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Built on the Word:
The theology and use of the Bible in the Australian Anglican Fresh Expressions of Church

A Thesis

submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Theology and Ministry

in Durham University

Department of Theology and Religion

by

Guerin Tueno

2014

Abstract:

The Fresh Expressions of Church are a new form of Anglican church planting that emphasises an incarnational or encultured methodology which recognises that simply repeating existing patterns fails to connect to the majority of society. However, within both the Church of England and the Anglican Church of Australia, the Fresh Expressions movement has been attacked as being illegitimate owing to its extra-parochial nature.

This thesis argues that the parochial system is not the defining feature of Anglicanism, and that the debate should be refocused on the Anglican Formularies as the normative expression of the Church's theology and practice. Central to these Formularies is the authority and use of Scripture. So this thesis argues that in considering the legitimacy of the Fresh Expressions movement attention needs instead to be given to the Anglican Church of Australia's espoused theology and practice regarding the Bible. These beliefs are then to be brought into dialogue with practices of the Fresh Expression churches.

While due weight is given to the academic debate around Anglican identity, this research focuses instead on practice; espoused belief is an insufficient measure of ecclesial identity and churches need to be considered through what they do. This research was carried out in three Fresh Expression churches and one Inherited church, all of which belong to the Anglican Church of Australia. Field research was conducted through a questionnaire followed by participant-observer work.

The Fresh Expression churches considered in this thesis express positive Anglican identity through their use of the Bible and through another core feature of Anglican identity and practice – that is, the ordination injunction from the Church of England 'to proclaim the gospel afresh to each generation'. 'Afresh' does not simply mean repeating the message, but rather is a process that can only be done through giving due weight to the social, economic, and educational factors that inform each individual church's area or network of ministry.

The contention of this thesis is that the Fresh Expression churches considered individually display some aspects of Anglican identity through their practices and thus encourage the movement as a whole to reflect on how to more fully express their place in the Anglican family. This thesis also argues for the central importance of the authorised leadership in maintaining Anglican identity through practice while engaging in enculturated mission and ministry.

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List of abbreviations used in this thesis

BCP – Book of Common Prayer

DThM – Doctorate of Theology and Ministry

FXC – Fresh Expression of Church

MSC – Mission Shaped Church report

RCL – Revised Common Lectionary

My ethnographic present

The position is stated as at July 31, 2014.

Referencing of participants

To preserve anonymity, the churches herein are referred to by a randomly sequential numbering system. Where necessary quotes have been redacted in order to remove identifying material. Titles have been retained as the role of the ordained offices is important to the conclusion reached in this thesis. The churches these people were licensed to at the time of interview remain de-identified. The four participating churches have not been named or referred to by geographic locations.

Declaration

None of the material contained in this thesis has been previously submitted for a degree in this or any other institution. This thesis is my own work.

Statement of copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the prior written consent of the author, and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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Dedication

There are many to whom I am grateful for their support, encouragement and friendship, but I dedicate this thesis to the Husband of the Bride, the Good Shepherd of the sheep, the Bright Morning Star without whom the church has no life, regardless of whether its forms are inherited or fresh.

Come Lord Jesus.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

This thesis is about Anglicanism. It is about locating what it means to be Anglican in the principles that inform the Formularies and not simply in the current structures of the inherited Church. Its genesis sprang from reading the *Mission-Shaped Church* report in an area-deanery meeting. This sparked an interest in new patterns of mission and ministry for me as a first-time Rector. Mine was a small ageing congregation and the question of how to engage creatively in mission was attractive. It also raised for me questions of how the Bible was being used in these new churches. As I continued my reading I came to the realisation that others in the Anglican world were also asking questions of the Fresh Expressions movement, or rather, questioning its legitimacy. At around this time I was nominated by my Bishop for a scholarship to undertake further study on the basis of my suggestion for this topic. The hypothesis I set out to test was that the Australian Anglican Fresh Expressions of Church movement express Anglican identity through their use of Scripture.

My starting point was in processing what I read about the Fresh Expressions in parallel with the work of Francis Schaeffer; although not an Anglican, he contributed to my initial thinking through his idea of orthodoxy as an island. Some Reformed Christian believers demand strict confessional agreement with a highly systematised theological statement, but Schaeffer resisted this impulse.[1] Schaeffer's idea was that orthodoxy is spacious:[2] Christian belief and tradition (in this case Anglicanism) is better understood as a circle (or island) rather than as a singularity, and upon this island one has liberty to move around. To be sure, there are cliffs and ravines on the island, and it is surrounded by dangerous reefs and currents, but in the end there is generous room for accommodating a variety of positions. It is in this sense that the Anglican Formularies are able to accommodate the Fresh Expressions – the Formularies could constitute the boundaries of the Anglican island of orthodoxy upon which both traditional and fresh expressions may roam.

This thesis is about the relationship between espoused theological commitments and ecclesial practice: testing what we say we believe against what we do. This question is really two-fold – the first part is a straightforward testing of biblical practices amongst a range of churches from the Fresh Expressions movement, but the second question is, what is a reasonable measure for practice? Which espoused beliefs should be determinative of whether a church is Anglican or not? Is such measure even possible or fair and reasonable?

This thesis is about examining whether the Fresh Expressions of Church function as legitimate parts of the Anglican Church of Australia: looking beyond the external

[1] Francis A. Schaeffer, *Works Vol.4.*, 2nd ed. ed. (Wheaton, Illinois Crossway Books, 1985). p.165.
[2] Ibid. p.166.

structure to find authentic Anglican ecclesial identity. This thesis looks through the lens of practical theology to address my hypothesis. Its discussions are earthed in the real and observed practices found amongst the churches I have been researching. This is not the theoretical discussion that has been allowed to dominate the critiques regarding the Fresh Expressions movement, but one concerned with operational theology and practice and their relationship with the Anglican Church of Australia's formal theological commitments.

This thesis is about the use of Bible in Anglicanism. It is about thinking theologically about what is believed and practised in these Fresh Expressions. It is about testing whether authentic Anglican character is expressed in the churches considered herein. I hope also to encourage and foster the development of the movement by speaking critically and positively about the training of the next generation of Fresh Expression church planters and leaders.

Chapter 2 - Methodology

Before considering the Fresh Expressions of Church and the broader field of Anglican identity, I need to present the methodology employed in this project. This will enable an understanding of both the initial approach with which I began this research, and also the research methods employed over the life of the project. I will also be engaging with challenges to my thesis from one of the participating churches.

This research project consists of four foci: espoused Anglican identity and practice located in the Anglican Church of Australia's Formularies; the practices prevalent in inherited forms of the Anglican Church of Australia; the espoused beliefs of the leaders of Anglican Fresh Expression of Church in Australia; and the practices of the selected churches as I encountered them as a participant-researcher.

Of these four, the Formularies bear some brief discussion given their crucial role in my method. The three Formularies of the Church of England are the 1662 Book of Common Prayer (often referred to simply as BCP), the 39 Articles of Religion, and the Ordinal. While discussed in greater depth in Chapter 4, readers may benefit from knowing that the Book of Common Prayer contains the authorised liturgies of the Church of England. To stay a middle course between Roman Catholicism and some of the radical extremes of Protestantism, the Church of England's worship was delimited by the theology and words of the Prayer Book. While cherished for its language, the true genius of the Book of Common Prayer was rather in how it discipled a nation and its colonies through its public and private worship. The 39 Articles of Religion are not a full confessional statement as found in some parts of the Continental Reformation, but rather a collection ranging from theological essentials such as the Trinity (Article I); to refutations of Roman Catholic errors such as in the nature and number of the Sacraments (Article XXV); and also some which guard against the theological teachings of groups such as the Anabaptists which were believed to undermine social order (Articles XXXVII, XXXVIII, XXXIX). Of particular note for this research are those Articles which address the nature and role of Scripture (Articles VI, VII, XX, & XXIV). The Ordinal contains the ordination service by which people are admitted to the three ordained offices of the church, Deacon, Priest, and Bishop. The Ordinal is significant, as in it we find the espoused nature and task of Anglican ministry – especially regarding that of how ordained ministry relates to the nature, content and function of the Bible. These three texts are not competing documents, but rather there exists a synergy between them. What the Articles define, we see embodied in the authorised liturgies of the Church, and this in turn is witnessed in the promises and charges of the Ordinal. The Anglican Church of Australia possesses a fourth Formulary in addition to these three historic foundations, that being the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia. This document is not an abrogation of the historic Formularies, but rather supplements

and strengthens them. The specific contribution of the Constitution will be considered further in Chapter 4.

2.1 - Reflexivity: locating the researcher

Questions and knowledge are not neutral – my identity as a researcher can directly impinge on the perspectives that inform my hypothesis, the way I conduct my research and the ways in which I present my work.

I am an eldest child, raised in a white middle-class professional family. I am married and the father of two children. I describe myself as an Evangelical Anglican,[3] in the reformed tradition, with an egalitarian approach to gender and ministry. I began university studying Art History, writing my Honours thesis in 1997 at Monash University on *Contemporary Practicing Christian Artists*. I was a staff-worker with the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students before being encouraged to apply for ordination in the Anglican Church of Australia. I was ordained a Deacon in Melbourne Diocese and a Priest in Canberra and Goulburn Diocese. I have served as a Priest-in-Charge and Assistant Priest in my ministry, though these have been in inherited forms of the church. I write as both an insider and outsider: as an insider as I am an ordained member of the Anglican Church of Australia, whose ecclesial family covers the Fresh Expression Churches that I am considering, but I am also an outsider as I have neither planted nor led a Fresh Expression Church. As an outsider the stresses and questions surrounding the process of birthing and growing a new Christian community, especially regarding how the Bible is engaged with, are beyond my experience. I recognise that my own faith has been conditioned by my own experience of the Christian faith as expressed within Evangelical Anglicanism, but I believe that I have worked hard to present this thesis in an honest and prejudice free manner.

I am writing also as an Australian – in discussions with both staff and students in the Doctorate of Theology and Ministry (DThM) Summer School programme I came to appreciate that the issue of defining Anglican identity is something felt more acutely by Anglicans outside of England and the Church of England. This thesis thus sits across two distinct but related ecclesial settings – I began the research as an Australian in England, and having to adapt to a different set of assumptions about what it meant to be Anglican. Research, like life itself, is a marked by a series of

[3] Can you be both Evangelical and Anglican? I am indebted to the work of Kenneth Locke's robust defence of Evangelicalism – he concludes: 'The evidence clearly shows that the Anglican Evangelical Protestant understanding of the Church is historically and theologically a legitimate and respectable option within Anglicanism.' Kenneth A. Locke, *The Church in Anglican Theology: A Historical, Theological and Ecumenical Exploration* (Farnham2009). p.43. For Locke's complete argument see: ibid. pp.29-43.
For an extended discussion on the tensions between Anglican and Evangelical identity and theology see: Richard Turnbull, *Anglican and Evangelical?* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007).
Tim Bradshaw, *The Olive Branch: An Evangelical Anglican Doctrine of the Church* (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1992).

choices and decisions that shape the present. What if I had conducted the research entirely in Australia? I believe the thesis would have been the poorer for it, as my time in England has provided perspective on 'being Anglican'. This encompasses: being able to engage personally with Stephen Sykes at seminars in St John's College, having a key (English) Anglican theorist on my supervisory team, and gaining a broader sense of English (and Anglican) history by visiting English churches that predate my country's establishment by centuries. I would have missed the strong sense of identity and place that the parish system has in England and the ongoing role the Church of England has in the life of the United Kingdom. Being not long past the bicentennial of English colonisation, Australians are not by inclination bound by tradition as much as by pragmatism. While the Englishness of Anglicanism is perhaps of a more conservative sensibility than much of our surrounding culture, Australian Anglicans are still products of their national setting. But to stand in the antiquity of Durham Cathedral, or even to worship in local churches whose buildings predate the English Reformation, is a reminder of the weight of history and tradition (both social and theological) that some of the critics of Fresh Expressions would be loath to lose.

2.2 - Methodology proposed and reconsidered

My method of theological reflection - Whitehead and Whitehead's *Method in Ministry*[4] - is by its very nature, conversational between its constituent elements. The Church of England and her daughter Provincial Churches are a Communion of ongoing conversations – it produces national Churches that are neither too dogmatic nor too pragmatic. As Sykes points out, Anglicanism is system of balancing authorities[5] – the method adopted in this research needed to resonate with this Anglican appreciation of identity. The Whitehead and Whitehead approach entails placing the pastoral situation (in this case the perceived tension between the Fresh Expression of Church and some views within the Inherited Church) in a broad conversation that encompasses theology, history and practice.

I have sought to use a quantitative approach (albeit with a relatively small sample) in gathering information from the leadership groups of Fresh Expression Churches regarding their beliefs, and a qualitative approach through my participant-observer work with the four churches described in this thesis. In approaching this research I have envisioned it as both apologia and constructive critique. Despite emerging from within the Church of England, there has been the charge that the Fresh Expressions churches are not truly Anglican chiefly by virtue of not conforming to the parish system. My approach has been to see Anglican identity located not in institutional structure but in liturgical activity. At first this approach may seem just as problematic for the Fresh Expressions given that their liturgical practices may

[4] James D. Whitehead & Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry (Revised Edition)* (Lanham: Sheed & Ward, 1995).
[5] S. W. Sykes, *Unashamed Anglicanism* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1995). Chapter 9 'Authority in the Church of England', pp.140-177.

differ from those encountered in the authorised Anglican liturgies, but my contention is that Anglican identity resides not in the simple constant rehearsing of common liturgies, but in practices that are consistent with the historical Anglican Formularies. As noted by Berry, there is a real need for consideration of worship that goes beyond merely researching texts, if we wish to look for their practised theological identity.[6] If 'it cannot be over emphasised that worship and communion are central to Anglican understanding'[7] then we cannot deal adequately with questions of Anglican identity and legitimacy without considering the real practices of these churches.

In the course of writing up my participant-observer material I have been led to reconsider my approach, through the feedback of one of the participating Fresh Expression churches (FXC). Their response to my initial writing was that I had failed to properly appreciate what they had been doing and that I was claiming too much for the Formularies. I appreciate the fear of misrepresentation on their part, indeed this concern underlies the section of this thesis in which I sought feedback from the participating churches as to whether or not I had misrepresented their practices. The other churches surveyed had minor points of correction, but the church in question challenged the underlying assumptions for my hypothesis. I have not rewritten the relevant section to acquiesce to their perspectives, but I am acutely aware of the dual fears of misrepresentation and misunderstanding amongst the broader Church. Their concerns have reinforced for me the necessity of anonymity for my participating churches; what I have written is open to misuse by members of the Anglican institution for their own political agendas.

Also challenged by this church was the benchmark I had set in the Formularies. What is the significance of the Formularies in contemporary Anglicanism? This in itself would constitute a significant body of research – as Frame and Jensen note, there is no consensus across the Anglican Church of Australia regarding the status of the Articles of Religion,[8] let alone the rest of the Formularies. Indeed, the place and status of the Articles, and the meaning of assent is an area of debate within Anglicanism generally.[9] This research is about theological practice not systematic or confessional theology. It is sufficient to note that:

i. the Formularies are part of the historical and theological design of Anglicanism, with Australian clergy still being asked to give their assent to the doctrines contained therein; and

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[6] Jan Berry 'Worship and Action' in Helen Cameron, *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook* (London: SCM Press, 2005). p.122.

[7] Alan Jones, *Common Prayer on Common Ground* (Harrisberg: Morehouse Publishing, 2006). p.2.

[8] Michael Jensen and Tom Frame, *Defining Convictions and Decisive Commitments* (Canberra: Barton Books, 2010). pp.1-16.

[9] See: Henry Chadwick, "The Context of Faith and Theology in Anglicanism," in *Theology in Anglicanism*, ed. Arthur A. Vogel (Wilton, Connecticut: Morehouse Barlow, 1984). pp.29, 31; J.C. de Satgé et al., *The Articles of the Church of England* (Oxford: A.R. Mowbray & Co. Limited, 1964).; David Broughton Knox, *Thirty-Nine Articles: The Historic Basis of Anglican Faith*, Christian Foundations (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1967).

ii. there is disagreement over the meaning of 'assent'.

Some may call for revision; some may give verbal assent but not mean it; some give assent without really considering the nature of what they are agreeing to; some may give assent to the principles but not the wording. But clergy are required to give an expression of agreement to the Formularies;[10] as Sykes argues, the 'definite convictions' that inform the Anglican liturgical texts and the vow of canonical obedience still sets the limits within which Anglican clergy may operate.[11] While the Formularies may be disputed, they are still lodged in the structure of the Anglican Church of Australia and, as such, may be used as a lens through which to consider the practices of both inherited and fresh expressions of Church. The contested space occupied by the Formularies (especially the Articles) is a most illuminating case study into the tension between operative and normative theologies.

2.3 - Research methods

Given the legitimate concerns raised by one participating church, I feel limited in the level of information I can disclose regarding the process of selecting the participating churches. That said, I can comment on the methods I have employed without endangering their anonymity.

My first step in creating the research project was to identify as many Anglican Fresh Expression Churches in Australia as possible. I did this both by internet searches and by contacting Diocesan Bishops around the country. This in itself was an illuminating exercise, not simply for the information that would come from their questionnaires but in the sometimes differing responses from Bishops and churches. In some cases, Bishops informed me, there were no Fresh Expression Churches in their territory, while I simultaneously had made contact with a church in their Diocese that was happy to self-identify as a Fresh Expression. This highlighted for me the politically charged nature of the discourse. The polarised nature of the Australian Anglican Church means that not all Bishops and Dioceses have sought to align themselves with the Fresh Expressions movement. The application of labels such as 'Emerging' or 'Fresh' goes beyond the definitions examined later, and into the realm of politics and alignment/dis-alignment. As such, the process of identifying churches was not as straightforward as I had initially anticipated.

Subsequent to this I ran a trial of the questionnaire through the staff team of my local Anglican church. This was not done to solicit material for the thesis but to test the questionnaire itself for both its usability by participants and to see if I could recognise the contours of the church as I knew it, from the responses given by the staff team. Satisfied on both these matters, I proceeded to mail out the questionnaire to the Fresh Expression churches. Each was sent three copies of my questionnaire for the church's primary leader and two additional leaders or senior members of the

[10] A. Stevenson, "Oxford Dictionary of English," (OUP Oxford, 2010). p.95.
[11] Stephen Sykes, "The Genius of Anglicanism," in *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism*, ed. Geoffrey Rowell (Wantage: IKON Productions Ltd, 1992). p.233.

church. These questionnaires allowed me to build up a rich description by gaining information about the individual churches so that I had an appreciation of the opinions and shape of the movement across Australia (this data also assisted me in selecting which churches I would spend time with as a participant-observer), and by allowing me to construct an appreciation of the espoused theology and practices of the participating churches which could be tested through my participant-observer fieldwork.[12] In this research I am engaging with three different kinds of theology – espoused theology (what the leaders of the Fresh Expression churches say they believe), practised theology (or operant theology – the theology that actions and practices actually communicate); and normative theology (the stated theological position of the Church tradition in view, and which I would contend is the position of myself and this thesis).[13]

Concurrent with the questionnaire I began work on a point of comparison for the Fresh Expressions churches. While my intention was always to include an inherited form of church in the fieldwork, there was a need for a much broader appreciation of the practices of the Inherited Church. In my initial literature review I considered the praxis of Scripture and Anglican identity, but now I sought to build up a picture of how the Bible was being used in the Inherited Church. Limited by time and the length of the thesis, I reasoned that there was not scope to study more than one individual inherited Church, but there was the avenue of exploring how Scripture was being used in the writing of theorists and practitioners from the inherited arm of the Anglican Church.

From the questionnaire responses I selected three Fresh Expression Churches for further investigation. This selection was made dually on the basis of their given responses and also my ability to attend a month's services with them. A geographical and biographical note is warranted at this point – my studies were commenced in England and my original plan had been to apply my hypothesis to the English situation which had an abundance of Fresh Expression projects, some of which had been operating for a significant period of time. My wife's work necessitated our return to Australia after a year in England and required me instead to refocus my work on the local Fresh Expression scene. The size of England, and the relative abundance of Fresh Expression plants would have made pursuing individual churches solely on their questionnaire responses much more viable; in Australia, I was somewhat constrained by the scale of the country.[14]

Having selected three Fresh Expression Churches from the questionnaire data and also a suitable Inherited Church with which I was familiar, I began the process of undertaking participant-observer research. This consisted of attending the public meetings of each of these groups. I deliberately did not seek interviews with church

[12] This modelling can be found in Chapter 5.

