer). Spontaneous gestures therefore, more so than those that are prescribed or timed, can be deemed as representing illocutionary indicators to the performative attributes of hymn texts.

¹ Kubicki, 151.

6.3.3. Hymn Tunes as “Doing”

Having considered hymn texts as possessing performative qualities, I will now explore how in the act of the singing of hymns that the music itself as well characterizes similar performative qualities. I contend that music making, like textual utterance, is also a two-way street in that in the making of music (in this instance hymn tunes), the music is also *doing* something to the congregation. Of primary concern is the issue of how hymn tunes, as a sample of music making, can be viewed not just as musical performance but also as a means whereby congregational identity is impacted. The identifiable issue here addresses how hymn tunes as a sample of liturgical music contributes to shaping or expressing congregational identity. However, there is also the recognition that this is part of a broader discourse on the role of music and its impact on identity. Though I am cognizant of that, I will limit my analysis to the specifics of liturgical music and in particular to the genre of hymn tunes.

The core of this analysis, therefore, is centred upon the dialogue between hymn tunes and hymn texts. Of concern to me is the question of how hymn tunes impact the actual performative of hymn texts. A hymn tune then, though music, is not text-less music for it is conjoined with the text of the hymn which it is expressing. So then if hymns as text exhibit illocutionary properties, the music which accompanies the hymns ought to portray similar traits. How then does the music make obvious these performative properties? The goal is to examine specifically how the music of hymns reinforces the performative manoeuvrings that are already at work within the hymn text. So by grounding our discourse in how music is performative generally and

hymn tunes specifically, it should highlight the postulation that congregational hymnody (textually and musically) shapes or expresses congregational identity.

Edward Foley has suggested that music exhibits performative components because of its unique properties. He recognizes that though there are innumerable conventions and rules for composition in music, music itself is essentially incapable of any “fixed meanings’.”¹ Furthermore, the versatility of music, according to Foley rests in it being viewed as symbolic in that it is a “presentational, non-discursive form of communication.... especially suited to 1) exist in the present, 2) be a special key to interiority, 3) unite groups of living beings as nothing else can, and 4) situate people in the midst of actuality and simultaneity.”² These attributes which Foley highlights not only indicate performative characteristics but they also demonstrate some of the core features of identity formation. Seen in this light, music then can be credited with producing or fashioning a state of affairs while at the same time yielding an indispensable understanding of meaningful associations.

Kubicki in her examination of the Taize chants builds her theory on Wheelock’s thesis of liturgical language in which there is a bias in labelling such language more as *situating* rather an *informing* type of speech. She therefore concludes that the music of the Taize chants is *situating* speech because in the performance of these chants, “members of the assembly create an acoustic space in which they become *situated*. The music which they make fills the space and surrounds those who are present within it.”³ Specifically, she notes that the music of the chants provides to the worshippers a “sonic environment” in which the space where the

¹ Edward Foley, *Music in Ritual: A Pretheological Investigation*, (Washington, DC: The Pastoral Press, 1984), 11.

² Ibid, 17.

³ Kubicki, 160 – 161.

congregation occupies is both a worship space as well as a place where music making occurs.¹ It is noteworthy that Kubicki, in her evaluation of liturgical music as a performative, like Foley, stresses music as situating. She elaborates on how the compositional components present, within the chants themselves, facilitate this situating of the community as it makes music. Her discussion in this matter will prove insightful in the following section on community identity.

S. Paul Schilling's perspective on music emphasises its theological qualities and sheds further light on how music can be viewed as being performative. He posits that:

Music without words unquestionably has power to move, disturb, or bring emotional assurance, but its explicit theological significance depends on the beliefs of those who compose, hear, or perform it....there is evidence that music may shed some light on the nature of what is, and therefore on the reality that Christians address when they worship...[moreover] people of faith may find in music support for some beliefs...Faith is not inevitably produced – but it may be enhanced – by musical sensitivity.²

What is implied here is that a precise reflexive performative that is achieved through music does not occur in a vacuum per se. Particularly in the context of worship, the performative that is associated with music is always tied to other variables that are present in worship. What Schilling therefore underscores is that within Christian worship music's performativity is contextual. If music's performativity in such cases is primarily theological, then one can surmise that in Christian worship music as a performative has direct bearing upon a congregation's theological identity. But if the focus shifts specifically to the hymns in worship and the music of hymns (tunes), then clearly more than the creation or expression of a theological identity is being advanced. After all, hymns do more than merely express theology. In exploring

¹ Kubicki, 161.

² S. Paul Schilling, *The Faith We Sing: How the Message of Hymns Can Enhance Christian Belief* (The Westminster Press), 33 – 35.

therefore the many ways in which hymnody might be viewed is to explore too how hymn tunes aid in identity formation.

Jeremy S. Begbie's ideology on the interconnections between theology, music and time is also worth mentioning. Begbie's stance on music generally as possessing performative attributes overlaps and in some ways expands on that which Foley advances. He acknowledges that music is still a subject area that can be somewhat cloudy in that even though "it is clear that music is one of the most powerful communicative media we have...how it communicates and what it communicates are anything but clear."¹ Key to Begbie's philosophy is grasping the understanding that music is practised and not just theorised. Therefore, for Begbie, it is the *practise* (italics added) of music that brings meaning to music. Integral to this process is *music-making* and *music-hearing*² where the former is an activity that produces music through the means of ordered sounds or pitches and the latter is the receiving of that music with more than just one's ears. In essence they can be seen as two sides of the same coin. Meaning is communicated when both actions complement each other.

But what is the congregation hearing as they are making music? What more is happening than the making of music as they sing? I raise these questions in light of Begbie's suggestion that "music generates meaning both through its own intrinsic relations and through its extra-musical connections."³ This implies that in the making of music by singing hymns in worship, congregations may be hearing more than the music they are now making. There are numberless "extra musical connections" which could surface within this process. What role do these connections play in determining

¹ Jeremy S. Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4.

² Ibid, 9.

³ Ibid, 11.

the performativity of the hymn being sung? Begbie emphasizes that the deriving of meaning from music cannot be seen as an autonomous activity.¹ This is in keeping with the conclusions drawn by Martin Stringer, who in his analysis of how worship was perceived at the Baptist congregation, realized that through the singing of hymns members were connecting their personal stories associated with certain hymns with biblical stories. Meaning in worship was therefore being created by reciprocity of what can be considered as “extra-musical.”²

This study has revealed some of the “extra musical connection” that impinges upon the congregation not only as it sings hymns but also when the tune that is used is that which is generally known. It is in the making of music as the hymns are sung that these connections are stirred and resurrected. At the St. Thomas Assembly of God, the interviews and group discussions showed there were ‘extras’ associated with certain hymns that activated both the individual and collective memory within the congregation. The responses of the members at Fetter Lane to hymns that were sung by the congregation can be said to have exemplified how the emotional welfare can be closely moored to music making. By utilizing musical rhythms which were reflective of the region’s social and cultural norms, Caribbean hymnody would have triggered ‘extras’ even as the congregations were singing.