[13] Helen Cameron et al., *Talking About God in Practice: Theological Research and Practical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2010).

[14] See Chapter 6.1.1 for further discussion of the role of distance in selecting churches for study.

leaders or members during this process as my intention was to let the observed practices speak for themselves. I wanted to preclude special pleading, where explanations of the internal world of participants was taken as the measure of their 'Anglican identity' over the practice. That said, I did have significant engagement with two of the FXC leaders. One (from FXC-M) wanted not to justify their practices, but to ease me into their social world – it was a safeguard, so that I did not inadvertently negatively impact their attendees. The other was the leader of FXC-C who raised objections not so much to my reporting of their practices, as to my interpretation of them. The challenges raised were significant to this thesis and to me personally. I have found it painful to reconsider my observations and conclusions, but I believe the conversation has ultimately been rewarding and beneficial for the thesis as a whole.

While I have claimed the role of participant-observer, I note that owing to the size and activity of the four churches the nature of participation changed according to their nature and activities. In the Inherited Church I, along with the majority of the congregation, participated by sitting and standing at the appropriate parts of the service, listening to Bible readers, preachers, service leaders and intercessors. I joined in the responsive prayers and singing and I received communion. In one Fresh Expression church, my experience was almost identical to that in the inherited church, with the only real difference being a coffee and community break halfway through the service to allow people to meet each other.

It was in the other two Fresh Expression churches that I found my role differing. In a Food Bank run by FXC-M, I found myself assisting the volunteer staff as they served the attendees. I joined the prayer circle before food was distributed. I sat and talked with some of the attendees as they waited for their turn. I carried boxes for elderly clients or those encumbered with children. Notes had to be recorded either as I could grab moments to write or reconstructed from memory after the day's activities. The final Fresh Expression church's meetings were small enough and deliberately structured to enable those present to engage in group discussions, not simply listening to those leading the sections of the meeting, but responding to them with our own questions and thoughts.

It was this last church that challenged my hypothesis and method. Although not a direct parallel to my own situation with this church, Martin Stringer's experience as a participant-observer attending four churches in Manchester is insightful.[15] The Independent Christian Fellowship's leadership insisted on Stringer functioning as a full participant rather than an observer or participant-observer. This forced Stringer to adopt a different approach to gathering data on the experience of worship there, and necessarily required an alternate method of analysis. So, while three of the four churches were on the whole satisfied with my presentation of their meetings, FXC-C

[15] M.D. Stringer, *On the Perception of Worship* (Birmingham: The University of Birmingham Press, 1999). pp.139-141.

has required me to adopt a Hegelian model of Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis. I have done this so as to both maintain my own voice as a researcher, and to respect the concerns of the participating church. The Synthesis requires that the perspectives can be reconciled and shows the development of my own thinking as I engaged with the feedback.

2.4 - Theological methodology

Practical theology, as Veling describes it, is not another branch of theology, but rather the move to integrate theology with life.[16] Veling posits that:

> Theology is always shaped by and embodied in the practices of historical, cultural and linguistic communities. Our understandings always emerge from our practices, or from the "forms of life" in which we participate.[17]

If this is so, then two crucial issues loom large – are the practices around Scripture in the Anglican Fresh Expressions of Church authentic to and derived from the tradition in which they present, and moreover where will the practices currently found there take the theology of these groups? Does the use of the Bible enable the communities and people in focus to live more ethical, holy lives?[18] The normative pattern of Anglican liturgy would seem to be one in which the Bible is interwoven throughout services, enculturating listening and obedience to God, enabling and directing prayer, prompting confession and assuring of forgiveness and renewing thankfulness to God through the Eucharist. Is this pattern similarly enculturated in the Anglican Fresh Expressions? Moreover, the use of the Bible in responding to present situations should not be allowed to speak solely to the present. While the Bible addresses the present through God's past words and actions, the Bible has a restless anticipation and desire for what is yet to come, the revealing of God's Kingdom in all its fullness.[19] Echoing the eschatological nature of Jesus' words at his last supper, the Anglican Communion rite (itself a reading and use of the Bible) prompts and directs its participants to anticipate the day when 'Christ will come again', repeating the sharing of bread and wine until we share it at God's own table. Anglicanism, as a branch of the greater Christian tradition, with its rigorous and deeply engrained 'biblicality' held by and expressed in its Formularies is important because:

> Tradition calls out to us from the deep memory of the past, not to celebrate nostalgia or comforting doctrines, not to enshrine some truth in a timeless vault. It is no quaint or comforting reminiscence; rather it is the memory of a passionate people with deeply spiritual longings and burning hearts. Tradition is the collective and living memory of a

[16] Terry A. Veling, *Practical Theology: On Earth as It Is in Heaven* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005). p.3.
[17] Ibid. p.6.
[18] Ibid. p.14.
[19] Ibid. p,17.

> people, but what they remember is not a "glorious past" to be revered and enshrined. Rather they remember a time that has not yet arrived. Paradoxically, they carry and preserve the memory of a future that is yet to be, a time that is still coming, a promise that beckons and asks us to respond.[20]

In establishing the method of testing the theology and use of the Bible in the Anglican Fresh Expressions we are seeking to ensure that present and future church plantings are similarly orientated towards God and his purposes, not to recreate the church of Elizabeth I and James I, but to maintain the hope and theological commitments of the English reformers.

The question of the theology and use of the Bible in the Anglican Fresh Expressions movement is significant not simply because of questions of the integrity of a denomination, or the issue of the allocation of resources, but because it addresses the fundamental Christian concern of hearing and responding to God.[21] It is here that the issue of Anglican identity and practice is significant. Located in the Articles of Religion and the Ordinal, and embodied in the public worship services of the Book of Common Prayer (and its lawful descendants) is a powerful and essential commitment to regularly listening to the breadth of Scripture and to shaping the common life of the church and its constituent members with the Bible as the Word of God. While not writing as an Anglican, Ray Anderson's insight is correct:

> Theology is not simply something to be known; theology is something lived and experienced by a particular community. Thus in contrast to models of theology focusing primarily on the cognitive and rational aspects of theological knowledge, the understanding of theology that informs this book sees it in terms of *whole person knowledge*. Human beings are participants as well as observers, worshipers as well as workers, and all these aspects are potential sources of theological knowledge.[22]

While the personal and individual level of engagement with the Bible is beyond the scope of this project, Anderson's comment about communities being repositories of theological knowledge is a helpful insight – theology is never limited to official statements, confessions or even creeds. Theology is enacted and embodied as well as written; indeed all Christians are theologians in the sense that we all do some level of 'God talk' that may or may not cohere with the academic or normative theology of the academy or the church.[23] What is done with the Bible – how it is used – is of more importance in understanding Anglicanism or any church or tradition than just

[20] Ibid. pp.36-37.
[21] Ibid. p.12.
[22] Ray S. Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2001). p.23.
[23] Jeff Astley, *Ordinary Theology: Looking, Listening, and Learning in Theology* (Ashgate Publishing Company, 2002).

reading the normative theological statements on a subject. Paul Fiddes reminds us that this is an organic process – it happens over time in the (worshipping) life of a community, thus underscoring the need for ethnography as an ongoing study of living communities in understanding a church's practical theology:

> Faith is not a mere matter of words but is *embodied*; it takes bodily form in the life of a community as people live together, and communities cannot operate without some kinds of institutions and structures. Ecclesiology should seek to express the *theological* dimension within these embodied forms. [24]

The question of scriptural praxis and espoused denominational theology is therefore not simply about a tradition policing itself, but about the broader task of practical theology – 'critical reflection on the actions of the church in the light of the gospel and Christian tradition'.[25] Article VI presents the Scriptures as a united literary unit which records God's act of gracious self-revelation through his words and actions in the history of Israel, as well as in their worship, wise observations of the world, storytelling, and social analysis. This special revelation culminates and is centred on the person and work of Christ. How then the Scriptures as a whole are being used (or not) cannot help but impact on 'God's redemptive mission'[26] as the story of God is retold amongst the church and to the world if it will listen. My point is to guard against a drift towards the creation of a canon within the canon. The Fresh Expressions of Church sprang not from a concern to run alternative worship and structure community differently for the sake of novelty, but from the missional goal of connecting with those who have drifted away from the church or who have never believed in Jesus. This formed the heart of a report on church planting presented to the General Synod of the Church of England.

The desire to 'do mission' may however blind the Church to what consequences its decisions may have longer term regarding its ecclesiology. It is insufficient to allow the pragmatic approach of allowing practitioners free rein, but rather the church must consider what it does in the light of its theology. Orthopraxis need not be a singular approach, but rather the need to ensure the coherence between what is espoused and what is practised. We find a parallel in how Anderson calls for a reflective approach to ministry, moving from 'mere practice' to praxis:

> Whereas practice implies the nonreflective performance of a task in a dispassionate, value-free manner, praxis denotes a form of action that is value directed and theory-laden… Praxis is reflective because it is action that not only seeks to achieve particular ends but also on the means and

[24] Paul S. Fiddes, "Ecclesiology and Ethnography: Two Disciplines, Two Worlds?," in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, ed. Pete Ward (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012). p.19.
[25] Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis*. p.26.
[26] Ibid. pp.27-28.

> the ends of such an action in order to assess the validity of both in the light of its guiding wisdom.[27]

While it is questionable that any use of the Bible by Christians is ever dispassionate, the distinction between simply doing something and doing something reflectively is important. This research aims to examine how the Fresh Expressions of Church are using the Bible to enable me to test their validity within Anglicanism, but the fruits of this research may go far beyond this; from this work the aim is to equip and encourage a more rigorous and considered engagement with the Bible across both traditional and new forms of the church within the Anglican tradition.

That theological examination and reflection in this area is vital is certain; the question then becomes one of which methodology to employ. I selected Whitehead and Whitehead's 'Method in Ministry'[28] model of theological reflection as their model commends itself to the nature of this research because of the dialogical nature of this discourse. In critiquing the Fresh Expressions I am seeking to bring ecclesial practice into conversation[29] with the Anglican Formularies, together with a robust Biblical theology of Scripture itself. The process for this method is threefold – the first phase is that of attending (elements from personal experience, religious tradition and culture are sought out); followed by that of asserting (in which the elements are brought into critical conversation with each other); from these arise the pastoral response to the situation:[30]

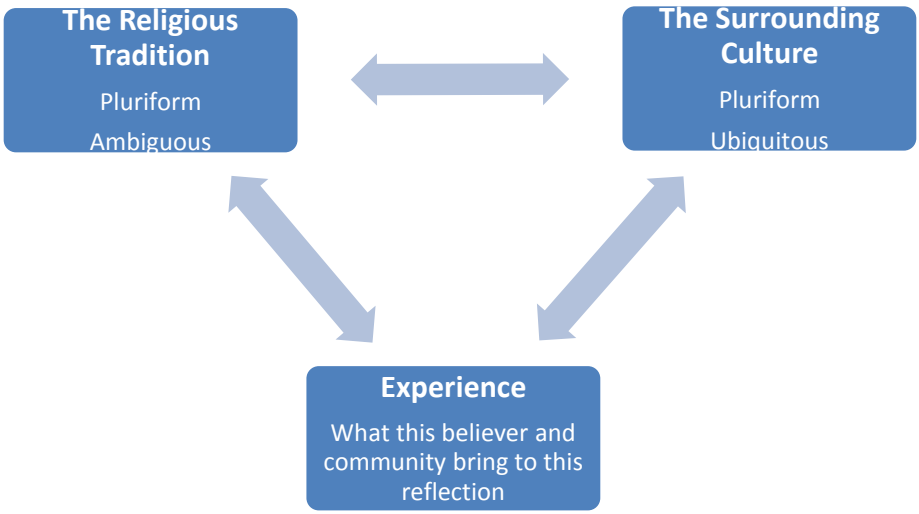

Figure 1 Whitehead & Whitehead's model of theological reflection.[31]

[27] Ibid. p,47.
[28] Whitehead, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry (Revised Edition)*.
[29] As Whitehead and Whitehead elaborate on 'conversation' is a rich term *'with its possibilities for interruption, disagreement and surprise'*.
Ibid. p.4.
[30] Ibid. p.x.
[31] Ibid. p.6.

Regarding 'Religious Tradition' the Whiteheads include Scripture, the ecumenical Creeds and councils, and the particulars of the relevant denominational tradition.[32] While nominally the ultimate authority in Anglicanism, Scripture does not stand in a vacuum, moreover as the Whiteheads point out, Scripture often addresses us indirectly:

> Scripture does not serve the contemporary community of faith by providing specific solutions to contemporary questions. In the face of this realisation, ministers must learn new modes of faithful and effective access to this central source of revelation and Christian wisdom.'[33]

What Scripture offers then are paradigms rather than neat solutions to contemporary issues;[34] Biblical principles and vision rather than dogmatic assertions about the form of the church. Using the Bible in theological reflection should not bypass the normal hermeneutical work of establishing meaning.[35] The Bible's ability to speak today requires careful attention to the text's context, medium and purpose if it is to speak with full voice and authority to contemporary situations. By including tradition as a dialogue partner, the Whiteheads' model offers us a rich reading of the issue of the ecclesial identity of the Fresh Expression churches through a dynamic conversation with ecclesial theology rather than static reading of denomination form. As the Whiteheads rightly note, church tradition does not exist in isolation but is conditioned and responsive to the cultural setting and needs around it:

> Historically, the tradition has developed as Christianity interacted (with varying effectiveness and faithfulness) with different cultural contexts and challenges. This historical movement results in a religious heritage rich with responses to particular pastoral concerns. Recognising this historical pluriformity helps faith communities today appreciate more clearly the tradition's flexibility and breadth.[36]

This flexibility to cultural context within the method's approach is a significant feature when considering a movement that essentially is a reworking of the theology and practice of the church in the light of changing social conditions. And while the Whiteheads note the priority of tradition as an authority in their model, they also note that the initiative for beginning this conversation actually lies with another partner, that of experience.[37] It was my own reading of the Fresh Expression literature that drew me into considering its place in the Anglican tradition and it will be my own experience as a participant-observer in the fieldwork component of the research that will be the lens through which these churches will be considered. Subjectivity is innately present in this, but by thorough reflexive practice in the field

[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid. p.29.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid. p.35.
[36] Ibid. p.8.
[37] Ibid. p.9.

and in my writing I aim to own my experience of engagement with the Fresh Expressions I research and to present as honest an account of their practice as possible. The third partner in the dialogue is culture, by which the Whiteheads mean not simply the context within which the situation considered takes place, but the broader social and scientific milieu available to the researcher.[38] For this research, if the Fresh Expression churches are truly 'incarnational', then their target social grouping must be recognised as playing a key role in their practice regarding how the Bible is used. For example, if the group consisted of the socially disadvantaged and poorly educated, the church's use of the Bible will need to reflect its mission to an illiterate or post-literate community. Considering what cultural resources may speak meaningfully into this conversation will also mean drawing from sociological and ethnographic insights into these churches. The Whiteheads draw our attention to culture's importance in the conversation by unearthing the 'assumptive world'[39] of a given group of people – what are the factors which have shaped that community that may be invisible to them?

The Whiteheads' model then uses a three stage process through which theological reflection takes place:

1. Attending: Seeking out the information on a particular pastoral concern that is available in personal experience, Christian tradition, and cultural resources. Listening critically while suspending judgment.

2. Assertion: Bringing the perspectives gathered from these three sources into a lively dialogue of mutual clarification to expand and enrich religious insight. Having the courage to share our convictions and the willingness to be challenged.

3. Pastoral Response: Moving from discussion and insight to decision and action. Discerning how to respond; planning what to do; evaluating how we have done.[40]

The changing metaphors the authors use illustrate each phase - in attending, the elements are brought into conversation - in the asserting phase, they instead speak of a crucible in which the elements are combined and something new is produced.[41] It is the third movement that sets this reflection firmly as a piece of practical theology - what is to be done to change or encourage practice? Insight and theological truth must be applied in response to the pastoral situation considered[42] - and by their very definition, the Fresh Expressions of Church are innately a pastoral situation that requires a pastoral response. The weight given to experience in the Whiteheads' model contains an inbuilt synergy with the ethnographic concern for the research to

[38] Ibid. pp.11-12.
[39] Ibid. p.56.
[40] Ibid. p.13.
[41] Ibid. p.15.
[42] Ibid. p.16.

be reflexive; awareness of one's own agenda and prejudices is required in honestly presenting both the cultures and peoples encountered, but in the process of the theological reflection or else it faces being short-circuited by our own agendas.[43]

In the final analysis, as Richard Osmer notes, there is certain commonality across various methods of reflective theological reflection that indicates an underlying paradigm that forms the core task of practical theology – the tasks of Descriptive-empirical description. In Osmer's schema, the Interpretative task is to make sense of the information collected, the Normative task is to reconcile theology with Christian practice, and finally the Pragmatic task is to respond to the situation.[44] Taking Osmer's observation as correct, it means that the selection of a particular method of theological reflection is arbitrary, as the underlying orientation of all reflective theological reflection will lead those using them in a similar direction.

2.5 - Development of the hypothesis

While the methodology has undergone some refinement, the essential hypothesis remains that the Australian Anglican Fresh Expressions of Church express Anglican identity through their use of the Bible. The Anglican Formularies set forth the normative theology of the Anglican Church of Australia which is, in theory, found in the liturgical life of its constituent congregations, be they inherited or fresh expressions. As I have conducted this research my personal conviction has been strengthened regarding the necessity of looking beyond just the normative theology of a denomination or individual congregation and instead examining practice in dialogue with tradition. Much of the critique of the Fresh Expressions movement comes at a theoretical level. The churches or models that have been criticised may bear little resemblance to real functioning churches. Pete Ward argues this point well when he states that:

> Ecclesiology and ethnography argue that the ethnographic "voice" demands our attention because it has the potential to make a significant and urgently needed contribution to the contemporary discussion of the church. This conviction arises from a growing sense that there is often a disconnection between what we say doctrinally about the church and the experience of life in a local parish.[45]

I am also indebted to my dialogue with FXC-C, not simply for their permission to conduct my research, but for the reminder that my initial hypothesis, while not wrong, needs to be set in a broader consideration of the threads from which Anglican identity is woven – to focus on Scripture is not incorrect, but Anglican identity is not reducible simply to scriptural usage. Indeed, even the question of how Scripture is

[43] Ibid. p.73.
[44] Richard Osmer, "Practical Theology: A Current International Perspective.," *HTS Teologiese Studies* 67, no. 2 (2011), http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v67i2.1058. p.2.
[45] P. Ward, ed. *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company,2012). p.4.

read and used is tied to missional concerns and activities in seeking to engage with the de-churched and unchurched.

2.6 The Australian Context

Context matters – culture, ethnicity, geography and history all effect how we understand the communities and practices considered. The churches I have researched are all *Australian* Anglican churches. While modern Australia began its life as a colony of the British Empire, and continues as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, we need to approach this research conscious of the distinctives of Australian culture and society.