The linkages between hymn tunes and hymn texts reveal that hymn tunes themselves are an integral aspect of the performative process of hymn texts. Consequently, it can be rightly concluded that when we “mention the word *hymn* to almost anyone...the first image that comes to mind is a hymn tune. It is quite natural

¹ Begbie contends that meaning associated with music cannot be autonomous because of: 1) “the social and cultural embeddedness of musical practices”; 2) “an engagement with the distinctive configuration of the physical world we inhabit”; 3) “musical practice is inescapably bodily”; 4) “music has very strong convictions with our emotional life.” 13 – 15

² Stringer, *Perception of Worship*, Chapter Four (pp. 83 – 108).

for the concept *hymn* to conjure up some kind of music because hymns are for singing.”¹ That certain hymn tunes have been historically affixed to particular hymn texts implies that credit for the reflexive performative of the hymn texts must embrace as well the invaluable contribution made because of the hymn tune. Schilling, in addressing the bond between hymn tune and its impact on hymn text, holds to the position that even though “hymn tunes do not in themselves convey definite theological ideas, when they are joined with texts they may strengthen or undermine the meanings expressed.”² He further highlights three ways in which hymn tunes can have an effect on hymn texts which are noteworthy. First, “like other music, they are capable of stirring and expressing deep emotion;” second they impact “the moods evoked by the hymn texts;” and third they can either “fortify or weaken the convictions embodied in the words.”³ These three principles advanced by Schilling are akin to those made by Foley and Begbie. It underlines that the interplay between music of hymns and the texts is not inconsequential. The impact and influence of hymn tunes to hymn text is of such that to speak of hymn tunes as illocutionary acts would not be altogether inappropriate.

The performative language theories can be applied to the genre of hymns because of the utilization of texts in their construct. However, the structure of the texts of hymns is not a casual exercise. A hymn writer in crafting a hymn has to be led by some of the following dominant musical characteristics that shape the form and structure of hymn texts. They are: (1) stanzas (verse as opposed to prose); (2) a rhyming scheme which is not always set or predetermined; (3) varying metrical

¹ Eskew and McElrath, 14.

² Schilling, 35.

³ Ibid, 35 – 37.

patterns with accented and unaccented syllables (ex. iambic tetrameter and trochaic); (4) the number of syllables in each line guiding the meter of the hymn (ex. short meter – SM 6.6.8.6; long meter – LM 8.8.8.8; and common meter – CM 8.6.8.6.); (5) use of poetic devices (ex. hyperbole, simile, metaphor).¹ Evidently the composition of a hymn tune is predominantly guided musically by what is happening textually. The implication therefore is that the music is not being constructed to stand alone but to accompany a particular text and to be performed by the voice as its primary instrument. The music of hymns therefore must be of the same ilk as hymns – “*sui generis* – the products of an art having its own qualities and requirements.”²

Therefore hymn tunes as music are performative because they have a direct bearing on the performative language of hymn texts. J. R. Watson in his seminal work explores the interplay between hymn text and hymn tune. Key to Watson’s evaluation is his emphasis that it is during the public performance of a hymn that the performative attributes of the hymn tunes and texts are realized. It is acknowledged that hymns can be read in privacy, allowing for the individual to engage the text at a pace based on personal choice. However, it is a totally different and new experience when the same hymns are sung in a corporate communal context. Watson stresses the distinction between private reading and public singing in that:

The music changes the nature of the words: it makes them ‘sound’ not just in the normal way in which words make a sound, but in resonance with the music, creating a musical and verbal texture. The music has its own ways of imposing pauses, fluidity, emphasis, structure upon the words: the mind has to combine an appreciation of syntax and sentence with another appreciation of movement through and in the musical notation. Punctuation, too, becomes important...A hymn exists, not just on the page, but in sound...in a church. The building is filled with sounds, made by musical instruments and human voices, and the text becomes no longer the marks on the page but a series of sounds in

¹ Ibid, 14 – 26.

² Ibid, 27.

the air...it is no longer just a text, no longer writing, but something else in addition to writing...through music, the words sing.¹

So then it is in the making of music when hymns are being sung that the congregation engages in the performative of a hymn at least from a musical perspective. Watson's stance parallels that of Kubicki when she addresses the aspect of liturgical singing as being performative because of its ability to create a sonic environment.

The centrality of the sound of music as hymn singing, occurring as the primary means by which hymns can be said to be manifesting performative attributes, is also advanced by Linda J. Clark. She argues first that the value of hymns rests in their use of images which express the essence and substance of the Christian faith. For Clark the images take on life and become meaningful only when hymns are sung. This is the case because "singing puts the words of a hymn into motion. Hymns are not static sets of words on a page but shapes of sound that exist in time, beginning at one moment, traveling toward a point, and then drawing to a close and stopping at another moment. This shaping of time heightens the meaning of texts."² Clark insists that when congregations sing hymns, the words of these hymns come alive implying that the congregations as they sing are doing more through their hymn singing than merely stating facts. Recalling an earlier point of hymnody as an avenue by which congregational symbolic identity is achieved, Clark maintains that through the act of hymn singing by the congregation, "the hymn creates that faith by bringing it into being and therefore is functioning as a symbol of the singers' faith...a hymn does not only *tell of* the faith, it *tells* it, declares it, or bodies it forth."³

¹ Watson, 22 – 23.

² Linda J. Clark. "Hymn Singing: The Congregation Making Faith," in *Carriers of Faith: Lessons From Congregational Studies*, ed. Carl S. Dudley, Jackson W. Carroll & James P. Wind (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 52.

³ Ibid, 53.

At the outset of this study, I highlighted that, according to Hall, from a sociological perspective, identity is an ongoing process that incorporates aspects of the past while at the same time engaging in the present. A major element of Hall's definition of how identity is to be understood and which I wish to highlight is the notion of identity formation is achieved through "enunciative strategies." To enunciate implies that is not just a mental assent that is given to the interpretation of identity. Rather, in addition to the mental assent, there is a voicing of that identity. This is an intentional uttering and articulating of the key attributes which expresses the building blocks which constitute identity. Whereas the reading of hymn text may be considered an enunciation of the performatives that are present within the hymn, I submit that it is in the actual singing of the hymns by the congregation which can be perceived as a more potent enunciative strategy through which there is the interpolation of congregational identity. The process of identification – the taking of an identity into the self – on the part of a congregation is enabled in the process of making music via the hymn tunes. Therefore it can be concluded that hymn tunes, like hymn texts are performative in that "we do not simply make music, to some extent music makes us [it] organizes its users, creating new forms of life."¹

Consequently, like the texts, the hymn tunes which accompany the hymns would have been integral in helping to shape the identity of the Fetter Lane Moravian *gemeine* as it was being constructed. A musicological analysis of the hymn mentioned earlier, *We Kiss Each Other in the Side-hole*, would be illustrative of this point. The tune # 159 (**See Appendix Ten**) is scored in C major with the figured bass notated. It is a bright, lively tune which is structured in an AABA form. The melodic contour of

¹ Jeremy S. Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 46.

the tune is balanced with an almost perfect blend of descending and ascending patterns. Even though the tune ends with a descending motion, by moving the closing phrase an octave higher (*all' ottava* or 8^{vo}), it shifts the singing voice to the upper tessitura thereby creating a melodic climax as one approaches the end of A. This motion results in the ending note of the tune (C) being the same as the starting note. In so doing, this holds the tune together as a single musical unit. Generally, most of the melody rotates around the starting note and only goes a 4th below (G). However by applying the 8^{vo} which takes the ending of A an octave higher, this causes the highest note to also be a 4th above (F) the starting note. That equidistance adds a measure of internal symmetry to the melodic contour which replicates the AABA form. The rhythm is predominantly homogeneous but that is overshadowed by the general melodic shape and in particular the leap of nearly an octave in the voice to go from the lowest note immediately to the highest, a leap upward of a 7th (G to F).

Some measure of text painting is achieved in that the melody stays busy with very few repeated notes. This mirrors the flight of the bird moving to and fro, in and out of the “side-hole.” By keeping most of the melody middle voice and the shifting to the upper tessitura at the end of A, the sensuality, celebration and climactic mood of the physical union between Husband/Bride in the side-hole as the Bride’s chamber is captured. In the end, the tune has been able to present an image that one might consider to be reprehensible (i.e. the suffering Saviour) not as something to be sorrowful over but instead as that which is to be celebrated. This would be in keeping with the Moravian’s emphasis on the side-wounds theology.

In another Moravian hymn earlier referenced, *Thou death-sweat mixt with blood*, the tune which was applied to this text is both grand and stately (**See Appendix**

Eleven). The opening three repeated notes followed by the movement upward to the neighbouring note draw attention to the tune in that it is suggestive of the opening melody of a brass fanfare. That the opening note is the 5th (D) of the home key in G Major supports this claim. The latter part of that opening phrase releases some of the tension by its descending pattern which is done twice but with a rhythmic alteration the second time through. The opening of the third musical phrase (B) mimics that of opening phrase (A). It begins on the note A, but by the end of that phrase the melody has modulated to the dominant key (D Major). Consequently, the same pattern which was introduced in the beginning with the melody having repeated notes on the 5th note of the scale followed by step-wise movement upwards is achieved. Although the rhythm of the last phrase is exactly like that of the opening, the melody is not. From that perspective the form of the tune can be categorized as AABC. But the melodic contour is closely matched to the beginning of the tune and with that the grandeur and celebrative mood of the tune is maintained throughout.

The celebratory robust mood of the tune is apropos for expressing texts which captures the essence of Moravian beliefs concerning Christ's suffering and death. The tune effervesces as it progresses. But it does not do so violently but in a graceful manner which is seen through the step-wise motion of the melody. That contrast goes well with the inherent contradiction of Moravian hymnody, if it could be described as such, that the wounds which were inflicted upon the suffering and dying Lamb of God are not to be mourned over. Instead they are to be celebrated for it is in the wounds of Christ that his Bride is made one with him.

Having already offered a comprehensive analysis in the previous chapter about the impact of the application of Caribbean music to Caribbean hymns, it is suffice

here to simply state that as with the music of Moravian hymn tunes, so too the making of the music of Caribbean hymns would have been impactful in reshaping the Caribbean ecumenical community. Furthermore, the same can be said of the application of the various rhythms and instruments that accompanied the congregational singing which would have been a key component in expressing the identity of the St. Thomas Assembly of God as “*An Oasis of Love and Hope.*”

I will in the final section explore how the combined features of text and music of congregational hymnody can be said to be contributing to congregational identity.

6.4. Hymn Singing and Congregational Identity

How then does the text and music of what congregations sing might be said to be collaborating to either create or express that collective congregational identity? I raise this question bearing in mind that collective identity is in many ways the result of combined individual identity. And in this instance, the identity type which is of primary focus is Christian identity. A congregation is comprised of individuals and so the starting point, as it were is the individual. Yet my concern is aiming to address how these individuals who are singing together are, by virtue of that combined action, either forming a corporate identity or articulating the salient characteristics of what they have already embraced as the essence of a commonly held congregational identity.

If we make the individual as the smallest building block of the collective identity, then it suggests that the action of singing in which each member of the congregation is involved, feeds into the larger framework of the overall congregational identity. Ronald L. Warren offers some insights as to how the

individual who is engaged in hymn singing can be contributing to the shaping of the group identity. He contends that

The individual, as he repeats the words borne up by the compelling urge of the melody, affirms his faith, and that in a loud voice. Through singing he can say things which it would embarrass him to repeat in his more inhibited moments. And, hearing his own uninhibited confession on the lips of those surrounding him, he is led to an even deeper affirmation of faith in what he is reciting.¹

Warren advances as well the concept of “interstimulation” in which a random group of people become connected by virtue of them possessing a common perspective.