In 2009 a number of Australian Anglican Bishops published *Facing the Future*.[46] Bishop Andrew Curnow, writing on the changing Australian context. Curnow notes that after World War II Australia's patterns of migration shifted from the Anglo-centric to taking in migrants from across war-ravaged Europe.[47] The changes Curnow describes in Australia's cultural, social and religious dimensions only increased as Australia took migrants from beyond Europe.[48] Indeed some 3.25 million migrated to Australia between 1947 and 1983 – and while the largest single contributor was still England, 54% of these migrants were from countries other than England.[49]

While the image associated with Australia is of a rural nation 'riding the sheep's back', the reality is that Australia is a urban nation with the majority of the population residing on, or near the eastern coastline. The three eastern State capitals Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne are home to most Australians. Curnow also notes the changed position of the Anglican Church in Australia[50] – in 1901 the nascent Australian population was a mere 3.7 million, with 40% identifying as Anglican (or Church of England in Australia as the nomenclature of the Anglican Church of Australia was not adopted until 1981). However by 2006, the position had changed dramatically – the national population was now 20 million, and of these 3.7 million identified as Anglicans. Curnow states that presently only 18.7% of the population identifies as Anglican (whatever their appreciation of that term may be). Curnow also raised the issue of the growing number of people who identify as having no religion. In 1901, it was a minuscule 0.4% of the population – in 2006 the number was on par with those identifying as Anglicans (3.7 million). While we might question how the numbers presented in the census data translate into active attendance and participation in the life of the Church (as indeed Curnow does – of those identifying as 'Anglican' only 10% regularly attend Anglican churches),[51] the

[46] S. Hale and A. Curnow, *Facing the Future: Bishops Imagine a Different Church* (Melbourne: Acorn Press, Limited, 2009).
[47] Ibid. p.3.
[48] Ibid.
[49] I. Breward, *A History of the Churches in Australasia* (Oxford University Press, 2004). p.300.
[50] Hale and Curnow, *Facing the Future: Bishops Imagine a Different Church*. p.4.
[51] Ibid. pp4-5.

reported numbers indicate the numerical decline of the Anglican Church of Australia as an institution, together with the challenge for all Christian denominations witnessed in the growth of those actively rejecting religious belief of any kind.

The rise of modern multicultural migrant Australia and the missional work of Australian Churches is an important area of research itself, and exceeds the scope of my own work. However, some points bear consideration – there are a number of Australian Anglican churches with a specific ethnic underpinning (such as Chinese, Dinka, or Karen). These churches are not labelled as Fresh Expressions of Church, and are often quite traditional in their public worship. In time conducting participant observer research, the majority of those present at the Fresh Expression churches were Australian born, with English family heritage. A question for future research is who the Fresh Expression of Church movement is reaching in Australia? Is it the unchurched from a variety of ethnic and social backgrounds, or it is the de-churched who have previously left the Anglican Church of Australia and other denominations and have been coaxed back into the fold through alternate styles of the church.

Modern Australia is a wealthy materialistic society – as Stuart Piggin has noted that this underlies Evangelical Christianity's failure to engage in Australia but the critique applies more broadly across the denominations and traditions.[52] Piggin's point is that a message of 'heavenly hope' is hard, but not impossible, to communicate in a culture that aspires to make heaven on earth.[53] Social researcher Hugh Mackay also noted the growing materialism from those born in the 1920s to their children (the so-called 'Baby-Boomers').[54] Writing in the late 1990s Mackay commented that a key feature of modern Australia is the increasing rate of change both socially and technologically.[55] Gone is the job security and family cohesion of previous generations; so also moral certainties are lessened. There is simultaneously a search amongst young people for meaning and identity, and also a rejection of the institutions and metanarratives of their antecedents. Moreover, Australian culture (or cultures as Mackay argues) is not to be read in isolation – modern Australia is within the milieu of Western Culture and as such is deeply immersed in issues of late capitalism and globalism and post-modernity[56] effecting the United Kingdom, Western Europe and the United States of America also.

Recognition of these social changes underpinned the need to contextualise *MSC* for the Australian context – rather than simply adopt the Church of England report uncritically, the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia published

[52] S. Piggin, *Evangelical Christianity in Australia: Spirit, Word and World* (Oxford University Press, 1996). p.222.
[53] S. Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World: Evangelical Christians in Australia* (Brunswick East: Acorn Press, 2012). p.253.
[54] H. Mackay, *Generations* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 1997). pp.31, 34-37, 113-115, 123.
[55] Ibid. p.181-194.
[56] S. Cowdell, *God's Next Big Thing: Discovering the Future Church* (John Garratt Publishing, 2004). pp.8-37.

Building the Mission-Shaped Church in Australia.[57] Building on Mackay's analysis of the three generations of Australian society in the twentieth century, a fourth generation was noted – Generation Y.[58] The progress of change had not stopped for those born after 1981, and the rejection of traditional institutions seen in their predecessors had not been halted. Indeed, Generation Y, while more optimistic than Generation X,[59] continues to be materialistic, caught up in the financial benefits of globalisation and Australia's commodity boom in the 1990s and 2000s. The social, economic and cultural pressures of modern Australia have necessitated a re-examination of mission and ministry in Australia – perhaps more so than in England. The Anglican Church of Australia has never occupied the same cultural privilege that the Church of England does. The Anglican Church of Australia has never been the established church of Australia. It does not hold the place in the psyche of the Australian peoples that the Church of England may have once in England itself. Indeed, the very Englishness of the Anglican Church of Australia has made it difficult to engage across the breadth of Australian society as Australian identity is at a popular level being an 'Aussie' rather than a 'Pom'.

[57] A. Nicholls, ed. *Building the Mission-Shaped Church in Australia: A Resource Book for Churches, Home Groups and Diocesan Staff Meetings with Questions for Small Group Discussion* (General Synod Office, Anglican Church of Australia,2006).
[58] Ibid. pp.15-17.
[59] Ibid. p.16.

Chapter 3 - Logos and the Ecclesia Anglicana: defining the field of inquiry

In seeking to test the Fresh Expressions of Church as authentic expressions of the Anglicanism, one must first define what it means to be Anglican. This is not an easy proposition: one local Anglican Church may look nothing like its neighbour in public worship or theological orientation. In Australia, Dioceses cast competing visions of Anglican identity and mission. While in theory the ordained ministries are transferable, individuals may find themselves unwanted or unaccepted in some Dioceses because of their training or theological orientation. Globally, division and conflict wrack the Anglican Communion, ostensibly over homosexuality, but underlying this is a deeper conflict over the nature and authority of Scripture.

In this section I outline the definitions of Anglicanism and Fresh Expressions that will be used in this thesis, as well as seeking to define what I mean by 'form'. The Emerging Church movement will also be defined as it serves to highlight the distinctive features of Fresh Expressions. Concluding this discussion we will hear from some of the lead defenders of the Inherited Church in the face of the Fresh Expression movement.

3.1 - Anglicanism

The Anglican Church of Australia gives an overview of Anglicanism on its website. Of particular note is the nature and character of the church from the time of the Reformation onwards:

> The effect of reform movements led by Martin Luther and John Calvin in Europe when coupled with the desire of King Henry VIII to secure a divorce from his Queen, Catherine of Aragon, led to a major re-think of doctrines and customs. These pressures altered, among other things, the social and political standing of the Church. The reformers demanded that the Church be purged of heretical teachings and unbiblical practices gradually introduced during the previous millennium. They asserted that these additions obscured Christ's teaching and deformed his Church. The 'Reformation' of the English Church was based on two key principles.
>
> First, the reformers held that each national church was independent and subject to civil law. The English monarch became 'Supreme Head of the Church' and papal power was rejected. The English church claimed the right to order its own life. This included the forms and patterns of corporate worship with liturgies written in words ordinary people could understand. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the senior Anglican cleric, was to preside as the 'first among equals' in the official or 'Established' Church. As his formal authority was limited to his own diocese, his

> position and role was nothing like that of the Pope. The English believed, like the Orthodox Eastern Church, that it was possible to be Catholics without the Pope. [The title 'bishop' comes from the Greek episcope word meaning 'overseer' or 'superintendent'. The term 'diocese' is another Greek word and refers to administrative area. It defines the geographic limits of a bishop's authority].
>
> Second, the Church could be reformed and still claim historical continuity. The reformed Church retained the Canonical Scriptures [those books of the Bible acknowledged as divinely-inspired and authoritative in the experience of the Church], the historic Creeds, a three-fold order of ministry with bishops, priests and deacons together with a corporate life centred around the sacraments of baptism and holy communion. [The sacraments are visible symbols affirming Christian understanding of God's invisible but very real activity in the world]. Only those things which were contrary to Scripture were abandoned by the English Church. The ancient Church in England became the reformed Church of England and still claimed to be Apostolic, Catholic, Reformed and Protestant.[60]

By this definition to be Anglican is to be part of the church Catholic, but not subject to Papal claims of supremacy. It is to be part of a church that seeks to be faithful and subject to Scripture on a principal of freedom – ecclesiology is limited by what is prohibited, rather than bound to one scripturally mandated form of church. It defines episcopal jurisdiction in terms of territory rather than participating members. Married to the English state, the Church of England was part of the machinery of Empire – as England planted colonies around the globe, the Church was also transplanted. The death of Empire did not spell the end of the presence of the Church of England – Anglicanism speaks not simply of the Church *in* England, but the family of churches that have come *from* the Church of England. That concept of an ecclesial family is particularly important because it speaks of the web of relationship without the rigid control or monolithic nature of Roman Catholicism. Better to talk of a federation[61] of churches around the world than a single worldwide institution – and a federation whose internal tensions mirror those of a post-colonial world.[62] Written in response to the debate regarding homosexuality and the way the different members of the Anglican communion related to each other, *The Windsor Report* (2004) described Anglicanism as a:

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[60] Anglican Church of Australia, "A History of Anglicanism," http://archive.anglican.org.au/index.cfm?SID=2&SSID=5.

[61] Ian Mobsby, *Emerging and Fresh Expressions of Church: How Are They Authentically Church and Anglican?* (London: Moot Community Publishing, 2007). p.75.
Stephen Neill, *Anglicanism* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1965). p.428.

[62] Sykes, "The Genius of Anglicanism." p.231.
Stephen Platten, *Augustine's Legacy: Authority and Leadership in the Anglican Communion* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 1997). pp.57-72.

> …communion of churches sustained by a common pattern of liturgical life rooted in the tradition of the Book of Common Prayer; shaped by the continual reading, both corporate and private, of the Holy Scriptures; rooted in its history through the See of Canterbury; and connected through a web of relationships… that are the means and the signs of common life.[63]

The report defined the relationship between the members of the Anglican family through the Instruments of Unity – namely, being in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury, episcopal attendance at the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council, and the Primates' Meeting.[64]

We may identify the Church of England and its offspring readily enough, but is there an underlying identity beyond the institutional or historic that unites them? What does it mean to 'be Anglican' when one is no longer even in England? Does it even matter? At the time of the Reformation the Church of England claimed to be part of the true Church, not to be the true Church itself. Avis argues that Christian identity resides primarily for all believers in the person and work of Jesus, built on this is our location as part of the Church Catholic. Denominational or confessional identity is a tertiary level.[65] Indeed Archbishop Michael Ramsey could postulate a time in which Anglican and other words lost their meaning as the differing denominations reject identity built on difference, but rather simply on being in Christ.[66] In asking whether the Fresh Expressions of Church are authentically Anglican, we are therefore not questioning whether they are Christians, or part of the body of Christ, but are ascertaining their place within the Anglican tradition.

Where then is Anglican denominational identity located, if it even exists? Do the Formularies, including the Articles of Religion, fulfil this role? Avis notes that while Anglicans have never agreed on the nature of 'being Anglican',[67] the Formularies do however inform the three historic models he identifies (these being English citizenship, Episcopacy, and Baptism).[68] While the BCP and the Ordinal are central to the Anglican tradition, the Articles of Religion are not a full Anglican Confession but a polemic against Roman Catholics and those who claimed reformation in England had not gone far enough.[69] Bartlett describes them as a modest charter of belief in the face of monolithic European confessions.[70] Podmore

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[63] The Lambeth Commission on Communion, *The Windsor Report 2004* (London: Anglican Communion Office, 2004). p.21.
[64] Ibid. p.25.
[65] Paul D. L. Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London: T & T Clark, 2007). p.7.
[66] Michael Ramsey, *The Anglican Spirit* (New York: Seabury Classics, 2004). pp.125-126.
[67] Paul D. L. Avis, *The Anglican Understanding of the Church: An Introduction* (London: SPCK, 2000). p.10.
[68] Ibid. pp.16, 19, 59.
[69] Ibid. p.52-53.
[70] Alan Bartlett, *A Passionate Balance: The Anglican Tradition* (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 2007). pp.65-66.

points out that while the Church of England increasingly looks to the Declaration of Assent and its preface in ecumenical discussions to illuminate its position,[71] unlike the Australian wording, the Articles of Religion are a supportive element rather than a defining feature of Anglican belief, with primacy instead being attributed to the liturgy.[72] Podmore looks to the process of refining the English Declaration of Assent to see that the Articles are historically bound, but may still be used as a standard or norm for Anglican theology.[73] Chadwick directs our attention to Gilbert Burnett who argued in the seventeenth century that the Articles deliberately left open a variety of 'legitimate opinions within the broad and deep tradition of catholic spirituality and faith'.[74] Within the context of the broader Anglican family, the Articles are not universal features – significantly they are absent from the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral.[75] They are however, at least on paper, key to the normative theology and identity of the Anglican Church of Australia.

What then do the Articles state regarding Scripture? Proctor notes, the Articles begin not with the doctrine of Scripture, but with the undisputed (between Catholics and Protestants) person of God. From this common foundation the notes of doctrinal difference emerge, including the nature of revelation and Scripture.[76] The Articles locate Anglican belief regarding Scripture as (I summarise):

Article VI - Accepting that the Scriptures contain all things necessary for salvation, and that beliefs not found therein are not required; accepting the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, but excluding the Apocrypha.

Article VII – Understanding that there is an essential unity to the Bible; that the New Testament does not do away with the Old because the Old Testament foretells Jesus, and while the ceremonial parts of the Mosaic Law do not apply to Christians, the parts that deal with morality are still valid. The Article also avoids the Marcionite error by affirming that there is only one mediator between God and humanity (as per the Epistle to the Hebrews), and that salvation in both Testaments is therefore through Jesus.

Article XIX – Recognising that the true church exists wherever the Word of God is faithfully proclaimed and the sacraments celebrated.

Article XXXI – Submitting to Scripture; while the church has authority to alter its ceremonies it may not do so if these rites are contrary to Scripture. Likewise, the

[71] Colin Podmore, *Aspects of Anglican Identity* (London: Church House Publishing, 2005). p.43.
[72] Ibid. p.57.
[73] Ibid. p.46.
[74] Chadwick, "The Context of Faith and Theology in Anglicanism." p.31.
[75] Richard Giles, *How to Be Anglican: A Beginner's Guide to Anglican Life and Thought* (Norwich: Canterbury Press Norwich, 1988). p.38.
[76] W. C. G. Proctor, *The Teaching of the Church of England: Following the Thirty Nine Articles* (Worthing: Churchman Publishing Limited, 1987). p.16.

Church is not to teach the Bible in such a way as to make one part of Scripture repugnant to another.

Scripture is therefore not simply a facet of the church's life, but is normative for it, not in a restrictive fashion as envisaged by some of the Puritans, but in a generous Hookerian fashion.[77] The Articles open a field for biblical thinking and practice rather than tying down a single mandated form or practice. Anglicanism is in continuous discussion with itself about who it is and about how it understands Scripture, as Locke argues:

> Anglicans are prepared to argue that the Anglican tradition is essentially a continuing dialogue between Gospel and Church. The Church is not the Gospel, but a community within the world which has responded to the Good News and is constantly trying to interpret, proclaim, and celebrate it. Since a living Gospel may manifest itself differently according to the historical, geographical and social situation, this interpretation is ongoing and must not be hindered by some overly centralized form of human authority.[78]

Writing from an Australian Anglican perspective Bruce Kaye notes that many of the elements that have given identity to the Church of England simply are not valid in the Australian context; the Anglican Church of Australia has never been the established church, and as such it has not benefited from the Royal Supremacy.[79] The issue at hand concerns the Church's relationship with nationhood. In its nomenclature, the Church of England makes a profound claim about its nature – not simply, a church within England, but ***the*** Church. By contrast there is no antipodean claim to being 'The Church of Australia'. Indeed even as the nation was moving to political independence from England, there was concerted effort towards retaining Anglicanism in Australia as a legal and dependent extension of the Church of England.[80] Moreover, the tyranny of distance and a 'habit of passivity' have seen the character of the different Australian Anglican Dioceses drift from each other.[81] While all part of the one institution, Anglican*ism* will mean different things according to whether one is in Sydney, Perth, Bendigo, Melbourne or Brisbane. Indeed, writing in 1995, Kaye predicted that it would be the future relationships between the Dioceses that would be the most vexing for Australian Anglicans.[82] Kaye's panacea to this relational problem comes from within the Anglican tradition

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[77] Nigel Terence Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason: Reformed Theologian of the Church of England?* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997). p.90.ff.

[78] Locke, *The Church in Anglican Theology: A Historical, Theological and Ecumenical Exploration*. p.112.

[79] Bruce Kaye, *A Church without Walls: Being Anglican in Australia* (Melbourne: HarperCollins*Religious*, 1995). p.175.

[80] W. M. Jacob, *The Making of the Anglican Church Worldwide* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1997). pp.273-277.

[81] Kaye, *A Church without Walls: Being Anglican in Australia*. p.181.

[82] Ibid. p.183.

itself - the solution is what he identifies as the 'Trinitarian paradigm of knowing God in community'.[83] Kaye argues that one of the great Anglican distinctives is the Trinitarian focus in its liturgy – we know the God who is in community chiefly through our own being in (ecclesial) community; indeed, he rejects Avis's use of baptism and Sykes' focus on liturgy as the basis of Anglican identity.[84] Liturgy springs from this faith, but liturgy itself is not the bedrock of Anglican identity.

The answer to what it means to be Anglican is a contested area, with competing visions and voices. Perhaps this is not surprising given that Anglicanism is tied not with a single theologian (such as Luther or Calvin), and neither with a single national church (studying the Church of England will not explain the character or situation in the Anglican branches in Australia, South Africa or the USA). Inhabited by differing sub-traditions, each of which possess different appreciations of history and theology, what it means to be Anglican will be different according to who is asked, and where that person is located. Untangling the issue of Anglican identity is a task beyond a single thesis; instead I will be focusing my work through the lens of practice within the Anglican Church of Australia.

3.2 - Official commitments

However one construes Anglican identity, Australian Anglican clergy are licensed under a common text, the Declaration of Assent:

> The Anglican Church of Australia, being an Apostolic Church, receives and retains the Catholic Faith, which is grounded in Holy Scripture and expressed in the Creeds, and within its own history, in the Thirty-nine Articles, in the Book of Common Prayer and in the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons.
>
> Accordingly I,…… about to be ordained to the …… do solemnly make the following declaration:
>
> *I firmly and sincerely believe the Catholic Faith and I give my assent to the doctrine of the Anglican Church of Australia as expressed in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons; I believe that doctrine to be agreeable to the Word of God: and in public prayer and administration of the sacraments I will use the form in the said book prescribed, and none other, except as far as shall be ordered by lawful authority.*[85]

[83] Ibid. p.184.
[84] Ibid. p.186-187.
[85] Supplied by the Diocesan of Canberra and Goulburn, October 23rd, 2012.

The Christian faith is rooted in the Scriptures and expressed in the Creeds – but here a claim is made that the Christian faith is also expressed in the Anglican Formularies. The candidate hereby gives their assent to the doctrinal formulations of the Anglican Church of Australia and states that it is in agreement with the Word of God. As noted by White, ordained clergy are required to agree and cohere to a much tighter theological position beyond that which is common to believers in the baptismal and confirmation credal statements.[86] They bind themselves to the expression of that doctrine through the use only of the authorised liturgies. Assent is more than mere acknowledgment – it speaks of agreement. However, as noted by Jensen and Frame, practice across the Australian Church is not unified. Theological colleges may or may not include the Articles in their curriculum,[87] with some candidates only discovering the theological commitments being asked of them at the time of giving their vows.[88] Disturbingly, the nature of assent is sometimes veiled:

> The assumption is that the ordinand is able to make the requisite declaration relating to the Articles, but what it means legally, ethically and spiritually to assent to the Articles remains unclear to most. Indeed, a number of clergy have reported being directed to make the requisite declaration and being instructed not to ask questions about its intention or consequence.[89]

Despite confusion around the Articles, assent is still required to the Formularies (not merely the Articles) and this affirms them as the normative theology of the Anglican Church of Australia.