How is this achieved? It is accomplished through the “use of symbols encrusted with emotional meaning, the performance of hallowed rituals, the group recitation of the creed, the singing of hymns – all help in the primary function of breaking down resistances which inhibit the desired responsive attitude in the members of the fold.”²

Though Warren is addressing how hymn singing would have been used to foster the superiority of the German Nationalist sentiment during the World Wars, his assessment offers some insight as to how hymn singing impacts congregational group identity even today. The matter of the formation or expression of a collective congregational identity among the Moravians at Fetter Lane, the congregation at The St. Thomas Assembly or within the Caribbean ecumenical consortium is directly associated with hymn singing because “the derivative function of hymns is that of conditioning attitudes which will remain with the individual after the group has dispersed.”³

That there is a direct correlation between what a congregation sings and its sense of community Christian identity has been established. The interconnection

¹ Ronald L. Warren, “German Parteilieder and Christian Hymns as Instruments of Social Control.” *Journal of Abnormal & Social Psychology* 12/1942, 97.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

between singing and faith identity of the congregation as a community is further borne out by Brian Castle. In his comparative analysis of English and Zambian hymns, Castle too deduces that Christian communities are directly impacted by what they sing. He concluded,

When we sing a hymn, we are allowing that hymn to penetrate into our being and frequent singing has the power to tap emotional well-springs that are not wholly conscious or rational; in this way we acknowledge and accept the theological background and sociological presuppositions and all its implications from which the hymn has emerged and which the hymn enshrines. Thus we are shaped by what we sing.¹

Castle further contends that hymns “express what people do believe as opposed to doctrine which expresses what people should believe.”² Though what congregations sing can be said to represent what they believe regarding elements of their Christian faith, this study aimed to focus on whether hymnody also expresses what congregations believe about themselves and likewise what they reject.

The connections between the hymn singing, done by a congregation, and its identity are also addressed by musician and congregational song leader John Bell. He posits the view that it is through the boundaries of music which the entire congregation has to observe that causes hymn singing to be associated with congregational identity. Specifically, it is through singing together as a congregation that “provides us with a regular pulse or beat, ensuring that we keep in time with each other. Even at the point of making a mistake there is redemption. We can rejoin the group. Thus, the singing helps us create and celebrate our identity.”³

¹ Brian C. Castle, *Hymns: The Making and Shaping of A Theology for the Whole People of God: A Comparison of the Four Last Things in Some English and Zambian Hymns in Intercultural Perspective*. (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 192.

² Ibid, 190.

³ John Bell, *The Singing Thing: A Case for Congregational Song*. (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2000), 17.

At the outset of this study, I argued for the position that identity not be viewed as static but as a dynamic ongoing process. It means therefore that identity can be evolving. However congregational identity, when viewed in light of the heritage of hymn singing and other aspects of a congregation's worship tradition which either inform or express that collective identity, then may be considered not that dynamic. In other words, congregational identity, like other collective identities, does not morph overnight. However, I submit that there remains a great level of dynamism in hymn singing and its impact on the congregation's communal identity. The location of this dynamic reality is in the fact that both hymn singing and identity can be said to intersect at the site where both are at their core a performance. In other words, identity fundamentally is a performance in that it is an *enunciative* process in which a community seeks to communicate by articulating both what it is and what it is not. Similarly, hymn singing is another type of performance where through words and music a congregation is also engaging in an *enunciative* process by which the key aspects of its faith, traditions and theology are being pronounced. It is this overlap of both performances which makes the interplay between hymn singing and identity a dynamic process. So that as a performance, both hymn singing and identity embody Richard Schechner's claim that "performance is a paradigm of process."¹

Hymn singing therefore serves as a means whereby congregational communal identity is attained. Kubicki makes a similar argument in her analysis of the influence of the Taize chants and their impression upon shaping that community. She contends that singing as a performance "is the means by which the community is constituted."²

¹ Richard Schechner, preface to *The Anthropology of Performance*, by Victor Turner (New York: PAJ Publications, 1986), 8.

² Kubicki, 164.

Furthermore, “music-making embodies the experience of community by providing the assembly with a physical and psychological experience of unity and harmony...in this way [singing]...does more than communicate *about* a given state of affairs...a state of affairs is established *in* communicating.”¹ This reinforces the position that in the “doing” of hymn singing there is a mutual “doing” by those who are singing in that they are bolstering their sense of corporate identity through the texts and music of the hymns they sing.

This performance process in which hymn singing and identity are at play closely mirrors Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* when viewed from the social science outlook. Taking habitus to represent a view that “expresses, on the one hand, the way in which individuals ‘become themselves’ – develop attitudes and dispositions – and, on the other hand, the ways in which those individuals engage in practices,”² then as congregations sing and identity is given attention to, then habitus is also being created. Like identity, the concept of habitus is not fixed, but is also a dynamic process. Congregational singing as habitus can be seen as self-reinforcing of the attributes of a particular congregational identity. This study has shown that the correlation between hymnody and identity is achieved by repeatedly singing the hymns which advocate and emphasize the essential traits of the congregational identity. It is this feature of hymnody that causes congregational singing to be generative of identity. The texts and music of the hymns that are deposited within the congregation’s repertory reinforce that identity. Congregational singing satisfies this

¹ Ibid.

² Jen Webb, Tony Schirato & Geoff Danaher. *Understanding Bourdieu* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), xii.

principle because as the congregation sings it is in essence reminding itself of its self-proclaimed identity.

Warren's earlier concept of "interstimulation" highlights a rather telling aspect of how the individual sense of identity is wrapped up with the communal. In suggesting that the manifestation of this process is noticeable even when the individual is no longer with the group and that the attributes which were expressed within the group are still evidenced, is to infer that the individual identity is never far removed from the communal. This would offer some justification for members within a congregation to still lay claim to the fundamental characteristics of the group to which they are associated without necessarily having to be present in the community. Seen in this light, hymn singing then becomes a means whereby congregational identity is emblazoned upon an individual. The memorization of hymns in particular which promote the primary tenets of the congregational identity is a means whereby this 'branding' occurs. Little wonder then that Zinzendorf in seeking to expound the centrality of the Moravian *gemeine* would have exploited the advantages offered through hymn singing.

Turner's theory of *communitas*, in which there is the "matter of giving recognition to an essential and generic human bond, without which there could be *no* society,"¹ offers another approach through which one might consider the hymnody / identity interplay. The ideals of *communitas* are attained when hymn singing fosters a context in which members within a congregation have been moved beyond their social and economic class and even their ecclesiastical leadership rank and embrace their mutual and common community identity. This does not point to removal of the

¹ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 97.

various levels of leadership within the congregation. However, what is achieved is a state of affairs, to use Kubicki's terminology, in which leaders and members alike abandon themselves and embrace the ideals which are inherent in the congregational identity. It is this feature which was observed at the St. Thomas Assembly of God as the pastor and the worship leaders drew upon congregational singing to create a worship atmosphere where the Assembly was adjudged to be an 'oasis.' The Fetter Lane diarist records how Moravian hymns were used in the Lovefeast, Singing Hour or Communion by the leaders and in so doing fortified the formation of a Moravian *gemeine* also reflects this point. In both cases, the equal and full participation of leaders and members alike in hymn singing which also triggered and was associated with what can be termed as liminal actions constitute hymn singing as expressing Turner's notion of *communitas*.

By intentional participating in hymn singing, congregations through their performance are communicating the ideals of their identity. Through their performance, the community of which they are a part is not only expressing that identity but also branding and reinforcing the same to the individuals. As the individuals collectively voice their hymns and give themselves to the text and music of what they sing, then there is that double take occurring. I alluded to this earlier. That is to say, as the community is making music through the singing of hymns, the hymns, as a music making exercise, are also making the community by communicating its collective identity.

6.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted some of the complexities that have surfaced as we consider the correlations between hymnody and congregational identity. What a congregation sings can be viewed on the one hand as being generative of congregational identity. On the other hand, it can also be seen as conveying. In either case, congregational identity is directly impacted through the hymnody which is part of the congregation's worship tradition. A dialogical analysis between hymnody and identity has led to the consideration of three possible means by which hymnody may serve as a conduit of congregational identity. They are (1) heritage identity, (2) symbolic identity and (3) ritual identity.

By establishing each of the above to be an effective means of congregational identity, I then proceeded to explore how the text and music of hymns can be deemed to possess performative characteristics which ultimately inform congregational identity. In the final portion of this dialogical analysis, I sought to determine how hymnody and identity, by virtue of possessing at the core a common constituent, can be said to be working together to make hymn singing generative and expressive of the major attributes of congregational identity.

Having presented the multiple case studies and in light of this dialogical analysis, in my concluding chapter I will propose a theoretical framework which seeks to embody the main strands outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION:

TOWARDS A HYMNIC PERFORMATIVITY

7.1 An Enhanced Vista

As I conclude, I reflect on how this research has impacted me, in particular as it pertains to the rationale. As a result of this study, I have a deepened understanding as it relates to the duties that come with my current responsibility. Specifically, I now understand that there are far reaching consequences to the hymns that are included or excluded for that matter, as we seek to publish a hymnal for the Moravians in the Caribbean region. By the choices we make the identity of approximately 10, 000 Moravian members is being shaped or expressed through the pages of this new Caribbean Moravian hymnal. When it is finally published, this hymnal, will impact the historical, ecclesiastical and collective identity of a Christian denomination within the Caribbean. The challenge of maintaining the historical elements in our Moravian hymnody, while at the same time embracing new hymns which call the Church to remain relevant in the Caribbean in the 21st century, cannot be avoided. Forefront in my mind as we engage in this history making feat is how to ensure that we give our Moravian congregations not just the hymns that they may *want* to sing because of their cherished memories, but just as important the hymns that they *need* to sing. Since identity is a process and not just a product, in offering the Moravian Provinces in the Caribbean region for the first time a Caribbean Moravian hymnal, because of

this study, I have become more conscious that the product of our actions will have a direct influence on the present and future identity of the Caribbean Moravian Church. Seen in this light, then the proposed new hymnal can be seen as a project in identity.

This research has also had an effect on my approach to the hymns that I choose annually for the *Hymnspeak* event as part of the Barbados Gospelfest. As an ecumenical gathering that takes place in what has been described as the premiere Gospel festival in the Caribbean, here is a platform that affords me the opportunity to continue the legacy set by the editors and movers of the Caribbean ecumenical movement. As that ecumenical congregation gathers to sing hymns that have been arranged utilizing Caribbean musical idioms and as they witness the dramatization of the stories behind these hymns or hear persons recall how and why a particular hymn is meaningful, then the *Hymnspeak* event is more than just a hymn singing activity. This study has caused me to appreciate that even as that mixed congregation sings, there is the setting aside, at least for a while, of social and denominational barriers. It becomes a congregation that is reimagined for a moment as a Caribbean Christian community knitted together by its oneness in Christ. If I were to assess the event through the angle of ethnography, then the deduction can be made that as the congregation at *Hymnspeak* sings the hymns, ecumenical identity is being achieved by the interplay of memory and bodily gestures. A critical part of this survey would include how hymn texts and tunes collaborate in the performance to enable the formation of an ecumenical congregational identity at least in this context.

Considering the many themes and issues which surfaced throughout this study from the various case study sites, I offered a dialogical analysis in which I highlighted some key elements essential to the hymnody / identity dialogue. In light of the

foregoing analysis, I purport in this concluding chapter, that as congregations sing, be they Moravian congregations utilizing their new hymnal or the congregation at *Hymnspeak*, they are also engaging in an activity that has a bearing on their collective identity. The three case study sites have demonstrated that congregational singing can affect congregational identity in one of three possible ways. First it can help to create a congregation's communal identity at the onset of that congregation being established. Second, it expresses, while at the same time, nourishes a congregation's identity by fostering a sense of continuity within the congregation through the sustaining of corporate memory and facilitating gestures which are linked to that memory. Third, it possesses the potential to reshape and refashion not just a single congregation's identity but can also bring about a change of ecumenical identity among different congregations, which, in spite of their denominational distinctions, subscribe to a commonly held ecumenical vision.

Congregational singing is generative of congregational identity because as congregations sing, they are engaged in a performance. Through this performance in which there is a combination of textual and musical elements, identity is either established, rebranded or sustained through a process. Therefore, as I conclude, I set forth that this process can be described as a *hymnic performativity*. I have chosen *hymnic* to highlight that this activity addresses the singing of hymnody by congregations within the context of public corporate worship. But this is an attempt to describe the performance of hymns by congregations. Therefore, I recommend that a more accurate and appropriate term by which this singing activity can be labelled to be *performativity*. So then I am opined that the hymns that are being performed by congregations are also *performing* (shaping, configuring, expressing or constructing)

the congregation's identity as they sing. In that sense, congregational singing as *hymnic performativity* is an activity that boomerangs unto the singing congregation. The essence of this position is that through the performing of hymns, that in the process, what the congregation is singing can also be said to be *performing* the congregation. That is what is meant by my employing of the term *performativity*. It is this dual *performing* which substantiates the claim that congregational singing is a notable medium by which congregational identity is impacted. Consequently, the notion of *hymnic performativity* offers a theoretical perspective to the question of what is happening identity-wise when congregations sing.

7.2 Understanding *Hymnic Performativity*

Hymnic performativity is a neologism that is aiming to provide a way to describe the effects of congregational singing of Christian hymnody upon congregational identity. In coining the term, I am seeking to embrace and to fuse together two main components that emerged throughout this study. First, the act of congregational singing and second, how this could be seen as the avenue through which elements of congregational identity are articulated.