In understanding the normative function of the Formularies we must look beyond the Articles and consider the place Scripture in Anglican liturgy (BCP and its lawful descendants). Anglican liturgy embodies this through hearing from different parts of the Bible in the one service (the traditional system of four readings taken from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament and the Gospels) and through the way the liturgy flows in response to God – the elements of the Anglican service are introduced and enacted through quotations from the Bible. For example, Scripture introduces the need to confess our sins to God, Scripture helps us in shaping our confession, and God assures us of our forgiveness and his love through the words of Scripture. The Great Thanksgiving prayer is at heart a remembrance of Jesus' own words at the Last Supper and Paul's in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. Scripture is more than an element of the service – it is part of the essential vehicle of worship. After completing High School I spent three years worshipping at a Baptist Church with friends – this highlighted for me the essential biblical character of Anglican worship. It lies not simply in numerous readings from across the Bible but is intended to develop a spirituality in which the words of Scripture and the Prayer Book (itself

[86] Stephen Ross White, *Authority and Anglicanism* (London: SCM Press, 1996). p.47.
[87] Jensen and Frame, *Defining Convictions and Decisive Commitments*. pp.10-11.
[88] Ibid. p.11.
[89] Ibid.

shaped in language and theme by Scripture) create deep patterns of thought, feeling and rhythm that is at the heart of the Anglican method of worship, community, and the discipleship of believers.[90] Anglican catechesis resides not in signing your name to the Articles but in learning and doing your theology through the lifelong patterning of the liturgy. The Bible is not an element in isolation from the rest of the service, but together they are the lattice upon which the individual and the congregation grow.

3.3 - Fresh Expressions of Church

How do the Fresh Expressions of Church fit into Anglicanism? Building on existing insights in congregational planting,[91] the Church of England's *MSC* report recognised a new encultured methodology emerging amongst practitioners. Underpinning this approach was the understanding that as English society had changed, so too must the Church as it seeks to engage society, as Sachs noted about Modernity: 'In order to serve the world, the Church must adapt its idiom.'[92] The drift (or retreat) from the Church as experienced in England was a feature shared also in Australian society.[93] These 'Fresh Expressions' of planting churches drew their nomenclature from the ordinal for the ordaining of priests to *proclaim the gospel afresh to each generation*.[94] A recent report from the Church Army specified ten parameters that define Anglican Fresh Expressions of Church:

1. That the group is new (in their terminology, it was 'birthed'), rather than being a modification of an existing group.

2. The group has sought to engage with non-churchgoers. Not simply a new outreach programme of an existing church, but a new church with and for the unchurched to meet their cultural context rather than expecting them to confirm to an existing church paradigm.

3. The new church community would meet at least once a month.

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[90] H. R. McAdoo, *Anglican Heritage: Theology and Spirituality* (Norwich: The Canterbury Press, 1991). p.53ff.

[91] Church of England. House of Bishops, *Breaking New Ground: Church Planting in the Church of England : A Report Commissioned by the House of Bishops of the General Synod of the Church of England* (Church House Publishing, 1994).
George Lings, "A History of Fresh Expressions," in *Church Growth in Britain: 1980 to the Present*, ed. David Goodhew (Farnham: AshgatePublishing Limited, 2012). pp.170-173.

[92] William L. Sachs, *The Transformation of Anglicanism: From State Church to Global Communion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). p.308.

[93] Hugh Mackay, *Generations: Baby Boomers, Their Parents & Their Children* (Sydney: Macmillan, 1887). pp.112-116; 119-120.
See also: Tom Frame, *Losing My Religion: Unbelief in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009).

[94] Church of England. Missional and Public Affairs Council., *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (Brookvale: Church House Publishing, 2005).p.34.

4. The new church is to have its own name that reflects its identity, or in the process of discerning its public nomenclature.

5. The group is intended to be a church in and of itself, rather than being a bridge back into 'real church'.

6. The church is Anglican – by which they mean it is accepted by the relevant Bishop as part of their 'Diocesan family'. The report stresses that being Anglican is not measured by use of centrally authorised texts or by being part of the parochial system.

7. There is a system of leadership acknowledged both internally by the church itself and also from without by the Diocese and wider community.

8. The majority of members see the group as their primary and major expression of being church.

9. An aspiration to live out the four 'marks' of the church.

10. The church is intended to be self-financing, self-governing and self-reproducing (ie, mission-shaped churches plant more mission-shaped churches, which are to be themselves 'fresh' and not simply replicating the parent church).[95]

Since the adoption of *MSC* by the Church of England debate has continued over the relationship between traditional and fresh forms of the church. Many have read value judgments in the language employed – surely to call something 'fresh' is to imply 'staleness' in what already exists.[96] Some have alleged that Fresh Expressions are not part of Anglicanism, nor even truly part of the church because they do not conform to the parochial system. Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, sought to calm troubled waters by describing the Church of England being a '*mixed economy*'[97] in which both the inherited and fresh are legitimate and necessary expressions of the church, rather than two competing systems.

There are three broad approaches in the current debate. The first position, following Archbishop Williams, acknowledges the validity of both models of church simultaneously. The other two views are polemically opposed. The second position holds that the nature of our postmodern age means that traditional forms of the church are inadequate for the task of mission, and that like John the Baptist, the old must decrease while new forms increase. The third position holds that the church

[95] Church Army Research Unit, "Report on Strand 3b: An Analysis of Fresh Expressions of Church and Church Plants Begun in the Period 1992-2012," (2013). p.30.

[96] For example, despite some helpful and challenging elements to his critique of FXC, Martin Percy fails to recognise that 'fresh' is not about being new, but about missional.
Martyn Percy, *Anglicanism: Confidence, Commitment and Communion* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013). pp.129-131.

[97] Church in Wales. Board of Mission. Evangelism Research Group, *Good News in Wales: A Conference Held at the Hill Abergavenny* (Church in Wales Publications, 2000). p.3.

itself is sacred – the form of the church is itself the work of God; it is the radical new forms that are illegitimate.

In part, this problem is one of imagination and language: how are we to envision the Fresh Expressions and their relationship to the existing traditional forms of the church? Is the church to be defined by external appearance or by a theological feature? Robin Gamble depicted the relationship as mother and daughter, or a calving from the existing herd.[98] The problem in answering the second question resides in the failure to differentiate between institutional 'budding', from an understanding that the theological framework of Anglicanism can give birth to, and continue to enliven both inherited and fresh expressions. That is to say, that the church is not defined by its outward appearance, forms and traditions but by its theological character and relationships. By this, I am not conceptualising a dualism between the church' theological and institutional natures, but rather noting that not every feature of a constituent member church of the greater Anglican Church of Australia is a necessary feature of that institution. Time, and place, and musical style are contingent features of Anglicanism. However, conformity to the theology of the Formularies in worship, the faith of the three historical creeds, and canonical obedience to the relevant Diocesan Bishop are necessary for both clergy and parishes within the Anglican Church of Australia. While I disagree with Archbishop Ramsey that Bishops are the necessary outworking of the gospel,[99] they are a necessary feature of what it means to be Anglican. During my time in Durham I became aware of a church in the city that by both style and nomenclature identified as being 'Anglican'. But their claim to Anglican identity rested on a professed confessional identity alone, rather than being institutionally part of the Church of England. An isolated use of the theology of the Formularies is problematic – the church is not defined solely by allegiance to a set confessional statement, but by being part of a broader community (in this case the Anglican Communion, through being member of one its constituent Provinces). To qualify as 'Anglican' Fresh Expressions need to be part of the broader Anglican family.

Instead of simply rehearsing the gospel message without reference to the surrounding cultural context *MSC* and the newly authorised types of congregation sought to take seriously the significance of the incarnational, or encultured, approach to mission and ministry - incarnation through local communities or networks and not just at the national level. While there are distinctive types (i.e. Café Church and Messy Church), the language of Fresh Expressions does not denote a single model - it is not as easy as putting on a new youth service with a rock band instead of a choir. Drane argues the problem is churches have only understood one way of 'being church' which appeals to one type of person at a time when there is an incredible

[98] Louise Nelstrop and Martyn Percy, eds., *Evaluating Fresh Expressions: Explorations in Emerging Church, Responses to the Changing Face of Ecclesiology in the Church of England* (Norwich: Canterbury Press,2008). p.15.

[99] Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and Catholic Church*, Kindle Reissue edition, 2011 ed. (Hendrickson Publishers, 2011). Loc 985-1242 of 3728.

diversity and range of view and lifestyles in the surrounding cultures[100] - but not everything is alien, as Drane also notes 'a reinvigorated traditionalism'.[101] The Fresh Expressions movement asks questions of culture, meaning and need amongst the un-churched and the de-churched that are its missional focus. A church is not 'fresh' in the sense of being targeted towards 'young people' or using a novel form of public worship - a 1662 Book of Common Prayer service could reach retirees who left the church before the 1975 revision of the Australian Church's Prayer Book, but who since entering a retirement home have a renewed spiritual interest and want to express it in the form they remember from earlier in their lives. A robed minister, with a worshipping group of retirees is a valid example of a Fresh Expression, but so too is the group of Young Adults meeting in a café to talk about Jesus and spirituality. The essential heart of Fresh Expressions is a missional ecclesiology that seeks to engage people in their own context, recognising that existing forms of church may not resonate with them. The difference between a Fresh Expression and an Inherited form is whether people are perceived as being 'suitable material' or not; Drane used Michelangelo Buonarroti's statue of David as a key to understanding ministry – where others saw only a flawed piece of marble, Michelangelo saw the potential and released the stone's beauty, allowing David to emerge. This Drane sees as typifying Jesus' ministry – allowing the God-given beauty of the individual to emerge.[102] I would argue that by behaving as an imperialistic mono-culture, inherited forms of the church may treat people like clay, to be moulded and pressed into the desired form. This is not simply discipleship, but the expectation that people will change to fit a particular church culture. It is easy to misrepresent the situation of inherited being 'oppressive' and fresh being 'open' (a view taken by parts of the Emerging Church, as discussed in the next part of this chapter). All communities are places of culture – some will always resonate more with particular communities than others. All Christian communities need to keep reviewing their practices and culture in the light of the work of Christ reconciling us not to God in isolation from others, but in also together as the unified people of God (Ephesian 2:11-22). That said a mixed economy model of both inherited and fresh churches casts a broader net than either can alone. Neither inherited nor fresh forms of church are not bad per se, but holding that one particular form of the church is the one-true form seems to misunderstand the first mark of the church – oneness is about unity, but not uniformity as Paul states in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. Cranmer's approach to the reform of the English Church was undergirded by his belief that while Scripture had supreme authority over faith and morality, church order and the structuring of church polity should be constructed according to the local (national)

[100] John Drane, *After McDonaldization: Mission, Ministry and Christian Discpleship in an Age of Uncertainty* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2008). p.67.
[101] Ibid, p.48.
[102] Drane, *After McDonaldization: Mission, Ministry and Christian Discpleship in an Age of Uncertainty*. pp.113-114.

situation and needs.[103] This freedom for the structuring of ecclesial life was determined at a national level (through the Act of Uniformity), rather than as local congregations. What happened in the Reformation at the national level sought unity of the nation and the church under the crow), but enculturation is now encouraged at the local and network level.

What is meant by form? By form I am referring to both the local expression of the church (where it meets and what it does when it meets), and the institutional structure to which it belongs. A Fresh Expression church may meet on a Saturday night in the café and structure its worship to agree theologically with the BCP but may not free itself from the broader institutional framework – its leaders are still under their Diocesan Bishop, and they are still bound by canon law (though its Diocese will likely have ordinances in place that allow it to function in an extra-parochial setting and to not use the authorised services). Fresh Expression forms of the church are meant to be organic – being generated by the local circumstances and worshipping community while staying in dialogue with the broader Anglican tradition.

Crucially, *MSC* holds a position that recognises a distinction between the essence and the form of the church – the former being theological and derived from Scripture, and the latter being contingent, shaped by tradition and culture. Forms are negotiable – but the credal foundation, and framework of any form of church (including its relationship with the episcopacy) within Anglicanism are not:

> This report assumes, but does not take for granted, that to be missionary, a church has to proclaim afresh the faith of the Scriptures and the Creeds. This is not a 'value' of the church, but the foundation upon which church is built.[104]

Archbishop Rowan Williams, under whose leadership the Fresh Expressions agenda has been shaped and embraced in the Church of England clearly argues this position in his foreword to *MSC*:

> …we have begun to recognise that there are many ways in which the reality of 'church' can exist. 'Church' as a map of territorial divisions (parishes and dioceses) is one – one that still has a remarkable vigour in all sorts of contexts and which relates to a central conviction about the vocation of Anglicanism. But there are more and more others, of the kind this report describes and examines… If 'church' is what happens when people encounter the Risen Jesus and commit themselves to sustaining that encounter in their encounter with each other, there is plenty of theological room for diversity of rhythm and style, so long as

[103] Locke, *The Church in Anglican Theology: A Historical, Theological and Ecumenical Exploration*. p.18.
[104] Church of England. Missional and Public Affairs Council., *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*. p.81.

> we have ways of identifying the same living Christ as the heart of every expression of Christian life in common.[105]

As noted by the Archbishop, by virtue of operating within the Anglican system even if not appearing as traditional Anglican churches might, Anglican Fresh Expressions still need to cohere with some Anglican particulars, namely, the Declaration of Assent (wherein obedience to the diocesan Bishop and the Formularies is given), the 1888 Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral (as a means of recognising the authorities within the church of Scripture, Creeds, Sacraments and Episcopacy and thus attempting to unifying the Church),[106] the necessity of the two dominical Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the life of the Church, and the presence and leadership of the episcopate in the life of the Church.[107] Steven Croft also adds to this the Five Marks of Mission.[108] These Anglican particulars constitute a foundation for Anglican identity that the Fresh Expressions may then build on.

MSC outlines a range of distinct types of Fresh Expressions of Church.[109] While these definitions are helpful, they are not essential in considering the essence of the movement. Of significance to this thesis are the five common features amongst the churches *MSC* considers as Fresh Expressions:

1. A focus on intentional discipleship and community through small groups.

2. A flexibility regarding the days on which they meet so as to respond to changing patterns in society.

3. A focus on networks of people with whom to meaningfully engage. This is the element that has provoked a strong reaction from critics such as Davison and Milbank.[110] It is seen as breaking away from the geographical inclusiveness of the parish system. In Milbank and Davison's ecclesiology *MSC* is a threat to the Church of England's identity as it uncouples the parish system from church attendance. But Milbank and Davison fail to appreciate that the Fresh Expressions movement complements rather than detracts from the parish system. *MSC* was written at least in part because of the failure of existing structures to engage with the entirety of the British population.

4. The recognition that these churches are post-denominational. While the group's leadership may be trained by and linked into an existing

[105] Ibid. p.vii.
[106] Mark Chapman, *Anglican Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2012). pp.191-194.
[107] Church of England. Missional and Public Affairs Council., *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*. pp.100-101.
[108] Mark Earey, *Beyond Common Worship: Anglican Identity and Liturgical Diversity* (London: SCM Press, 2013). p.87.
[109] Church of England. Missional and Public Affairs Council., *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*. pp43-83.
[110] Andrew Davison and Alison Milbank, *For the Parish. A Critique of Fresh Expressions* (London: SCM Press, 2010). Chapter 5 pp.64-92.

denominational structure, the actual membership of these churches is not attending out of an allegiance to a particular denomination.

5. Many Fresh Expression churches are associated with various resourcing networks. Their initial impetus and resources have not come through a Diocesan structure, but from a church or para-church organisation that is not part of the geographic network that normally administers Anglicanism.[111]

However a serious issue may be missed by concentrating too much on the examples *MSC* provides for what a Fresh Expression may be; undertaking sociological research into the movement Ian Mobsby noted that participants in his research identified Fresh Expressions with terms such as 'alternative worship, network church, and café church'.[112] What such word associations raise is of concern – a Fresh Expression is not 'fresh' by virtue of being innovative or new, but by its practised commitment to mission, specifically evangelism. Granted 'fresh' has a particular meaning in secular discourse, but *MSC* is operating out of a different definition. Alternative worship[113] is not inherently 'fresh' by the standard of *MSC*, but rather worship style serves to connect with, or emerge out of contact with, the de-churched or unchurched. Difference for its own sake is not of importance to the FXC movement. Fresh Expressions are a strategy to engage with people beyond the reach of traditional forms of the church. *MSC* states that if 'the church is not missionary, it has denied itself and its calling, for it has departed from the very nature of God'.[114]

3.4 - Fresh vs Emerging

The central challenge to the legitimacy of the Fresh Expression churches stems from their breaking from the parish model, but it needs to be asked whether the parish system itself defines the *esse* of the Anglicanism. As Mobsby suggests, what we find in inherited forms of the church today are not paradigms set in stone, but rather the pattern of the church that arose in a previous era in response to that era's culture and needs – preserving the form hinders the work of the gospel in the present.[115]

Mobsby's *Emerging and Fresh Expressions of Church: How are they Authentically Church and Anglican?* links these two movements. Some may conflate Emerging and Fresh churches because of the associations both have with alternate forms of worship, but do we misrepresent these movements by blurring their nomenclature?

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[111] Church of England. Missional and Public Affairs Council., *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*. p.43.
[112] Mobsby, *Emerging and Fresh Expressions of Church: How Are They Authentically Church and Anglican?*
[113] For explorations of alternate worship see: Jonny Baker, *Curating Worship* (London: Society for the Promoting of Christian Knowledge, 2010).
[114] Church of England. Missional and Public Affairs Council., *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*. p.41.
[115] Mobsby, *Emerging and Fresh Expressions of Church: How Are They Authentically Church and Anglican?* p.33.

Drawing from Lawson and Osborne's 1970 work, Mobsby outlines emerging church as:

- Rediscovering contextual and experimental mission in the western church.
- Forms of church that are not restrained by institutional expectations.
- Open to change and God wanting to do a new thing.
- Use of the key word "and". Whereas the heady polarities of our day seek to divide us into an either-or camp, the mark of the emerging Church will be its emphasis on "both-and". For generations we have divided ourselves into camps: Protestants and Catholics, high church and low, clergy and laity, social activists and personal piety, liberals and conservatives, sacred and secular, instructional and underground.
- It will bring together the most helpful of the old and the best of the new, blending the dynamic of a personal Gospel with the compassion of social concern.
- It will find its ministry being expressed by a whole people, wherein the distinction between clergy and laity will be that of function, not of status or hierarchical division.
- In the emerging Church, due emphasis will be placed on both theological rootage and contemporary experience, on celebration in worship and involvement in social concerns, on faith and feeling, reason and prayer, conversion and continuity, the personal and the conceptual.[116]

Of immediate note is the strained relationship with traditional expressions of Christianity in inherited forms of the church. While the Emerging Church is by no means simply a by-product of the anti-institutionalism of Gen X, Jim Belcher acutely points out that in particular the generational cohort associated with the emerging ecclesiology has been marked by a rejection of 'ordination, denominations and church connectionalism'.[117] Likewise, Drane holds that one core aspect of the Emerging Church is a prioritising of Christology over Ecclesiology[118] - that the person of Jesus is more important than a form of Church. Moreover, Drane links the Emerging Church movement with a re-appreciation of Jesus;[119] but this is by no

[116] Ibid. pp.20-21.
Also see: I. Mobsby, *God Unknown* (Hymns Ancient & Modern Limited, 2012). pp.66-69.
[117] Jim Belcher, *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009). p.30.
[118] Drane, *After McDonaldization: Mission, Ministry and Christian Discpleship in an Age of Uncertainty*. p.51.
[119] Ibid. pp.49-50.

means limited to it – there is a renewed interest in the person of Jesus and his methods in the church more broadly.[120]

The problem for Mobsby's approach is that while the Anglican Fresh Expression churches may break from inherited forms, they are still part of their local Diocese structures, and through that part of the Anglican Communion. They have not broken from their diocesan structures, or away from the authority of their Bishops. They are not anti-institutional but the institution reimagined – revivified in new flesh but with the same theological core, and a sense of identity that sees its place in the Anglican inheritance of the greater Christian tradition. Hence the importance *MSC* attaches to the Fresh Expressions movement coming from the Church of England's Declaration of Assent. Mobsby may be correct in asserting that the experience of being in a fresh or emerging church is one of acting as 'a corrective to the perceived gap between contemporary culture and 'inherited forms' of the church',[121] but he fails to give Anglicanism its due credit by not noting that this bridging of which he writes is the denomination reshaping part of itself for the very purpose he describes; emerging church happens outside of the traditional structure of 'church'. Fresh Expressions are still part of their denominational system, but may not resemble the parish churches that constitute the rest of the diocese. Mobsby instead talks about two different types of Fresh Expression churches:

> The first appear to be more akin to 'inherited' modes of church, which do not seek to be significantly postmodern in contextual understanding and differ in their model of contextual theology utilising a more 'transactional' type approach. The second is akin to more 'emerging' modes of church which do significantly seek to be postmodern in contextual understanding and use a 'synthetic' model of contextual theology.[122]

Inherited expressions may be numerically and historically dominant but are not themselves theologically dominant or normative in thinking about what is 'the church'; we would be better served by thinking of a plurality of expressions of

[120] While beyond the scope of this thesis, I refer the reader to Hardy's posthumously published work in which walking with Jesus in the gospels is central to God's redemptive purposes in this world, together with a Eucharistic centre:
Daniel W. Hardy et al., *Wording a Radiance: Parting Conversations on God and the Church* (London: SCM Press, 2010). pp.78-88;
Avery Dulles also is representative of this move with the addition of the concept of the community of Disciples of the resurrected Jesus to his models of the Church:
Avery Cardinal Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Doubleday, 2002). pp.194-217.
From within the Fresh Expressions movement this is given voice by the previous Archbishop's Missioner Graham Cray: Graham Cray, *Disciples and Citizens: A Vision for a Distinctive Living* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2007). Chapter 14 pp.174-185.