7.2.1 Congregational Singing and *Hymnic Performativity*

This study has revealed that the corporate act of congregational singing as a performance is multi-layered. On one level it is first and foremost musical since it is an activity that utilizes musical components (notes, rhythms etc.). The case studies have captured how the hymns, as music, have exerted influence upon individuals and congregations. As music, hymns have connected with people's emotions, triggered memories of defining moments and reflected the many associative meanings that

exist. Because the hymns which are sung by the congregation are done within the context of corporate worship, the singing is then linked with other variables in worship. In other words, the musical performance of hymns by the congregation has a direct bearing on the general shape of the liturgy. If we take the view of Christian worship to be a ritual, then hymn singing as ritualized music can be seen as a doorway through which religious meaning is appropriated by the worshipping community.

When congregations sing, they are making music through the use of hymn texts. Yet it is in the making of music that both music and text can be said to be doing more. This concept of *hymnic performativity* seeks as well to articulate and highlight in some way not only *what* is being sung by the congregation but also *how* the hymns are being sung or performed for that too impacts the gathered congregation as it sings. In the first instance, we are drawn to pay closer attention to the performative characteristics of hymn texts. This demands having an awareness of the underpinnings of hymns primarily as textual documents. The goal herein is to analyse hymn texts from the perspective of illocutionary utterances. The second concern of *how* hymns are sung places the spotlight on the role of hymn tunes in influencing the illocutionary attributes of hymn texts. By incorporating this second facet into the discussion, it stresses the totality of hymnody as comprising of music and text. By so doing there is equilibrium in the approach to congregational singing and *hymnic performativity* in that focus is given to the textual and musical variables of hymnody.

There are distinctions to be made in viewing congregational singing as a performance on one hand and as *hymnic performativity* on the other. In reflecting on the case studies, I advance that when congregational singing is assessed as a performance, attention is given to what is *heard* musically and textually. In this light

attention is given to the musical performance of the hymn. These include, among others, (1) the melodic shape and tune of the hymn (paying particular attention to how the climax is approached, etc.); (2) the key, rhythm and harmonic language (where the focus is how the various voice parts blend and the use of dissonance); (3) the message of the text and what poetic literary devices have been employed as the theme is developed from verse to verse. The primary focus is on the external *sound* that the congregation is producing as it sings together.

But *hymnic performativity* pushes for us to go beyond the performance. The emphasis shifts from what is *heard* to address at another level what is *happening to* the congregation as it sings. In order to distinguish what the external *sound* is achieving internally both individually and collectively, it is necessary to closely observe and decipher the actions taking place within the congregation as certain words of the hymns as well as the music are being performed. As a participant observer, one then must be willing to delve into some central issues. For example, (1) the illocutionary purpose of the text and the force associated with the hymn texts; (2) how the music is stirring the emotions that are linked with the text being sung; (3) what memories are resurrected and relived as the community sings; (4) how the music is being made to highlight the theological content of the texts that the congregation is singing, causing the congregation to be more fervent in its beliefs that are enshrined within the hymn texts. When we think of *hymnic performativity* then in this light, the focus is not so much on the *sound* that the congregation is producing but instead what that *sound* is producing in informing the congregation's identity.

Hymnic performativity as it relates to congregational singing establishes that the work of the congregation (i.e. singing of hymns) is liturgical and theological in

scope. It is work that shapes and expresses the hallmarks of the congregation's identity as a particular kind of community. In that sense the claim can be made that congregational singing as *hymnic performativity* is legitimately *leitourgia* in that it speaks of the people's work. As a theological undertaking, congregational singing and *hymnic performativity* advances the theory that it is in the act of singing hymns which are designed to be sung that the 'lyrical' theology being performed by the congregation is also *performing* the congregation. Congregational singing as *performativity* then is an example of a practical 'lyrical' theology that is also the embodiment of theological praxis. It is in the act of singing together that the congregation interprets and understands its theology. At the same time, by participating in worship and particularly in the act of singing, there is the enunciating of the type of community this congregation is and hopes to become. Congregational singing then as *hymnic performativity* is an expression of a faith community engaged in the practise of liturgy and espousing a practical 'lyrical' theology.

7.2.2 Congregational Identity and *Hymnic Performativity*

The second pillar upon which the theoretical principle of *hymnic performativity* stands focuses on the matter of how the collective identity of the congregation might be assessed through the grid of congregational hymnody. The study has revealed that the issue of identity does not happen in a vacuum. There are factors which are directly moored to the particular context in which the congregation is situated which have a bearing on identity. For example, we can approach the subject of congregational identity by focusing on the chief components that originate within the broad denominational umbrella. But the discussion on congregational identity may also bring to light the parochial traits that the congregation deems to be

exercising greater influence in shaping and expressing their identity. In either of the approaches, there may be some understated or palpable components which are intrinsic to the congregation's identity. A congregation therefore may opt to broadcast its identity based on its ethnic traits. Others may wish to pinpoint their identity based on their involvement in social and political events and community outreach ministries. Similarly, there are congregations for whom the identity rotates around the axis of their physical location (rural, suburban or inner city, etc.). To suggest that congregational identity may be also expressed primarily through the personhood of the one who is the founder of that congregation may not be too farfetched as we examine the meteoric rise of non-denominational mega-churches.

Though all of the above are valid means whereby congregational identity can be adjudged, I am opined that the *hymnic performativity* grid provides a framework which facilitates a more in-depth dialogical analysis of the congregation's identity that actually incorporates as well some of the above mentioned components. What *hymnic performativity* does as it seeks to interpret and understand congregational identity is that it prioritizes congregational singing within the context of the congregation itself. This highlighting of congregational singing within a particular context as being key in our approach to better grasp congregational identity advances the stance that "music has meaning because of its context."¹ This denotes that when we give attention to meanings of the music in its context, it is multi-vocal symbol

¹ C. Michael Hawn, *Gather Into One: Praying and Singing Globally*, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2003), 5. Hawn examines how context has been a driving force in the creation of new hymnody especially in places where these new hymns have spread globally. The places and individuals he identifies are drawn from Asia, Latin America, South Africa, Zimbabwe and the Iona Community. Because the Caribbean is often grouped together with Latin America, Hawn overlooks Caribbean hymnody as part of his global synopsis.

which directly and indirectly sways the musical performance and *performativity* of the singing congregation.