[121] Mobsby, *Emerging and Fresh Expressions of Church: How Are They Authentically Church and Anglican?* p.24.

[122] Ibid. p.31.

church. Both are mere 'expressions' – neither are exclusive perfect embodiments of church. All forms of church are contingent rather than necessary. As Cowdell states:

> There is no warrant in Christian history for a model of Church outliving its era. As we will see…forms of Church have arisen and then sunk from history. Scripture in both Testaments offers no warrant for the preservation of structures in the community of faith if the plot has been lost.[123]

Although Mobsby states that the churches he surveys met only three of the five values from *MSC* (namely, a focus on the Trinity, an incarnational model of mission and ministry, and a focus on being a highly relational community),[124] they should nonetheless be recognised as legitimate forms of both Church[125] and Anglicanism.[126]

Mobsby's apologia for the Emerging Church within Anglicanism is based too heavily on conviction[127] – the practices of the churches he discusses remain out of view. It is insufficient to claim to be Anglican simply from personal feeling – it is akin to deciding that one is Marxist without rejecting the class system or reordering the system of capital, labour and production. Moreover, Mobsby fails to recognise a sufficient distinction between Fresh Expressions as a movement within Anglicanism, and Emerging Churches that are emerging not simply in relationship with their surrounding culture, but also emerging out of what they see as the failed project of institutional Church. If traditional forms are dead for so many in contemporary society,[128] then why keep the body? That which has ceased to be relevant must be allowed to perish so that the new may be born;[129] the Emerging Church is not simply a new programme to run or a new form of church to incorporate - it is the rejection and negation of current forms of church. Pushed to its natural conclusion, the Emerging Church is antithetical to denomination (not simply Anglicanism, but denominationalism more broadly). Here we clearly see the important division between Fresh Expressions and Emerging Church – the former exists as part of a greater ecclesial family without adopting a totalitarian view of ecclesial legitimacy. The understanding of a 'mixed economy' of the church refuses to adopt the Emerging metanarrative of the death and dissolution of church institutions. Fresh Expressions are about the existing Church becoming embodied in new ways to reach people; Emerging Church is about the irrelevance of existing forms of church in their very essence, not simply because of the task of mission. John Drane echoes this sentiment when he contends that mainline churches have been dying because:

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[123] Cowdell, *God's Next Big Thing: Discovering the Future Church*. p.69.
[124] Mobsby, *Emerging and Fresh Expressions of Church: How Are They Authentically Church and Anglican?* pp.55-56.
[125] Ibid. p.66
[126] Ibid. p.77.
[127] Ibid. p57.
[128] Michelle Trebilcock, "Living with Jesus in Liminality: An Invitation to 'Be Dead with the Dead God.'," *Crucible* 4, no. 1 (2012). p.8.
[129] Ibid. p.17.

> Growing numbers of young people found little that spoke to them, and either left the Church or never connected with it in the first place. …there are good reasons for supposing that their disillusionment was not directly connected with the Gospel as such, but rather they were unable to get beyond the institutional structures and systems in which the message had been embodied.[130]

Belcher contends that members of the Emerging Church movement have not simply asked for existing forms of the church to be reworked, but claims that the form and essence of church as it has traditionally existed are wrong.[131] Belcher identifies the Emerging Church as a form of protest within Protestantism. It raises its voice against Enlightenment rationalism. Against a view of salvation that focuses too heavily on the personal and overlooks present corporate and ecological meanings. Against theology that places soteriology in a future tense and fails to ask 'What am I saved for *now?'* Against restricting church community solely to those who are able to profess a doctrinally pure understanding of the faith (belief before belonging). Against patterns of worship that are isolated from and meaningless to present realities. Against culturally irrelevant patterns of teaching. Against ecclesiologies controlled by institutionalism rather than mission. Against Christian tribalism (Christian culture against the world).[132]

Belcher's greater insight is in widening the definition of what the Emerging church is. Whereas Mobsby wrote of two forms of Fresh Expression, Belcher points out that there are three movements within the Emerging Church that all too easily get lost – each has a significantly different perspective on existing ecclesiology.[133] *Relevants* accept the underlying theology of the church but update and adapt patterns of worship and church leadership structures to better engage the surrounding society.[134] *Reconstructionists* are still orthodox in their theology, but are even more willing to restructure not simply music and leadership, but the nature of Church meeting – and also the nature of what Christian community should be like in its ethos more broadly. They hold that existing forms of Church are actually unbiblical and not fit to the task for mission.[135] There may well be a kindred spirit between the Fresh and Emerging movements to this point – though the Reconstructionist view of existing forms being unbiblical goes beyond the generosity of the understanding of an ecclesial mixed economy. According to *MSC*, Fresh Expressions churches arise not out of condemnation of what is, but with the recognition that mission always requires flexibility and humility regarding structure and appearance. It is arguably the third category that has come to dominate perceptions of the Emerging Church movement,

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[130] Drane, *After McDonaldization: Mission, Ministry and Christian Discpleship in an Age of Uncertainty*. p.3.
[131] Belcher, *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional*. p.38.
[132] Ibid. pp.41-43.
[133] Ibid. p.45.
[134] Ibid. pp.45-46.
[135] Ibid. p.46.

the *Revisionists*. Revisionists are those who consider not simply ecclesial form and culture as ripe for reconsideration but also a gamut of core doctrines, even to the very nature of the Gospel itself.[136] The Revisionist strand is the source of the movement's reputation for being '*anti-authority, anti-tradition and individualistic*';[137] while parts of the Emerging Church have indeed adopted various ancient practices from the church, Belcher lays the charge that this speaks to postmodern consumerism, selecting only what it wants from the tradition and leaving the rest. He contends that adoption of individual practices without the broader commitment to the 'Great Tradition' creates a plant without sufficient depth of root to survive.[138] It is with this subgrouping that Fresh Expressions and the Emerging movement part company. This nuance is often missed – while recognising that the Emerging movement is not uniform, Don Carson in his review of the Emerging Church phenomenon ultimately judged the movement by its extremes, failing to give reasonable consideration to voices other than from the Reconstructionist strand.[139]

3.5 - Listening to the critics: what is wrong with the Fresh Expression of Church?

Having noted that the Emerging Church and Fresh Expressions churches are marked by a significant contrast in their relationship with Inherited forms of church, we now return to Anglicanism, to consider some of the voices from within the Inherited Church that have critiqued *MSC* and the Fresh Expressions movement. It is significant that the critics do not begin, as I have, with the history and theological commitments of Anglicanism, but with the parochial system. In 2011 Philip Aspinall, Archbishop of Brisbane and Primate for the Anglican Church of Australia, having read Davison and Milbank's *For the Parish*, addressed the Diocese of Brisbane synod over the threat the Fresh Expressions movement presented to Anglicanism:

> …the church is essentially a reconciled and reconciling community. Church brings together the most unlikely collections of people across all sorts of divides and barriers and differences. The sheer existence of such motley gatherings of people bears eloquent testimony to the reconciling, inclusive effect of what God has done in Christ.
>
> In contrast to such broad, inclusive communities, fresh expressions tend to focus on narrow homogenous groups or networks based on a single characteristic or shared interest. So we find 'churches' of card-makers, sewers, ballet devotees, birdwatchers, skateboard riders and so on. Not

[136] Ibid. pp.36-47.
[137] Ibid. p.131.
[138] Ibid. p.133.
[139] D. A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church : Understanding a Movement and Its Implications* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2005).

> that there is anything wrong at all with any of these activities, or a thousand others. The problem comes when any one interest becomes a defining characteristic of a church. These activities are fine as a means of reaching out to people. But 'church' itself can't be defined by a single common interest. 'Church' is inclusive, all-embracing, just as Christ is. Narrow activity or interest groups are fine, but they are not, in and of themselves, church. They should be offshoots of and grounded in a parish community.
>
> The fresh expressions movement rightly insists that the church is 'mission shaped'. What it forgets is the other side of the coin which is also true: that salvation is church-shaped. Mission Shaped Church and fresh expressions sometimes read as if they are a bit embarrassed by the church and its heritage and traditions. The movement's writing refers to the inherited forms of church life as simply outward clothing that has reached its use-by date; that needs to be discarded and replaced by more contemporary apparel, something more fashionable and attractive. And so the movement tends to value innovation over common worship, novelty over stability, what is chosen over what is given in the tradition.
>
> In contrast *For the Parish* calls us to revalue the parish church and its heritage. The parish church represents the very counter that is so deeply needed to a superficial, consumer choice, here today gone tomorrow, kind of culture. We can and should regain a sense of confidence in the parish – in the ordinary practices, disciplines and ministries of Anglican life. We have in our heritage the means by which we can reclaim a powerful distinctive presence, a transforming, incarnational presence, in our communities. The latter part of the book offers a whole host of practical, imaginative ideas for parishes to be and do just that.[140]

Former General Secretary of the Anglican Church of Australia Bruce Kaye also gave similar weight to *For the Parish* at the expense of *MSC*.[141] Three points stand out: Firstly, Aspinall seems unaware that Davison and Milbank wrote their book without ever spending time amongst Fresh Expression churches.[142] What Davison and Milbank, and Aspinall, cite as the failings of Fresh Expressions are made without due reflection on practice across the movement.

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[140] Phillip Aspinall, "The Whole Church Engaged in the Whole Mission: President's Address – 1st Session, 77th Synod, Brisbane Diocese, 18 June 2011," (Brisbane: Anglican Diocese of Brisbane, 2011). pp.5-7.

[141] Bruce Kaye, "Does Fresh Expression Misrepresent the Gospel," http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2011/02/21/3144358.htm.

[142] As revealed in conversation between Davison and Bishop Cray.
Graham Cray, "*For the Parish* by Andrew Davison and Alison Milbank - a Response," *Anvil* 27, no. 1 (2011).

Secondly, there is an assumption that the geographic/demographic approach, with which they compare Fresh Expressions churches unfavourably, is satisfied by the Inherited Church. Where do these wonderfully mixed congregations the Archbishop mentioned actually exist? Can a parish truly be the body of Christ when it is composed solely of the wealthy and well educated, as the poor are prevented from being part of a parish by being unable to afford housing in that area (remembering that in the Anglican tradition and by canon law, a parish is defined as a geographic region so a church may describe itself as 'inclusive and welcoming' but still be lacking in diversity owing to broader economic and social factors).

The third point is however the most pressing – the view that parochial paradigm is the core feature of Anglican ecclesiology. Where in the Anglican Formularies is the centrality of the parish found? The Anglican usage of the parish system developed not out of a deeply held commitment to a geographic praxis of theology of the Church as the Body of Christ, but rather through the historic quirk of England having been settled by the Romans with their terms for civic administration districts (diocese and parish) which were adopted by the Roman Catholic church as an inheritor of the Imperial 'estate'. Where is the Bible? The Formularies are silent regarding parish but speak volumes about the Scriptures through both proposition and liturgical action. Milbank and Davison miss the idea that the 'mixed economy' of Church is about finding space for both approaches to church. The strengths of the Parish system are not being rejected but complemented by adding a missional focus on networks to the existing parochial system and not seeking to overthrow it entirely. Indeed Bishop Stephen Hale argues that one of the benefits of *MSC* and the concept of the ecclesial 'mixed economy' has been the renewal of interest in the health of, and the opportunities offered by, the parochial system.[143]

Aspinall's critique of FXC was simply a representation of Davison and Milbank's critique that lifts the Anglican Parish system from one of historical quirk to a near absolutised platonic realm – the parish church becomes the necessary outcome of the gospel. They arrive at this point through arguing that the Parish church is the necessary means of mediating the gospel; Church structure becomes intrinsic to the gospel.[144] In Davison and Milbank's thesis, salvation is dislocated from faith in Christ with the church as the body of those who share faith in Christ, to salvation as incorporation into the Church.[145] Salvation, the authors claim, is '*Church-shaped,'*[146] and consists in being reconciled to the Church[147] rather than Christ

[143] Stephen Hale, "Renewing Parishes," in *Facing the Future: Bishops Imagine a Different Church*, ed. Stephen Hale and Andrew Curnow (Melbourne: Acorn Press, 2009). p.13ff
Hale's point is argued also in: Steven J. L. Croft, *The Future of the Parish System : Shaping the Church of England for the Twenty-First Century* (London: Church House Publishing, 2006).
Paul Bayes et al., *Mission-Shaped Parish: Traditional Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House Publishing, 2009).
[144] Davison and Milbank, *For the Parish. A Critique of Fresh Expressions*. pp.37-39.
[145] Ibid. pp.43-44.
[146] Ibid. p.48.
[147] Ibid. p.49.

himself filling all things (Ephesians 1:22-23) as the fullness of God, so it is the Church which grows to fill all things.[148] Under such a proposal Fresh Expressions churches cannot be truly Anglican unless they capitulate to a geographic model of life that welcomes all within its boundaries. *For the Parish* critiques caricatures and parodies rather than engaging with the actual ministry practices of the movement. Milbank and Davison's argument holds true in the sense of salvation being about incorporation into the church if you hold to the view that Anglicanism is nothing more than the local (English) expression of the one true historic Church Catholic. But in a context that has gone from uniformity to toleration, the idea of a single church being *the* Church seems unsustainable. Establishment for the Church of England puts it in partnership with the state. It does not render other churches invalid. The Church is greater than the Church of England, or even the entire Anglican Communion – as Hull argues, in his response to *MSC*, salvation is Kingdom-shaped not church-shaped.[149] By this, I understand him not to divide the church out from the Kingdom, but to be critiquing an institutional triumphalism that he locates in both the Church of England and also in the *MSC* report. The Church has a place of importance in the Kingdom of God, but the Kingdom is bigger than it. The Church as the Bride encapsulates all believers regardless of their denominational preference. Being reconciled to the church (joining a Christian fellowship) is not limited to the established church of a nation. In this regard Milbank and Davison's work would have benefited from exploring what it means to be Anglican in a multi-denominational (indeed post-denominational) context.

Further weight to the critique of FXC came from the Master of Arts thesis of Bradley Long in which he builds on Davison and Milbank's claims that in their approach to the renewal of evangelism and new indigenised congregations *MSC* fails to cohere to traditional Anglican identity and practices.[150] While more measured than Milbank and Davison's work, Long takes the same essential approach of assuming that the parochial system is the only form Anglican ecclesiology can take – essentially the current structures are taken as necessary under the theology of the Formularies. He correctly articulates that Fresh Expressions churches have made the parish system merely 'a partner', rather than 'the central system'.[151] But why is this a problem? The Anglicanism he champions is essentially a fossil. Likewise, he elevates a set pattern of Anglican liturgy, rather than asking deep questions about how Scripture is being used in the liturgy so that its theology may be continued with differing forms. Long retreats into a cautious version of *lex orandi, lex credendi* that sees any change as a betrayal of Anglican theology.[152] Long's best critique is when he asks:

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[148] Ibid. p.52.
[149] John Hull, *Mission-Shaped Church : A Theological Response* (London: SCM Press, 2006). pp.105-120.
[150] Bradley Long, "How Is Mission-Shaped Church Changing Church of England Missio-Ecclesiology in the Light of Classical Anglicanism?" (MF Norwegian School of Theology, 2011). pp.6, 27.
[151] Ibid. pp.38, 43.
[152] Ibid. p.57.

> How will the new worshipping life of Fresh Expressions express Church of England faith? Will Fresh Expressions be judged as intersystematically *untrue* if their Anglican confession does not match up with their corporate life? In years to come will Fresh Expressions be recognisably Anglican? [153]

That is the question of this thesis – do the Australian Anglican Fresh Expressions express Anglican identity and theology through their practices regarding the Bible, something that the Formularies all speak at length about – rather than the parochial system which features very little. This is a significant issue. As Avis argues no one form typifies Anglicanism and the Formularies guard against claims for a divinely ordained church order.[154] I now turn to consider the place of the Bible in the Inherited Church and whether the use of the Bible offers us a means of moving forward.

[153] Ibid. p.48.
[154] Avis, *The Anglican Understanding of the Church: An Introduction*. p.78.

Chapter 4 - Scripture and the Inherited Church

The Fresh Expressions movement cannot be considered alone. It must be read in the context of the Inherited Church with which it constitutes the broader family of the Anglican Church of Australia. In this chapter, I will set forth the Anglican liturgical use of Scripture and how this contributes to determining Anglican identity. From this position I will present (in 4.3) the matrix of elements by which I will seek to reflect on the Fresh Expression churches considered in my research. By means of considering the broader movements in Anglicanism in Australia we will also examine the use of Scripture in the inherited forms of the Anglican Church of Australia as evidenced in some recent writings.

4.1 - Refocusing the debate: the Anglican praxis of Scripture

By shifting the debate to considering the role of Scripture in Anglican ecclesial identity we can remedy an error in both *MSC* and in the writings of its critics. As the role of the Bible has not been discussed by either side of the debate, the issue has become fixed on the attendance and membership of a particular organisation; the polarised debate is around whether that organisation is populated by a network or geographic region. Scripture allows us a way of out this impasse.

Martin Kitchen posits five chief paradigms in which the Bible is used in Anglican worship: quotation, allusion, psalmody, Lectionary readings, and preaching.[155] How the Fresh Expressions do these things will inform our appreciation of their relationship with the normative theology of the Anglican Church of Australia.

In exploring the Anglican identity of Fresh Expression churches through their use of Scripture measured against espoused Anglican theology in the Formularies, the field is left open to questioning the same issue amongst traditional inherited forms of church. This is not simply a question of examining the authorised liturgies of any given Provincial Church within the Anglican Communion, though this is a worthy activity; rather it is the issue of what is practised by these churches.

4.2 - Authorised liturgy

In considering how Australian Anglican churches are using the Bible, we begin with the liturgical developments of *An Australian Prayer Book*[156] (AAPB) and its successor, *A Prayer Book for Australia*[157] (APBA). There are two additional strands

[155] Martin Kitchen, "The Bible in Worship," in *The Identity of Anglican Worship*, ed. Kenneth Stevenson & Bryan Spinks (London: Mowbray, 1991). pp.39-44.
[156] Anglican Church of Australia, *An Australian Prayer Book* (Sydney: Standing Committee of the General Synod of the Church of England in Australia, 1978).
[157] Anglican Church of Australia, *A Prayer Book for Australia* (Alexandria, NSW: Broughton Books, 1995).

in the cord of Anglican liturgical practices – Bishops may authorise additional liturgies if what is proposed satisfies their appreciation of Anglican liturgy and theology; also parishes may simply choose to adapt their written liturgical form and its performance without reference to, or permission from, their Diocesan Bishop. The legality of such an action is not what we are considering; this is simply about recognising that there may exist a plurality of practices amongst inherited churches that may or may not be consonant with the theology of the Anglican Formularies, as indeed noted by the Anglican Church of Australia's Liturgical Commission in their commentary to APBA.[158] What we may however ascertain is the theological understanding of the use of the Bible in those texts authorised for use across the national Church. These books are not replacements for, but supplements to the *Book of Common Prayer* - on paper at least there is conformity to the theology expressed by the 1662 prayer book and the other two Formularies.[159] In the introduction to the AAPB Archbishop Frank Grindrod, referring to Bishop R.G. Arthur's work on the Liturgical Commission, stated that the process of liturgical revision which was undertaken leading to the new prayer book was possible under the Australian Anglican Church's Constitution - so long as it was consonant with, and committed to the theology of the Formularies; this commitment was stated also in APBA:

> It is not necessary that the traditions and ceremonies be in all places one and utterly alike; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, time and manners, so long as nothing be ordained against God's Word… Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edify.
>
> *Article 34*
>
> This Church, being derived from the Church of England, retains and approves the doctrine and principles of the Church of England embodied in *The Book of Common Prayer together with The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons* and in the *Articles of Religion*, sometimes called the Thirty-Nine Articles but has plenary authority at its own discretion to make statements as to the faith ritual ceremonial or discipline of this Church and to order its forms of worship and rules of discipline and to alter or revise such statements, forms and rules, provided that all such statements, forms, rules or alteration or revision thereof are consistent with the Fundamental Declarations contained herein and are made as proscribed by this Constitution. Provided, and it is hereby declared, that the above-named *Book of Common Prayer* together with the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, be

[158] Gillian Varcoe, ed. *A Prayer Book for Australia: A Practical Commentary* (Alexandra: E.J. Dwyer (Australia) Pty Ltd,1997). p.8.
[159] Anglican Church of Australia, *An Australian Prayer Book*. p.7.

> regarded as the authorized standard of worship and doctrine in this Church, and no alteration in or permitted variations from the Services or Articles therein contained shall contravene any principle of doctrine or worship laid down in such standard.
>
> Provided further that until other order be taken by canon made in accordance with this Constitution, a Bishop of a Diocese may, at his discretion, permit such deviations from the existing Order of Service, not contravening any principle of doctrine or worship as aforesaid, as shall be submitted to him by the Incumbent and Church Wardens of a parish.
>
> *Constitution*, ch. 2 § 4. [160]

It is important to note at this juncture that the Anglican Church of Australia possesses a fourth Formulary – the Fundamental Declarations given in the constitution are unalterable.[161] These three declarations are the 'bedrock of the faith of this Church'[162], and its position on Scripture does not deviate from that of the triumvirate of the BCP, Ordinal and Articles of Religion:

> 2. This Church receives all the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as being the ultimate rule and standard of faith given by inspiration of God and containing all things necessary for salvation.[163]

Furthermore, these beliefs (as expressed in the historic Anglican Formularies) are restated and committed to by the Church. The Formularies continue as intended to, legally shaping and delimiting the Church's worship *and* doctrine:

> 4. This Church, being derived from the Church of England, retains and approves the doctrine and principles of the Church of England embodied in the Book of Common Prayer together with the Form and Manner of Making Ordaining and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons and in the Articles of Religion sometimes called the Thirty-nine Articles but has plenary authority at its own discretion to make statements as to the faith ritual ceremonial or discipline of this Church and to order its forms of worship and rules of discipline and to alter or revise such statements, forms and rules, provided that all such statements, forms, rules or alteration or revision thereof are consistent with the Fundamental Declarations contained herein and are made as prescribed by this Constitution. Provided, and it is hereby further declared, that the above-named Book of Common Prayer, together with the Thirty-nine Articles, be regarded as the authorised standard of worship and doctrine in this

[160] Ibid. p.9. & Anglican Church of Australia, *A Prayer Book for Australia*. p.ix.
[161] Kaye, *A Church without Walls: Being Anglican in Australia*. p.54.
[162] Ibid.
[163] The Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia
The Anglican Church of Australia, "The Constition of the the Anglican Church of Australia," http://www.anglican.org.au/docs/ACAConstitution-2003.pdf. p.3.

> Church, and no alteration in or permitted variations from the services or Articles therein contained shall contravene any principle of doctrine or worship laid down in such standard.[164]

Writing as an Australian commentator on Anglicanism, Kaye stresses that while the Formularies have a real role in determining the beliefs and practices of the Anglican Church in Australia, they cannot be read uncritically – Australians do not live in the world of the Henrican or Elizabethan royal supremacy. What it means to believe and practice being a good citizen as a Christian has changed.[165] For Kaye, more important than the formal wording is the method to which the Formularies point.

What about the architect of the English reformation? While personally complex and even conflicted,[166] Archbishop Thomas Cranmer's goals in his liturgical and ecclesial reforms are not obscure, even if he was required to play in the dangerous realm of Henry's court to achieve them:[167]

> Cranmer's general liturgical goals are clear from the Prayer Book itself, and especially from its two prefatory statements 'Concerning the Service of the Church' and 'Of Ceremonies'. He seeks to attain intelligibility, edification, and corporateness, by producing, for regular use, a single, simple liturgy in the vernacular, in which the Scriptures are read and expounded in an orderly way, biblical teaching is incorporated throughout, all that is misleading or meaningless is excluded, words are audible, actions are visible, and congregational participation in speaking, singing, and reception of the sacrament (in both kinds) is encouraged.[168]

Charles Sherlock points us to the heart of Cranmer's approach – that Scripture was the matter of divine worship, not merely a component in it.[169] As the chief architect of the English reformation, Cranmer's ecclesial vision was the Bible as the very vehicle of worship. Part of Cranmer's complexity is in how he allowed personal convictions to be restrained by giving priority to obeying the crown – as God's appointed ruler, the 'godly prince' must be obeyed over and above other concerns. We see this when he acquiesced to Henry's position that the Bible be kept out of the

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[164] Ibid.

[165] Kaye, *A Church without Walls: Being Anglican in Australia*. p.92.

[166] Patrick Collinson, "Thomas Cranmer," in *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism*, ed. Geoffrey Rowell (Wantage: IKON Productions Ltd, 1992). pp.79-103.

[167] Susan Wabuda, "Setting Forth the Word of God: Archbishop Cranmer's Early Patronage of Preachers," in *Thomas Cranmer: Churchman and Scholar*, ed. Paul Ayris and David Selwyn (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1993). p.78.ff

Also: Paul Ayris, "God's Viceregent and Christ's Vicar: The Relationship between the Crown and the Archbishopric of Canterbury, 1533-53," in *Thomas Cranmer: Churchman and Scholar*, ed. Paul Ayris and David Selwyn (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1993).

[168] Geoffry Wainwright Cheslyn Jones, Edward Yarnold SJ, Paul Bradshaw,, ed. *The Study of Liturgy* (London: SPCK,1992). p.104.

[169] Charles Sherlock, "The Food of the Soul: Thomas Cranmer and Holy Scripture" (paper presented at the Cranmer Conference, Cranmer College, University of Durham, 1989).

hands of those below a particular social level.[170] Nonetheless, in the BCP the reading of Scripture stipulated through his lectionaries was ambitious and bold, with the emphasis being on the continual reading of Scripture:

> The Scriptures were not to be read in little chunks. A proper diet needs a mix of foods for wholesome development. Thus Cranmer insisted that not merely parts, but the whole of the Scriptures was to be used. (Anyone who follows his lectionary will soon find that to be the case; only the genealogies are omitted.) This reveals a profound catholic consciousness of the importance of the whole story of God's dealings. Only then could the parts of Scripture be appreciated properly, even if many were "too high" for the simple. Cranmer sees that as no excuse for not using them, however: "He that is so weak that he is not able to brook strong meat, yet he may suck the sweet and tender milk, and defer the rest until he wax stronger".[171]

Cranmer's goal was to enculturate a deep biblical literacy in English Christianity and to educate believers to the internal connections and integrity of the Bible.[172] His work in the reforming of English ecclesial life was not simply an artful reworking of the Sarum mass but, as Hatchett argues, the stripping away of non-biblical readings and facilitating the widespread usage of Scripture in the liturgy as well as the systematic reading of the Bible through his aforementioned lectionary.[173]

4.3 - The key to the Anglican praxis of Scripture

The espoused features of Anglican theology and liturgy that concern us and help in the dual process of discerning and asserting[174] in this discussion are the following:

- The unity of the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) focusing on the person of Jesus Christ.
- Anglican use of the Bible seeks to avoid a canon within the canon - following Archbishop Cranmer's principles in reworking of the lectionary to include the entire Bible.[175]
- The continuous reading of Scripture in an 'ordered and intelligent manner'.[176]
- The sufficiency of Scripture for salvation – in that no additional revelations are required to know God and to be saved.[177]

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[170] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996). pp.310-311.
[171] Sherlock, "The Food of the Soul: Thomas Cranmer and Holy Scripture".
[172] Michael Jensen, "Scripture, Preaching and Reformation Anglican Worship," in *The Blogging Parson* (Sydney2013). p.3
[173] J.E. Booty and S. Sykes, eds., *The Study of Anglicanism* (London: SPCK,1988). p.123.
[174] Whitehead, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry (Revised Edition)*.
[175] Varcoe, ed. *A Prayer Book for Australia: A Practical Commentary*. p.38.
[176] Ibid.p.99.

- Scripture operates not simply as a feature of the service, but rather Scripture stands as proxy for God himself – the dynamic of Anglican services is one of conversation between God and his people. The experience of the Church, reflected in the Old and New Testaments, is that God always takes the initiative; God speaks and we respond. Indeed the path of discipleship is but a response to the God who invites. The liturgy of the word, traditionally called the synaxis, named from synagogue worship, is about God's calling us and our response.[178] We approach God confidently in prayer by speaking his words back to him. The meaning of, and impetus for, the Eucharist is found in the Bible as either a direct quotation or a deep allusion. As Leuenberger describes it:

  > The style of worshipping by a responsive participation in the Psalms and other Biblical texts is to be understood as an expression of emphasis on the importance of the Word of Scripture, which is offered through the experience of a dialogue. The responsive form allows the basic intention of the Biblical Word to become apparent, namely to lead to a discourse between God and man. The congregation is able by its interest in participating in an aesthetic dialogue to comprehend better the monological truth of God in the Bible.[179]

- The 'hearing and intelligent understanding of the Scriptures'[180] – accessibility of Scripture means that Anglican use of the Bible should include consideration of issues of literacy and culture in worship. Historically, this was seen in the shift from services and readings being read in Latin to being read in the vernacular, English. But as Bartlett points out, vernacular means more than using the right language for those assembled, rather it necessitates the most appropriate cultural form of that language.[181]

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[177] That, allowing for a variety of means of inspiration, Scripture is authoritative and not merely illustrative – the ministry of the Word in Anglican liturgy is not simply expressed in the presence of readings and a sermon but is woven throughout the architecture of the service. The Anglican appreciation of the sufficiency of the Scriptures for salvation is seen not so much as in a confessional form, but in the practice of its extensive use of the Bible in its liturgy. In regard to the omnipresence of Scripture in Anglican worship Samuel Leuenberger, in his exhaustive examination of the sources and theology of the Book of Common Prayer, concluded by way of the question: *Is the BCP of 1662 anything other than God's Word, which has been arranged artistically in a liturgical form?*
Samuel Leuenberger, *Archbishop Cranmer's Immortal Bequest: The Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England: An Evangelistic Liturgy* (Grand Rapids: Wm, B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990). p.337.

[178] Varcoe, ed. *A Prayer Book for Australia: A Practical Commentary*. p.68.

[179] Leuenberger, *Archbishop Cranmer's Immortal Bequest: The Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England: An Evangelistic Liturgy*. pp.224-225.

[180] Anglican Church of Australia, *An Australian Prayer Book*. p.12.

[181] Bartlett, *A Passionate Balance: The Anglican Tradition*. p.173.

4.4 - Defending the 'Anglican matrix'

Is locating Anglican identity in the nexus of Scripture usage sustainable? Regardless of what an individual may think about either the Bible or Anglicanism, the fact that the Anglican Church of Australia (following the Church of England) holds to a particular view of Scripture located in its practices is a well-documented view. In addition to Leuenberger's position, we find additional support from the former principal of Ridley Melbourne, the Reverend Dr Peter Adam who holds that:

Anglican liturgy is based on the Bible in the following ways:

- The purpose of the lectionary is to ensure that both the Old and New Testaments are read in a systematic way, so that every part of Scripture is heard in the church.
- Every service includes the meditative use of the book of Psalms.
- The words of the liturgy reflect the language of the Bible.
- The shape of the liturgy reflects the gospel of the Bible. For example, in Morning and Evening Prayer we are addressed by the Word of God, we confess our sins and are assured of forgiveness, we hear the Bible read, we respond with faith in the words of the Creed, and then we pray for the world and the church. This provides a permanent *lectio divina* for the people of God.
- Sermons are the corporate meditation on the Scriptures and the application of those Scriptures to the life of the church and the world around us.

In the words of Article XIX, 'The visible Church of Christ is a Congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance…'

Because theological formation happens in the church, prayer and belief go together; *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* inform each other. As we engage in *lectio divina*, our minds and hearts are formed by the Scriptures. So both our prayers and our actions are attuned to God, and there should be no disparity or dissonance between our liturgy and our life.[182]

[182] Peter Adam, "The Scriptures Are God's Voice: The Church Is His Echo," in *'Wonderful and Confessedly Strange': Australian Essays in Anglican Ecclesiology*, ed. Bruce Kaye, Sarah Macneil, and Heather Thomson (Hindmarsh: ATF Press, 2006).pp.99-100.
For a parallel understanding see: Earey, *Beyond Common Worship: Anglican Identity and Liturgical Diversity*. Chapter 4, pp78-118.

As C. Peter Molloy notes, the Anglican contribution to the Church catholic is its unique 'scriptural pattern of worship'; he notes that the main failing in attempts to modernise Anglican liturgy is the loss of the presence of Scripture throughout the service and the theology that underpins such services, rather than the loss of lyricism.[183]

4.5 - Anglicanism and the Bible

One of the key features of Anglican identity is the centrality of the Bible in worship – both in having a variety of readings in a structured intelligent manner, and in the incorporation of Scripture in the architecture and form of the services. It is not just that Anglicans have multiple readings and a sermon, rather it is embodied in Anglicanism's common liturgical life and practice. From the Book of Common Prayer the model of Anglican worship and identity has been as a Church which '...reads Scripture, offers praise through Scripture, prays scriptural concerns and stands under the authority of Scripture.'[184] In his research Leuenberger demonstrated that the whole nature of classic Anglican liturgy in the BCP is to '…lay stress upon and lift on high the Divine Word. Morning and Evening Prayer, apart from the exhortations, the confessions, and the prayers, are made indeed almost solely of artistically compiled Biblical quotations.'[185] As Molloy notes:

> Other Reformed Churches make great use of Scripture, usually the recitation of the Psalms and Scripture readings, but usually not the fullness of the canticles and prescribed, scripturally formed prayers. When we look at non-liturgical Evangelical churches, while the teaching can be thoroughly scriptural, the role of Scripture elsewhere in the service is quite limited. Perhaps it is read independent of the sermon, and usually Scripture sentiments or phrases are alluded to in a praise song, but often Scripture is relegated to isolated verses which buttress the homiletical journey of the pastor. It is easy to see why John Wesley was justified in concluding that there is 'no Liturgy in the world, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more of a solid, scriptural, rational piety than the Common Prayer of the Church of England'. [186]

The very nature of Anglican worship and identity is a Bible centred liturgical life and praxis, not simply in preaching but in common worship. In writing on the theology of the Articles of Religion O'Donovan reminds us that Anglicanism's Reformation praxis began not with homiletics but with the presence of the Bible for reading in the services. Cranmer and the English reformers held to a high theology of the nature of

[183] P. Dailey, *The Book of Common Prayer: Past, Present and Future: A 350th Anniversary Celebration* (Bloomsbury, 2011). p.156.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Leuenberger, *Archbishop Cranmer's Immortal Bequest: The Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England: An Evangelistic Liturgy*. p.224.
[186] Dailey, *The Book of Common Prayer: Past, Present and Future: A 350th Anniversary Celebration*. pp.156-157.

Scripture which directly affected their liturgical practice – namely, the Bible carried its own divine authority from God and was not reliant on the Church for its authority.[187] Cranmer's goal in the Book of Common Prayer was to enculturate 'a thoroughly biblical piety'.[188] Cranmer's paradigm was that worship shapes and forms the faith of Christians individually and together as the Church[189] - in the Book of Common Prayer, the primary content of worship was Scripture as the medium of God's instrument of salvation in Christ.[190] The entire Anglican service therefore has a didactic function, not merely the sermon, though as Peter Adam notes it is through the sermon that people are taught how to read and interpret the Bible for themselves; the sermon forms disciples by having the art of Biblical understanding and application modelled.[191] The importance of the sermon however needs to be weighed against O'Donovan's point that in the 16th century ensuring the reading of Scripture was considered more important that the presence of a sermon.[192] Bradshaw reminds us that this pedagogical view was precisely that with which Cranmer undertook the liturgical reforms, seeking nothing less than the 'formation of a Christian character within the worshippers.'[193] By a clear public liturgy focused on Scripture, Anglicanism has sought to create not simply mature Christian believers, but mature congregations,[194] through the means, as Avis puts it, of 'rehearsing their faith primarily in liturgical and doxological form.'[195] Therefore, the presence and use of the Bible is of central importance for in both inherited and fresh forms of the church. As Stephen Platten posits, liturgy is the primary source of receiving and growing in the faith through mimesis.[196]

Alan Bartlett highlights the theological effect of Anglicanism's biblio-centric pattern of worship – 'the essence of worship is that it is responsive. We are here taken back to the priority of God and grace.'[197] The Anglican pattern is that God speaks and calls us together; and so we come. God addresses us in the readings and together with the preacher we reflect on God's words. God calls us to be generous and the offertory is taken up. God calls us to speak to him and so we pray. God calls us to remember his saving work in Jesus and to anticipate his reappearing and so we share the Eucharist. God dismisses us and so we go. All this is done with Scripture

[187] O. O'Donovan, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity* (Flemington Markets: Paternoster Press, 1986). p.50.
[188] R.A. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture: From the Reformation to the Present* (Crossroad Pub. Co., 2006). p.7.
[189] Ibid. p.8.
[190] Ibid. pp.8-9.
[191] Bruce Kaye, Sarah MacNeil, and Heather Thomson, eds., *'Wonderful and Confessedly Strange': Australian Essays in Anglican Ecclesiology* (Adelaide: ATF Press,2006). p.97.
[192] O'Donovan, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity*. p.50.
[193] p.73.
[194] Booty and Sykes, eds., *The Study of Anglicanism*. pp.54, 55
P.F. Bradshaw and Alcuin Club, *A Companion to Common Worship* (SPCK, 2001). p.65.
[195] Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology*. p.15.
[196] Stephen Platten, "Liturgical Living: Learning by *Mimesis*," *Anaphoria* 5, no. 1 (2011). pp.26; 29; 32ff.
[197] Bartlett, *A Passionate Balance: The Anglican Tradition*. p.171.

operating as the divine voice. An Anglican service which belittles Scripture, or which minimises its use (and therefore cuts God out of the meeting) is not worthy of its name. The Anglican view is that worship is not something which we give to God, but something that God invites us to and something he leads us in through Scripture. To cut Scripture out of the liturgy is to make it into something which we try to give to God without his leading or direction.

This thesis rests on the assumption that Fresh Expressions churches are authentic expressions of Anglican tradition and identity if they embody the essential Anglican theology of Scripture. Bishop Colin Buchanan expresses the dual concerns of coming under the authority of Scripture and engaging with those beyond the church well:

> It is very clear that the doctrinal reformation of the Church of England was carried through on the assertion of the supremacy (and perspicuity) of Scripture. It also, in principle, means that the Church of England ought to be open constantly to further reforms on the same basis… To live under the supremacy of Scripture is the reverse of a retreat into a semi-private stained-glass window world of a unique culture adapted most closely to the nostalgic tastes of those in it; to live under the supremacy of Scripture is to question, test and reform all received traditions, conventions and cultural safety-nets; to live under the supremacy of Scripture is to seek an eschatological goal of perfection in belief and behaviour, rather than to set up a supposed past golden age and seek to return to that.[198]

What is left is to ask whether this is what is actually occurring in practice? The liturgical texts may call for a broad engagement with Scripture, but individual churches may not use these texts as intended. What is being encultured may be far from the goal of Cranmer's reforms - as David Peterson asks:

> …we may ask how much the Bible is actually read and influences what we do when we gather together today. If Bible readings are reduced, Psalms are not used, biblically informed prayers and praises are removed and affirmations of faith based on Biblical teaching are neglected, what do we have left: songs that are only superficially biblical and spontaneous prayers that fail to express the breadth and depth of biblical spirituality?
>
> Being outsider-friendly or making services accessible to children and young people is fine. But how do we expect people to progress in their experience of corporate worship and to grow in maturity to Christ? Some would argue that biblical preaching is sufficient to edify the

[198] C. Buchanan, *Is the Church of England Biblical?: An Anglican Ecclesiology* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1998). p.194.