The juxtaposing therefore of congregational identity with *hymnic performativity* centralizes the matter of context as it plays out in the congregation's music making through its singing. But to speak of context in this manner is to approach it from a multilateral perspective. So that as we highlight the components of the congregational singing environment, asking how the same is related to the interpretation of identity formation, we can analyse this matter by looking at the congregation through the lens of its historical context, denominational context, cultural context, musical context, etc. There are at least two implications that emerge because of this contextual emphasis. First, it underscores the notion that identity is not something that is simply thrown *carte blanche* across the board without giving attention to the uniqueness of each congregation. The accentuation of the context of the congregation and its singing and how that is related to its identity buttresses the thought that identity is fluid and at its core it is an ongoing process. Secondly, because of the fact that one is then obligated to give particular attention to the context, the application of a research methodology such as ethnography to the study of ecclesiastical worship contexts can be insightful in better understanding congregations generally and how their identities are shaped as Christian communities.¹

¹ The application of ethnographic methodology to the study of congregations is in keeping with the goals and objectives of the Ecclesiology and Ethnography Network. See www.ecclesiologyandethnography.wordpress.com.

7.3. A Final Word

What a congregation sings therefore as it worships is of major significance. When congregations sing they could be creating an identity, seeking to sustain and maintain an identity that they are expressing through their collective singing or aiming to reshape and refashion a collective identity that they have determined is in keeping with who they really are as a people. Congregational hymnody can be seen as an avenue where congregations manifest aspects of their heritage, symbolic or ritual identity. By recognizing the performative nature of text and music – the two components of hymns – we are able to propose how congregational identity and congregational hymnody may be interconnected. The theoretical framework by which the singing of Christian hymnody brings about congregational identity I have labelled as *hymnic performativity*. It proposes that as congregations sing hymns and perform the same, there is a simultaneous action in which the music being made is also *performing* the congregation. Through *hymnic performativity* congregational singing is generative of the on-going process of creating and expressing congregational identity.

Though a complex matter, this study has provided some clarity of how the hymnody which is utilized by congregations in worship does shape and express their congregational identity.

Appendix One

ST. THOMAS ASSEMBLY OF GOD Research Project Field Work Participants' Questionnaire (Please Print Clearly)

Name (OPTIONAL):.....

Sex: (F)..... (M).....

Age Group: 21 – 30 31 – 40

41 – 50 51 – 60

61 – 70 Over 71

Years of membership at this Church:

0 – 5 6 – 10 11 – 15

16 – 20 21 – 25 Over 25

List churches where you have been a member before and length of time:

.....

.....

Are you part of a musical group/music ministry: Y..... N.....

If yes, please say what and how long:.....

List your five (5) most meaningful hymns/songs:

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

Appendix Two

The Congregation of the Lamb With its Officers and Servants Settled October 30, 1742 In London

Elders:	William Holland	Martha Claggett
Vice:	Esther Kinchin	
Wardens:	James Hutton	Louisa Hutton
Elder of Married Men:	William Holland	
Vice:	Richard Bell	
Warden:	John Browne	
Eldress of Married Women:	Louisa Hutton	
Vice:	Elizabeth Holland	
Warden:	Esther Sutton West	
Elder of Single Men:	William Griffith	
Vice:	Richard Uttley	
Warden:	Thomas Knight	
Eldress of Single Women:	Mary Bowes	
Vice:	Elizabeth Rogers	
Warden:	Mary Ewsters	
Eldress Widdows:	Martha Claggett	
Warden:	Esther Kinchin	
Admonitors:	William Stanton	Grace Stanton
Censors:	George Bowes	Margaret Lloyd
Servants:	John Paul Brochmer	Martha Hilland
	Richard Utley	Margaret Lloyd
	William Peter Knolton	
Sick Waiters:	John Edwards	Martha Claggett
	George Bowes	Grace Stanton
	Richard Brampton	Esther Sutton West
	Samuel Watson	James Hutton

Married Men:	William Holland John Browne John Edmonds	James Hutton George Bowes George Chapman	Richard Bell William Stanton William Peter
Knolton	John Clarke	Tho. Lateward	John Paul
Brockmer	Tho. Gladman William Hunte Henry Jones	John West Jasper Payne John Hilland	John Senniff John Leighton William Hondrick
Married Women: West	Louisa Hutton	Elizabeth Holland	Esther Sutton
	Hannah Knolton Grace Stanton Mary Dijon	Jane Browne Mary Bowes Elizabeth Payne	Martha Hilland Katherine ? Sarah Leighton
Single Men:	William Griffith William Horne John Gambold William Knash James Greening Peter Sims	Richard Uttley William Delamotte John Holmes John Cooke George Moore Branth	Thomas Knight William Thacker Samuel Watson Richard Brampton
Single Women:	Mary Bowes Margarett Lloyd Dinah Raymond Sally Romley Jane Bagley	Elizabeth Rogers Christian Anderson Elizabeth Claggett Jane Fuller Jane Miller	Mary Ewsters Jane Chambers Susanna Claggett Joan Hopson
Widdows:	Martha Claggett Ann?	Esther Kinchin Mother Payne?	Frances?
Widowers:	Lewis Wellett Pellet?	Joseph Hodges	

Appendix Three

(Lovefeast in celebration of Ordinations)

For Sister Clagget and Kinchin Sister Spangenberg gave out:

*Friend of Sinners, Lamb of God once slain
Dearest Elder of thy Crofses Train,
Give to these dear EldreFese
In their weighty office Grace,
To stand always in they Holy Place.*

For Sis. Hutton she gave out page 17, verse 5.

Sister Pisch gave out for Sister Clagget page 234. Verse 3;
for Sister Kinchin page 230 v. 10;
for Sister Hutton page 176. Ver 3.

Sister Gufsenbauer for Sister Clagget pa 126. ver 8;
for Sister Kinchin p. 175, ver. 5.;
for Sis. Hutton. P 140, ver. 8

Br. Telfschig gave out for them three Page. 115. verse 11.12
Bro. Gufsenbauer pag: 184, ver 3 '*A priestly Spirit Lord to them impart*'
Br Reineke page. 84. Ver:11*
Sister Stonhouse page 177. Verse 2
Br. Pisch page 88. Verse 2

Marshall pag: 174, 2
*Lift up o great High Priest thy hands
Mark'd with the wounds so dear
And blefs o blefs most graciously,
Thy Handmaids who are here & c...*

Br Stonhouse pag: 85, verse 11.*
Br Delamotte pag: 41, verse 6
Br. Shlicht pag. 33. 10

And then we sang for all the congregations
*O may we safe and well
In that his Hearts would dwell* (page 21)

The above recounts the worship that took place at Smith House in Yorkshire on November 28, 1742. At that time the Moravian congregation had not yet been fully established but the work there had started. All of the hymn verses were taken from the 1742 edition of the first Moravian Hymn book in English. This love feast commemorated the ordinations of three sisters: Martha Clagget, Esther Kinchin and Louisa Hutton all of whom were ordained as Eldresses on November 27, 1742. As Eldresses these sisters were now eligible to also ordain other labourers. It was later noted that with their new position, "Sister Clagget ordained Elizabeth Holland: Esther Kinchin ordained Mary Bowes, Louisa Hutton ordained Esther West & Mary Eursters."