Church, but the Bible's teaching about edification challenges that conclusion.[199]

4.6 - International insight?

The Windsor Report (2003) was commissioned in response to the growing divisions in the Anglican Communion ostensibly over the issue of homosexuality, but which also sprang from the deeper divisions regarding the authority and interpretation of Scripture combined with issues of how authority is structured and how the different provinces relate to each other. This in turn raised the questions of how the constituent provinces should relate to each other.[200] These endemic issues within the Communion as a whole, especially regarding the nature and interpretation of Scripture, have continued to be played out in the Anglican Church of Australia, as evidenced in recent publications.[201] No part of the Communion was attempting to rid itself of the Bible, and yet there exist fundamental differences in the way Scripture is read and understood. In response to this, the *'Bible in the Life of the Church'* project was commissioned to examine how the Bible was read and used throughout the Communion, and in 2012 the report *Deep Engagement, Fresh Discovery*[202] was launched. The Australian contribution to the report was by Charles Sherlock. He identifies the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) as the majority approach for determining the pattern of Scripture readings in Australian Anglican churches.[203] The exception to this usage lies primarily amongst the Dioceses with a majority Evangelical position, noting that this grouping often also neglected the church year.[204] While RCL usage may be in the majority it is not necessarily itself core to the Anglican tradition – a reading of the lectionary set out in the 1662 BCP[205] shows a deep commitment to sequential and comprehensive reading of Scripture that places less emphasis on the Church Year than many parishes currently ordered by the lectionary.

Unfortunately in *'The Bible in the Life of the Church'* Sherlock lacks the critical edge he presented in 1989 in considering how contemporary Anglican practice failed

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[199] David Peterson, "Worship, Edification and the *Book of Common Prayer*," *St Mark's Review*, no. 222 (2012). p.51.

[200] See: Mark D. Chapman, *Bishops, Saints and Politics: Anglican Studies* (London: T&T Clark, 2007). pp.223-225 Mark D. Chapman, ed. *The Anglican Covenant: Unity and Diversity in the Anglican Communion* (London: Mowbray,2008). Daniel W. Hardy, *Finding the Church* (London: SCM Press, 2001). Chapter 9-15, pp.145-220.

[201] See: Mark Burton, ed. *Five Uneasy Pieces: Essays on Scripture and Sexuality* (Hindmarsh: ATF Theology,2011).
M Bird and G Preece, eds., *Sexegesis: An Evangelical Response to Five Uneasy Pieces* (Sydney: Anglican Press Australia,2012).
Gregory C. Jenks, ed. *The Once and Future Scriptures* (Salem: Polebridge Press,2013).

[202] The Bible in the Life of the Church Project, "Deep Engagement, Fresh Discovery: The Bible in the Life of the Anglican Communion," (2012).

[203] Ibid. p.25.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Cambridge University Press, *The Book of Common Prayer of 1662* (Melbourne Cambridge University Press, 1968). pp.xvii-liv.

to match Cranmer's theology and use of the Bible, and which serves as a salutary warning for both inherited and fresh forms of church in their use of Scripture in worship:

> The words of liturgy are composed of allusions to the Scriptures, but we do not trust the latter to do their own grace-giving work. Sentences are changed so as to give a meaning different to that in their original settings. Choruses repeat fragments in such a way as to distort the text's meanings, or to convey 'religious' overtones not present in the Scriptures. The public reading of the Scriptures is commonly done with little care – or as it were merely an exercise for the intellectuals in the congregation. Sunday lectionaries repeat the same passages, cut down to bite-size chunks, in the same year – and leave out whole books. (Ruth and Esther have disappeared entirely, despite contemporary concerns over the visibility of women in public liturgy.) It does not seem to occur to many intercessors to use the set lections as a basis for common prayer or meditation. And liturgical leaders issue instructions without end (whether publically, or via the servers' classes), failing to trust the people to fashion their own liturgical practice.[206]

At a critical level the Australian report fails to illuminate us about current practices in the Anglican Church of Australia as to the theology and use of the Bible; to say the answer is 'the lectionary' with some dissenting evangelicals doing their own thing sheds no real light here. It is worth noting that the essential question of my research regarding the use of the Bible among the Fresh Expressions churches remains unanswered regarding the Inherited Church.

4.7 - Tom Frame: consensus Anglicanism

Another window into the place of the Bible in the Australian Church of Australia comes from Tom Frame. Frame was the Anglican Bishop to the Australian Defence Forces (2001-2006), before becoming the Director of St Mark's National Theological Centre in Canberra until 2013. St Mark's trains clergy for a variety of Australian Dioceses, being seen as acceptable across a variety of churchmanships and theologies. Frame offers us a view across the Australian Anglican spectrum of theology and practice.

While influenced by Sydney Anglicanism, Frame holds a distinct identity from simply being a 'conservative Evangelical'. Frame's use of the Bible is straightforward, not in the sense of being simplistic or unscholarly, but because his reading of the Biblical texts is done in such a way as to honour authorial intent and

[206] Sherlock, "The Food of the Soul: Thomas Cranmer and Holy Scripture".

academic insight into the text.[207] The good news of God's Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus, as Frame reads it, was not simply symbolic, but rather the Kingdom was:

> …a present reality that was made manifest in his words and works. The sovereign rule of God was being expressed and experienced by those who responded to Jesus and his mission. But it was also a promised reality with the force and effect of judgment and salvation yet to come.

Where Frame differs from Sydney most clearly is over public worship. Phillip Jensen (Dean of St Andrew's Cathedral, and brother of the former Archbishop Peter Jensen) has stated through the Cathedral's website that what he called 'Confessional Anglicanism' rightly captures the heart of the Biblical message.[208] Frame's response is significant:

> I do not believe that Anglican theology *per se* is consistent with the Biblical witness. I would further argue that the '*confessional* Anglicanism' promoted by Jensen is not consistent with the letter or the tenor of the Articles. The worship that appears to flow from his kind of Anglicanism is contrary to the Preface to the *Book of Common Prayer* and the two subsequent statements headed 'Concerning the Service of the Church' and 'Of Ceremonies: Why Some Abolished and Why Some Retained'. It is a hybrid form of Anglicanism that is inclined to make claims that cannot be sustained from history nor from a fair-minded reading of Anglican Formularies. It also reflects a very narrow approach to being Anglican that unnecessarily excludes possibilities of belief and custom that are not precluded by the Formularies.

What we are witnessing here is the replaying of Richard Hooker and the Puritans; what Frame is critiquing is the equating of one particular form of ecclesial gathering as *the* biblically mandated one. Frame wants to preserve the integrity of the Bible in what it positively teaches about the Church, but still allow the Church freedom to order its life in ways that do not run contrary to the Bible. Frame is arguing from the perspective of Article XX in regard to the freedom of the Church, but also from Article XIX that states that the Churches of Antioch, Rome and Jerusalem have erred in their lives, worship and faith, that is, all Churches may go astray. To claim to have the one true reading of Scripture and to possess the form of Church that embodies the Biblical teaching regarding the nature of the Church is foolhardy at best. To say that someone ceases to be a biblical Christian if they differ from you in matters over Church structure and meeting is inconsistent with Anglican history – the Anglican Reformation was not about making the *ecclesia Anglicana* simply an extension of the New Testament church, but rather a removal of the teachings, practices and Roman Catholic authority that were opposed to the biblical witness.

[207] Tom Frame, *A House Divided? The Quest for Unity within Anglicanism* (Brunswick East, Melbourne: Acorn Press Ltd, 2010). pp.1, 3.
[208] Ibid. p.20.

The overconfidence in the Sydney approach is seen in Frame's presentation of how Sydney Anglicans have spoken of other churches:

> Sydney Evangelicals have been heard to say that very few of the Anglican churches in Canberra where I live 'preach the Gospel' and 'believe the Bible'. In referring to the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn as 'the Diocese of Sodom and Gomorrah' or as 'Egypt' (the region beyond the Promised Land), they announce that Sydney people coming to Canberra would be better served attending Baptist or independent churches than becoming part of a local Anglican congregation.[209]

What Frame highlights is that the Sydney Evangelical Anglican approach wants to move every issue into the sphere of primary importance. It is not sufficient to read the Bible – you must read it our way. It is not sufficient to believe the Bible – you must believe in the way we do. The way you worship is different from us – therefore you must not believe the Bible. Frame highlights this by critiquing the view in Sydney that equates Biblical faith with that of Reformed Evangelical theology.[210] Frame returns us to the often overlooked teaching on Christian freedom.[211]

Frame's critique also addresses the Sydney Anglican claim of teaching 'all of Scripture'. He argues that in practice there is a shoe-horning of every issue into Justification by Faith alone, together with an underestimating of the difficulties in reading and interpreting some parts of the Bible.[212] Frame criticises the move within Sydney Anglicanism to make one's position on the issues of gender, ministry and authority the new benchmark for biblical orthodoxy.[213] Frame's observation is thus that in desiring to take the Bible as the Word of God, Sydney Evangelical Anglicans exceed the historic Anglican understanding of what Scripture does – at worst, they run the risk of substituting the Bible with their reading of it.

Opponents of Sydney Diocese should however take little comfort from Frame's critique as he holds that whilst each tradition within Australian Anglicanism makes important contributions to its nature, each is also implicated in its disunity. Anglo-Catholicism and Liberalism also earn Frame's ire. Anglo-Catholicism adds Church tradition to the centrality of Scripture, in particular emphasising the unique role of the episcopate and a particular account of Church order, but as Frame points out, Scripture itself gives little or no evidence for one divinely mandated form of Church order. Frame contends that the Anglo-Catholic view of Bishops has lost the episcopacy's biblical roots – it has moved away from the eschatological hope and vision of the Church as the Church became established under Constantine. The

[209] Ibid. p.23.
[210] Ibid. p.24.
[211] Ibid. p,28.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid. pp.28-29.

centrality of the realised Kingdom of God was replaced by the need to legitimise the place of the Church in the world – Frame agrees with J.A.T. Robinson that:

> …without the guarantee of the End everything was made to rest on continuity with the Beginning. The Church as the eschatological community of the Messiah gave place to the Church as the extension of the Incarnation.[214]

Frame posits that this early shift continues in Anglo-Catholicism in that what undergirds ministry is not that the ascended Christ gives gifts (Ephesians 4:11) but an unwarranted dependence on a succession of ministry first from Christ, to the Apostles, to the line of apostolic Bishops.[215] Frame contends that Conservative Anglo-Catholic claims that the ordination of women runs counter to 'Catholic truth and order' cannot be sustained as:

> …there is no mention of the forms of ministry in the creeds and there is nothing in Scripture to suggest that differing forms of ministry constitute grounds for disrupting fellowship'.[216]

Frame also rounds on the liberal wing of the church for subjecting both the medium and message of Scripture to current social agendas of cultural relevance and cohesion.[217] Frame is not rejecting reason as a source of authority in Anglicanism, but holding to the Hookerian view that binds reason together with Scripture and tradition. Part of Frame's defence of this is equally telling for his own view – he refers to Jesus' parable in Matthew 21 of the landowner and the rebellious tenants who kill the owner's son. Frame continues to hold to both the authority of the Biblical account and its power to speak meaningfully to Christian belief and experience.[218]

Liberal Anglicanism, in Frame's view, has subjected the Bible to a worldly agenda, and where it does use the Bible it is not allowed to speak with its own voice freely but only where it might be seen to agree with an external agenda.[219]

Frame's own position and approach are what he describes as 'Consensus Anglicanism':

> Although it might come as a surprise to some, there is no such thing as 'Anglican faith'. There is only the Christian faith 'once for all delivered' (Jude 3) to believers. Anglicanism does not see itself as being analogous to Roman Catholicism or Calvinism. It tries to avoid demanding allegiance to doctrines or the elevation of practices that are not 'essential

[214] Ibid. p.34-35.
[215] Ibid. p.35.
[216] Ibid. p.40.
[217] Ibid. p.62.
[218] Ibid. p.62.
[219] Ibid. p,63.

> to salvation'. It is anchored in the Scriptures and is faithful to the Early Church and the wisdom of the Church Fathers. It is neither Puritan nor Papal. I have described my present position as 'Consensus Anglicanism', because it holds to the view that the diversity apparent within Anglicanism is actually very near to the essence of Anglicanism. 'Consensus Anglicanism' is Reformed and Catholic and, in an intellectual sense, Liberal. It combines the faith and order of Catholicism with the expectation of a personal response to divine grace that characterises Evangelicalism, while making use of intellectual freedom to correlate Christian faith with social realities in the context of mission and ministry.[220]

Frame acknowledges that such a view has historically been seen as a form of broad churchmanship within Anglicanism, but rejects that he is advocating another party within the Church, and instead he argues that the essential body of the Anglican Church takes in the vital truths of the competing traditions.[221] That is, the essence of Anglicanism is not found in a single tradition but in the presence of all three. In *Anglicans in Australia*[222], Frame states that the Anglican Church of Australia possesses the means to transcend its current divisions and conflicts by holding together Hooker's strands of authority.[223] Granted Hooker does give a primacy to Scripture, but this is not to trivialise tradition and reason but to appreciate that within Anglicanism Scripture has always been the primary authority. Where Scripture is silent or does not communicate unequivocally, the Church may rightly and freely turn to tradition. Where tradition is silent, reason is applied. Reason is of course exercised in the understanding of Scripture and tradition. Tradition is used in interpreting Scripture. Scripture is able to challenge both tradition and reason. Frame's position allows him to speak freely of the merits of each source of authority without either overstating the scope of one, or denying the legitimacy of any.

Frame challenges the practices found within the Australian Church that run counter to Anglican espoused beliefs and authorised practices regarding the Bible. He adheres to the central and foundational role of the Bible in evangelism, prayer, and indeed all ministry and Anglican liturgy,[224] and in light of its 'critical role' questions why amongst Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics there has been a significant reduction in the amount of the Bible that is read and preached upon.[225] Frame attacks the movement amongst Evangelicals towards having a single reading at each service; likewise, Anglo-Catholic parishes may read all four lectionary readings (Old Testament, Psalm, New Testament and Gospel) but with no attempt to comment on the readings. As Frame rightly points out, Anglican liturgy presumes that the Bible

[220] Ibid. p.96.
[221] Ibid. pp.96-97..
[222] Tom Frame, *Anglicans in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd, 2007).
[223] Ibid. p.228.
[224] Frame, *A House Divided? The Quest for Unity within Anglicanism*. p.103.
[225] Ibid. pp.103-104.

will be preached as well as publicly proclaimed.[226] Frame presents real concerns over current trends regarding the place of the Bible in the practice of the Anglican Church of Australia that are important for the Fresh Expressions movement and no less for inherited forms of Church:

> …it is not merely the presence of the Bible that vivifies Anglican life and spirituality. The Bible itself commends an attitude of excited expectation that God can and does speak through its pages when the Holy Spirit is a companion to its public and private reading and reflection. The high profile of the Bible in Anglican congregational life means that the personal conversion to which Anglicans are committed will transcend the individual heart and touch on those social and political structures that enthral and then enslave whole communities.[227]

4.8 - Scripture and the Inherited Church considered

The features of Anglican theology discussed, as compared to the practices described by the authors considered, show some tension in the inherited forms of Anglicanism between their espoused and practiced theologies. Frame highlights for us the tensions over the nature and authority of the Bible – chiefly this speaks to how the Bible may be used in the sermon, but not beyond. As we consider how the Bible is being used amongst the Fresh Expressions churches, we need to appreciate that the range of practices in the Inherited Church may themselves be in tension with the Formularies.

[226] Ibid. p.104.
[227] Ibid.

Chapter 5 - Espoused identity and practice

In considering the Inherited Church and the use of Scripture we have examined the first of the Whiteheads' conversation partners, that being Tradition. We now need to bring the next element to bear as we consider the voice of Culture – how are the churches surveyed located in regard to their espoused beliefs and practices? This chapter serves as an introduction to the culture of these churches, which will be expanded on in the next chapter through my participant-observer work. The questionnaire does allow us to understand the 'assumptive world'[228] these churches inhabit – how it is they understand their ministry and connection with the rest of the church.

In this chapter we will be considering the questionnaire results in gauging the espoused commitments and practices of the Fresh Expressions that I contacted from across the Australian Anglican Church. This section of my research seeks to give an indication of current practices and therefore culture, and to establish the espoused commitments amongst these churches prior to my undertaking participant-observer research amongst them.

5.1 - Phase one: understanding the questionnaire

Together with an explanatory letter of invitation and a consent form, the follow questionnaire was sent out to the Fresh Expression Churches I had identified, and also to the Inherited Church I intended to study:

[228] Whitehead, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry (Revised Edition)*. p.56.

Built on the Word Questionnaire

Please rate the significance of the following items in the life of your Church (1 being Totally Unimportant; 10 being Extremely Important)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Being 'Anglican'										
Being 'Evangelical'										
Being 'Catholic'										
Being 'Liberal'										
Being 'Charismatic'										
Being 'Emergent'										
Engaging with the Pentateuch										
Engaging with the Wisdom books										
Engaging with the Old Testament History books										
Engaging with Old Testament Prophets										
Engaging with the Psalms										
Engaging with the Gospels & Acts										
Engaging with the Epistles										
Having a sermon when your church meets										
Which version of the Bible is used										
The involvement of the Bishop										
Choosing songs that draw from the Bible for their lyrics										
Encouraging members into Home Groups/Bible studies										
Using the Bible in shaping your liturgy										
Using the Bible in staff meetings and other meetings of the church										

Please select the answers which best describe your Church.					
What is the dominant theological tradition of your Diocese	Anglo-Catholic	Charismatic	Evangelical	Liberal	Other (please state)
How many Bible readings do you typically have in your church meetings for worship?	0	1	2	3	4 or more.
What version of the Bible does your FXC use?	New International Version (NIV)	New Revised Standard Versions (NRSV)	Good News	English Standard Version (ESV)	Other (please state)
In the last year which books of the Bible has your Fresh Expression of Church read?					
In the next year which books of the Bible does your Fresh Expression of Church plan to read?					

Figure 2: Built on the Word Questionnaire

The questionnaire provides two essential streams of information. First, the questionnaire established the espoused beliefs of the churches surveyed by interrogating the group's leader (ordained or lay) and two additional members of the church. It is this information that allows the churches' practices to be tested, not only against their understanding of Anglican identity but also from their own stated espoused views. As noted by Bernard, self-administered questionnaires have certain advantages – respondents are likely to report aberrant behaviour and are not trying to personally impress the researcher.[229] While Bernard links this liberty for the participant to sexuality, this is no less important for religious matters. A church that has no regular pattern of Bible reading may only feel comfortable disclosing this when anonymity is provided. Bernard however also recognises the limitations of such an approach, chiefly that the absence of the researcher means that issues of understanding and interpretation of questions by respondents may affect the results.[230] The honesty of the responder cannot be assumed either – by having the entirety of the questions asked available, and not being 'blind' to upcoming questions,[231]participants may skew their answers to satisfy what they perceive the researcher's goal to be or to avoid presenting themselves in a negative manner. However, by Bernard's selection criteria (literate respondents; the nature of the questions not needing personal interaction or visual aids; and confidence of a high response rate)[232] a self-administered questionnaire is a viable tool for making meaningful comments regarding the theology and use of the Bible in the churches contacted. In the questionnaire I have sought to incorporate questions that engage with both Bible usage and information about the theological and ecclesial traditions of both the church and its parent Diocese. This information may assist in understanding their own method and presumptions about the merit, authority and use of the Bible.