Appendix Four

The Right Hand Of God

Patrick Prescod

Noel Dexter

Source: *Sing A New Song No. 3*. Patrick Prescod (ed.), Bridgetown, Barbados: Cedar Press, 1981.

Appendix Five

Blak Up

Barry Chevannes

Barry Chevannes,
Arr. Patrick Prescod

Source: *Sing A New Song No. 3*. Patrick Prescod (ed.), Bridgetown, Barbados: Cedar Press, 1981.

Appendix Six

In Bethlehem One Glorious Night

Everton Joseph

Attributed to Isalyn C. Richards,

Source: *Sing A New Song No. 3*. Patrick Prescod (ed.), Bridgetown, Barbados: Cedar Press, 1981.

Appendix Seven

Patrick Prescod

Me Alone

Traditional Jamaican. arr. Patrick Prescod

Source: *Sing A New Song No. 3*. Patrick Prescod (ed.), Bridgetown, Barbados: Cedar Press, 1981.

Appendix Eight

Enter Into Jerusalem

Richard Ho Lung

Richard Ho Lung; Arr. P.E.P.

Source: *Sing A New Song No. 3*. Patrick Prescod (ed.), Bridgetown, Barbados: Cedar Press, 1981.

Appendix Nine

Our Father Who Art In Heaven

Richard Ho Lung

Source: *Sing A New Song No. 3*. Prescod, Patrick (ed.), Bridgetown, Barbados: Cedar Press, 1981.

Appendix Ten

1

We kiss each other in the side
Of our beloved Spouse,
Which is ordain'd for his dear Bride
Her everlasting House.
The Lamb, the Husband of our Souls,
Hath got indeed more Wounds and Holes,
Yet is the bleeding lovely Side
The Chamber of the Bride.

2

Our Husband's Side-Hole is indeed
The Queen of all His Wounds
On this the little Pidgeon's feed,
Whom Cross's Air Surrounds
There they fly in and out and sing
Side's Blood is seen on ev'ry Wing,
The Bill that picks the Side-Hole's floor
Is red of Blood all o'er.

3

Then sings the little happy Croud,
Warbling their Blood wash'd Throats
No other Bird however proud
Can imitate their Notes
They sing their *Pleurae Gloria!*
And to the Lamb *Victoria!*
Amen and Amen sings the choir,
Then flies in to respire.

4

Blest Flock in the Cross's Atmosphere,
You smell of Jesu' Grave
The Vapours of his Corpse so dear
Are the Perfume you have.
It's scent is Penetrant and sweet!
When you each other kiss and greet,
This Scent discovers that you were
To Jesu' Body near.

5

With thy Side's Blood quite cover me,
And wet me thro' and thro';
For this I pant incessantly,
And nothing else will do.
The Blood-Sweat in thy Agony
Come in full Heat all over me,
Thy Body stretch its Breadth and Length
O'er me, and give me Strength.

6

A Bird that dives into the Side,
Goes down quite into the Ground,
And finds a Bottom large and wide
In this so lovely Wound
A Side-Hole's Diver will I be:
O Side-Hole I will sink in thee!
My Soul and Body, Enter thou
Into the Side-Hole now.

7

To live and work and sleep therein,
I'm heartily inclin'd
As a poor Dove myself to screen,
Is my whole Heart and Mind.
O precious Side-Hole's Cavity!
I want to spend my life in thee.
Glory to Thee for thy Side-hole,
Dear Husband of my Soul!

8

With all my Heart I bow and bend
Before thy bleeding feet:
Yet to thy Side I re-ascend,
Which is to me most Sweet.
There in one Side-Hole's joy Divine,
I'll spend all future Days of mine.
Yes, yes I will forever fit
There, where thy Side was split.

9

Ye Cross's Air Birds swell the Notes
Of the sweet Side-Hole song
The Side-Hole juice will clear your Throats,
And help to hold it long.
Each day and year shall higher raise

The Side-Hole's Glory, Love and Praise
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
To the Side Gloria.

T. 159

4

8

10

Source: *Hymn Tunes, Sung in the Church of the United Brethren, Collected by Christian Ignatius LaTrobe*; London, Printed for the Editor and Sold by John Le Febvre, Chapel Place, Nevils Court, Fetter Lane, 1796.

Appendix Eleven

1

Thou death-sweat mixt with blood!
Which the Lamb's body cover'd,
When pale his Face was view'd,
His Soul by a thread hover'd,
His Heart together press'd,
His Eye in tears was drown'd,
And Ice-cold Dew full fast,
O'er all His hair was found.

2

Sweat, which on Head shines bright,
Death-sweat on clammy forehead,
Sweat gathering round the sight,
Which the brain's moisture marred;
Thou Passion-Anguish hard!
Which his Spirit over-heat,
Did tear his Bones like Sword,
And His Breath suffocate.

3

Yes Corpse-like Dewy now
And still Grave-steaming fingers!
Thy Servant's bone sweat thro',
Which quiv'ring for it lingers
Thou Corpse's Air! Come, come
Thro' this Hand into th' Bread:
When kneaded with thy Fume,
'Twill make the members dead.

4

Thou but few inches deep,
Yet fountain fathom'd never,
Which first a Spear ran up,
Now Hell's quench'd by thy River!
'Fore that Well's Source and Grott
Thy Love-sick Wife here lies:
Lo! now his slumb'ring Note
Unstops thy passages.

5

Flow in this Hall with Haste,
That thy church wet it render;
And that (in this Meal Blest),
God's Mandhood depth so tender,
Which to its Church quite close
Comes thro' this Sacrament
And nuptially her knows
Thro' Mind and Blood ferment

T. 146.

The musical score for T. 146 is presented in three systems, each consisting of a treble staff and a bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system begins with a treble staff containing a series of chords and a single note, followed by a bass staff with a sequence of notes and rests, including fingerings 6, 5, 76, 6, 2, 6, 6, and 57. The second system starts with a treble staff featuring a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a bass staff with notes and rests, including fingerings 6, 3, 4, 2, 6, 6, 87, and 5. The third system begins with a treble staff with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a bass staff with notes and rests, including fingerings 76, 6, 7, 6, 6, 6, and 57. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Source: *Hymn Tunes, Sung in the Church of the United Brethren*, collected by Christian Ignatius LaTrobe; London, Printed for the Editor and Sold by John Le Febvre, Chapel Place, Nevils Court, Fetter Lane, 1796.

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