When we talk about Fresh Expressions of Church, we are not talking about new churches but rather new tendrils of existing denominational traditions that are 'fresh' in regard to seeking to engage with their target community/network, and also in regard to their denominational identity. Church planting may be (and is) done by churches in which the planted body may have no affiliation with the denomination from which it sprang. This is not a passing issue. Some Dioceses are concerned that another Diocese has planted a church in their territory but the planted church is not 'Anglican'.[233] The motivation for this is that one Diocese may feel that 'the gospel is not being proclaimed there', and thus seek to remedy the situation – a

[229] H.Russell Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Second ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE PUBLICATIONS, 1994). p.260.
[230] Ibid. pp.261-262.
[231] Ibid. p.262.
[232] Ibid. p.264.
[233] Muriel Porter, *Sydney Anglicans and the Threat to World Anglicanism* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011). Pp.4-5; p.158-159.

phenomenon even noted in the secular media.[234] Issues of institutional integrity and territorial jurisdiction are sidestepped by virtue of the planted church not being 'Anglican'. This research is concerned with churches that are planted within and through existing denominational and institutional systems.

In asking about the espoused use of the Bible, the questionnaire requires a longitudinal perspective about the group's commitments, beliefs and practises. This is not simply asking 'how many times do you read it?' as frequency alone is no guarantor of the Bible's importance or reception. One church may only have a single reading which forms the basis of the entire service. Another may hear multiple readings from the lectionary but only ever hear the Gospel reading used as the basis for a homily. An overview of the church's reading and preaching over the course of a year may demonstrate a commitment to readings from a variety of parts of Scripture.

This thesis seeks to test the congruence of the Fresh Expressions churches to Anglican identity as expressed in the Anglican theology of the Bible – the Fresh Expressions churches are not restricted to one tradition that inhabits the broader Anglican tradition. For example, although Evangelicals are generally committed to evangelism and church planting, the Fresh Expressions movement is not solely an Evangelical concern or activity. Indeed, the movement is in theory marked by the scope for a plethora of expressions of church and particular concerns for many strata of society that they are seeking to engage. In both the Fresh Expressions and Emerging church there is space for a strong Catholic and Sacramental presence that does not identify with Evangelicalism.[235] The questionnaire asks with which church traditions the respondents identify; likewise there is a question that asks them to identify the dominant ecclesial tradition of their parent Diocese.

It is worth stating the intention behind each question; while I have stated the purpose of the questionnaire as a whole, the import of individual questions needs to be stated to allow for transparency in my methodology for the analysis of the data. Because this questionnaire is concerned with practices many of the questions are closed. Some questions do seek to elicit personal opinions, but this is to assist in the interpretation of the data they provide regarding what they actually do as a church. It is important to note that this questionnaire is not the primary means used to assess conformity to Anglican theology and identity – relying on these closed questions would be too crude a means of assessing them alone.[236]

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[234] Malcolm Brown, "Seeds of Division Take Root over Planted Churches," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 October 2000. p.7; Julia Baird, "Numbers Rule as Team Sydney Muscles Up," *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 20 2005.

[235] As also suggested by Bishop Steven Croft and Carl Turner.
See: Steven J. L. Croft and Ian Mobsby, *Ancient Faith, Future Mission : Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2009). pp.36-51, 140-155.

[236] Cameron, *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook*. p,34.

Section One – Rating the importance of:

Being 'Anglican'

The purpose of this thesis is to test whether the Fresh Expressions churches surveyed express Anglican identity through their use of the Bible. Nonetheless it is worth asking the churches in question how 'Anglican' they believe themselves to be. What 'Anglican' means has been left undefined for the purposes of this survey as what constitutes Anglican identity is not identical in each Diocese and sub-tradition that inhabits the broader Anglican Church of Australia.

Being 'Evangelical'

Being 'Catholic'

Being 'Liberal'

Being 'Charismatic'

These four categories represent the leading influences within Anglicanism, and are the traditions in which Fresh Expression church leaders will have been nurtured. Understanding how each self-identifies will alert us to their espoused methods. It may also alert us to the potential to give the 'correct' answers to each question. For example, someone from the Evangelical tradition is likely to espouse a high value for the Bible within the life of their church. This data needs to be correlated with the information given by participants about their actual usage as well as that encountered in the second phase should that church be included in that phase.

Being 'Emergent'

The Emerging church movement is not distinctively Anglican, and may alert us to influences on identity and practice that are external to the denomination. The terminology of the Fresh Expressions movement is not universally accepted within the Australian Anglican Church, with various Dioceses giving preference to projects that may be labelled as 'emerging' or as 'missional communities' but which actually exhibit the stated goals of the Fresh Expressions of Church movement as expressed in the Mission-Shaped Church literature.

Engaging with the Pentateuch

Engaging with the Wisdom books

Engaging with the Old Testament History books

Engaging with Old Testament Prophets

Engaging with the Psalms

Engaging with the Gospels & Acts

Engaging with the Epistles

These questions shift the focus away from identity to espoused practice; Anglican liturgy draws from across the spectrum of the biblical canon and lectionary usage aims to ensure that God's voice is heard from the various parts of the Bible. What importance then is espoused by the Fresh Expression churches to each of these broad sections of Scripture? Are they espousing a canon within the canon by singling out the Gospels for attention at the expense of other parts of Scripture which the Formularies also identify as the Word of God no less than the Gospels?

Having a sermon when your church meets

The expectation evident in Anglican liturgies is that Scripture will not simply be read but will be taught. What importance does the Fresh Expression church in question attach to public teaching as an element of discipleship and mission?

Which version of the Bible is used

Here the attention shifts from 'how important do you think the Bible is?' to issues of mission and enculturation. In a church with a focus on families and children or on people with English as a second language or on working-class neighbourhoods, there may be a need to use a less technical version: moving from the English Standard Version or New Revised Standard Version to something more 'user-friendly' such as the Good News Version or New International Version. It is not simply academic snobbery to ask about translation – Article XXIV states that:

> It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have publick Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments in a tongue not understood by the people.[237]

In the context of mission and even ongoing parochial ministry, the question of the accessibility and cultural appropriateness of any given translation needs to be assessed. Moreover, as the Article states, the Anglican use of the Bible is inherently pastoral – can the people hear and understand it?[238]

The involvement of the Bishop

Fresh Expressions may exist as a special ministry district or project and operate apart from the legislated norms that inherited churches do; as a result Fresh Expressions churches may function under the direct authority of their Diocesan Bishop. As the licensing authority, Bishops may be more given to supporting Fresh Expressions churches that share their own ecclesial and theological perspective.

Choosing songs that draw from the Bible for their lyrics

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[237] Anglican Church of Australia, *A Prayer Book for Australia*. p.830.
[238] See: Sykes, "The Genius of Anglicanism." p.236.

People may not remember a sermon from week to week, but songs and music are repeated within the course of a church's life. Songs express a 'heart language' that lodges in the imagination and memory of believers. This question asks whether the Fresh Expressions churches are aware of and utilising the capacity of music to assist in discipleship through use of Scripture, or whether the music they use has other sources.

Encouraging members into home groups/Bible studies

This question seeks to uncover how committed the Fresh Expression church is to engaging with the Bible beyond their 'service' or main meeting. It also may allow us to better gauge the breadth of Scripture they are engaging with; for example, a focus on the Gospels in their public worship meetings may be balanced by a commitment to studying Old Testament material in their Bible study groups.

Using the Bible in shaping your liturgy

Anglican liturgy is rooted in the Biblical metanarrative and committed to the use of the Bible as the voice of God in public worship. Anglican use of the Bible is not restricted simply to the Bible readings for the day. The Bible commences each service, it shapes the prayers, demands confession of sins and assures those that do confess of God's forgiveness. The Bible explains the meaning and events of the Eucharistic celebration. How committed therefore are the Fresh Expressions churches to having their liturgical life shaped by the same principle?

Using the Bible in staff meetings and other meetings of the church

The issue of practice in regard to the Bible in the life of the Church cannot and must not be restricted simply to the area of public worship. This question seeks to address how important the church believes the Bible is in shaping the lives of its leaders and members. This question recognises that being a Christian, indeed being an Anglican, means a commitment to the Bible beyond simply that of public worship. This question, as indeed with the earlier one regarding home groups and Bible studies, highlights the importance of looking beyond public worship in considering the theology and use of the Bible in any given church. Simon Coleman rightly points out:

> It is all too easy to concentrate on obvious, visible activities such as Sunday morning services, and forget the more personal forms of piety that might be practised in smaller and more intimate circles.[239]

<u>Section Two – written responses from the participants.</u>

What is the dominant theological tradition of your Diocese?

[239] Simon Coleman, 'Perspectives on the Local Church: Anthropological Strand' in Cameron, *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook*. p.52.

In Section One participants were asked to rate the relative importance to them of various ecclesial traditions; here they are asked to identify the dominant theological tradition within their parent diocese. This may allow us to anticipate the influence of the diocese on the church, and may also provide insights into the theological literacy and awareness of the participants.

How many Bible readings do you have in your church meetings?

This question is not as simple as it first appears; what constitutes a reading of Scripture? Is it just the lectionary format of 'Old Testament/Psalm/Gospel/New Testament Epistle'? As discussed elsewhere, the Anglican liturgy engages with the Bible in more places than just the liturgical space allocated to the formal reading of the Bible. I suspect however that this nuanced understanding is not omnipresent in either Inherited or Fresh Expressions of Church – which only serves to underscore the importance of the Bible in Anglican public worship; it forms the background, the atmosphere to the church service rather than just being an element within it. Numbers beyond four amongst the responses gathered will be worthy of paying particular attention. In creating the questionnaire I anticipated that the more casual Fresh Expression churches would have one to two formal readings and while those with a more structured liturgy could have up to four.

What version of the Bible does your FXC use?

This question appears twice. In its previous usage I was asking about the relative importance of the choice of version the church uses, here I am asking participants to specify which version their church uses for public readings or publications. As with its previous iteration, this question seeks to uncover how issues of enculturation and incarnational theology have an impact on the use of the Bible in this church.

In the last year which books of the Bible has your FXC read?

In the next year which books of the Bible does your FXC plan to read?

These two questions work in tandem to build up a longitudinal picture of what parts of the Bible the churches in question are using. This question alone should provide rich data about the practice of Bible reading compared with the stated espoused beliefs given in answer to other questions. The exclusive reading and preaching of one part of the Bible to the exclusion of others is a spirit and practice contrary to Anglican identity and belief.

5.2 - Developing the questionnaire

The questionnaire had been designed as part of my initial thesis proposal submission, which was approved by the Durham University Theology Department. The questionnaire was subsequently given approval by the Durham University Ethics Committee prior to its use. As part of my preparation for distributing it, I undertook a trial with the staff of a local Anglican church in Australia regarding its usability.

For the sake of brevity, it is sufficient to note that this trial satisfied me that the questionnaire was a usable document. Satisfied with this trial I commenced the mail-out to the participant churches I had identified.

5.3 - The questionnaire in use

In 2011 and 2012 I sent out the questionnaire to all of the Anglican Fresh Expression churches I could locate in Australia and to one Inherited form of church. The questionnaire was intended as an indicative survey of the attitudes to, and espoused usage of, the Bible amongst these churches, to be completed by the leader and two other key members.

Did this add anything to my knowledge of the Fresh Expression churches, especially considering that the primary data for the thesis was to come from participant-observation? What the questionnaire provided was context about the state of the Fresh Expression movement at a national level. It was also a way of collecting and analysing the espoused beliefs of key personnel so as to have a second point of comparison for the operational theology and ecclesiology located in their practice – rather than the cyclical approach of the pastoral cycle, the Whiteheads' model of theological reflection is essentially dialogical between the constituent elements.

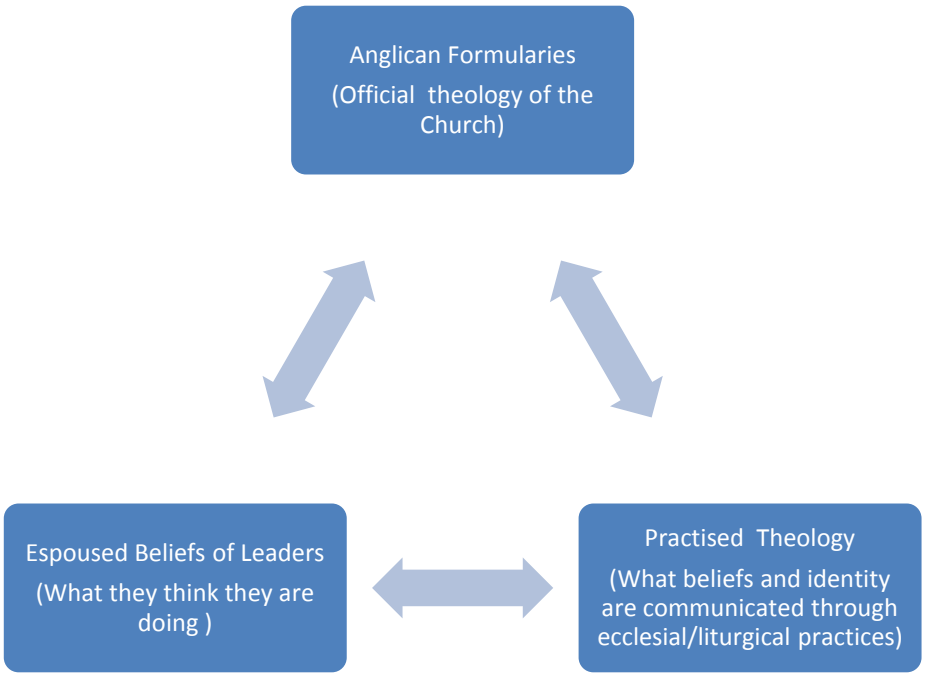

Figure 3 Whitehead & Whitehead's model applied to Anglican identity

The thesis I have set out to argue is that the Fresh Expressions of Church are legitimate expressions of Anglican identity and practice based on their usage of Scripture. Now with the questionnaire data we see how vexed the situation actually is. Some may 'feel Anglican' or hold Anglican identity to be highly important, but in their practice reject the beliefs and practices stated in the Formularies. Others

may not feel particularly 'Anglican' but carry out practices that resonate with the Formularies.

In total 24 churches were contacted; of these 23 were active Fresh Expression churches. These were identified through web searches and direct contact with Diocesan Bishops and their support staff. The 24th was a church that conformed to Anglican Prayer Book liturgical practice and was sought to act as a comparison. Seventy-two questionnaires were sent out (three to each church – one for the primary leader and two additional key members). From this mail out 32 questionnaires were returned – 44.4% of the total sent out, giving a church participating rate of 62.5%.

From the entire field of churches invited to participate 25% returned all three questionnaires; 28.8% returned two, and 16.6% returned just one. There was a nil-response rate from 37.5% of churches. All participating churches were followed up both by phone and email to elicit responses. The figure of 37.5% reflects those churches from which no data was ever received. On a purely statistical level, the total sample number is not very high, but it was never intended to provide a large sample; rather it was the first part of a qualitative research method, targeted to key personnel to give an indication of the self-perception and perceived practices amongst the Fresh Expression churches.

The churches supplying three sets of results are classified as Class I, those with two as Class II, and those with one response as Class III. In selecting which churches to investigate further, primary attention has been given to Classes I and II. As Class III possesses only one set of results for the church, it is unlikely to be representative of anyone beyond solely the primary leader for the church.

Class I	FXC: C, D, E, J, N, & IC-X (Inherited Church X)
Class 2	FXC: A, H, K, M, & W
Class 3	FXC: B, Q, R, & U

Table 1 Classification of Churches by number of questionnaires returned

The key information being sought from the questionnaire was:

1. How important is Anglican identity?
2. How important is engaging with the breadth of Scripture?
3. What importance is attached to having the church's worship shaped by Scripture?
4. How important is using the Bible beyond the primary meeting?

Of particular note is the question of whether there is an overlap between claims for Anglican identity and the use of the Bible. Given the earlier discussion regarding the theology and use of the Bible in Anglicanism, we could reasonably expect to find a correspondence between these areas. If there is not, we may legitimately ask, why

not? How can a church espousing high Anglican identity relegate the Bible? Likewise, how can a church which is formally part of the Anglican system regard Anglican identity as unimportant?

In this research then, we will be paying attention to the strongest claims to Anglican identity from the churches in Classes I & II.[240]

5.4 - Importance of 'being Anglican'

If Fresh Expressions are both a 'fresh' proclamation of the gospel and an embodiment of a particular denominational identity, then we encounter an issue in that over half of the total of participating churches rated on average the importance of Anglican identity as being five or less.[241] Focusing on the more reliable classes highlights this further – with just over half of the churches ascribing an importance on average of five or less. Within Classes I and II, even those above the midpoint of the spectrum of importance ranked it lower than of being of less than utmost importance to them.

We should however be wary of reading too much into a single question, in particular one as ambiguous as this one. What is it to 'be Anglican'? Are respondents rating this particular attribute as being unimportant to them because of how they themselves construe Anglicanism? Are they pragmatists who want to undertake church planting and the Anglican Church of Australia was simply the best option at the time to offer them support? Do they reject the idea of there being a distinct Anglican identity on the basis of the claim that being 'Anglican' is synonymous with simply being a Christian in England, (and while not themselves in England, they are institutionally part of this extended body)? Supposedly because Anglicans possess no special doctrines[242] of their own they cannot be differentiated by other Christians on the basis of doctrine. Indeed part of the Reformers' defence was that nothing new was being developed, but rather the Articles were defending against errors and not creating a new doctrinal position. However Sykes rightly pointed out that such a claim was in itself a special doctrine.[243] Moreover, this is not a claim I have encountered from Australian Anglicans – while familiar with it from my reading, I had never encountered this as espoused theology until my time living in the England. I suggest that in Australia, Anglicans are used to merely being one of a number of Church denominations and have not sought to justify their tradition as being ***the*** historic expression of the Church Catholic in a particular geographical province.

We also must guard against reading the relative importance as an outright rejection of the Anglican denomination – they are after all licenced ministry units of the Anglican Church of Australia with Anglican clergy running them. Moreover, these

[240] In the appendices this is shown by ranking only classes I & II but not III in the relevant tables.
[241] See Appendix 1 for the relevant table for the numeric results.
[242] See: Jacob, *The Making of the Anglican Church Worldwide*. p.17.
Neill, *Anglicanism*. pp.417-418.
[243] Sykes, *Unashamed Anglicanism*. pp.101-103.

results need to be contextualised alongside the rest of the data – it may be that an individual church would prefer to identify itself as being Anglo-Catholic, Evangelical Anglican or an Emerging Anglican (noting the word order for all three categories) rather than the simple undifferentiated nomenclature of Anglican. To make this comparison the following results are presented in the same order as was established in the area of espoused importance of Anglican identity, with value out of ten in parenthesis.[244]

Church J's average response places as being Emergent (8.6) ahead of being Anglican (7.6). While this does not tell us their understanding of either term, it does show that 'being Emergent' has significant traction amongst those surveyed from Church J. The other scores, while lower than their Anglican value, were still above mid-range with the exception of a notably low resonance with Evangelical identity (2).

Church A placed Evangelical identity (8.5) as significantly higher than all other attributes, including that of 'being Anglican' (6.5). Liberal and Catholic identity were particularly low, while the significance of 'being Charismatic' was only fractionally less important than 'being Anglican'.

IC-X's respondents have a staunchly Evangelical identity (9.3) that places 'being Anglican' in second place (6.3). Presumably, they hold being Anglican as being compatible with their Evangelicalism, but they are not wedded to denominational identity. All other possible identities are rated at the lowest possible level. This raises questions for future research – to what extent is 'being Anglican' a secondary concern? Is being Anglo-Catholic, or Charismatic, more important than being part Anglican? The dominance of Evangelical identity need not concern us here – the point of this question is to ascertain the espoused identity of the participants (all in senior roles in their church) and then test their practices in the second phase; we may, as might be inferred from their answers, find that IX-C respondents are able to hold together being Evangelical and being Anglican based on how Scripture is used in their worship.

Church M gave 'being Anglican' only slightly above average importance (6); those surveyed attached significant importance chiefly to 'being Evangelical' (8.5), with Charismatic and Emergent identity also being highly significant to them (both scoring 7.5). Whatever meaning they attach to 'being Catholic' is unimportant, and Liberal identity is seen as totally unimportant to their common identity.

Church K respondents saw their church as drawing extremely heavily from 'being Evangelical' (8) to ground their identity, while the Catholic, Liberal and Emergent strands are seen as marginal in their importance. Both Anglican and Charismatic identity are of average importance to them (5).

[244] See Appendix 2 for the tables in full.

However Church C recipients construed 'being Anglican', it registered as less than an average importance for them (4.6). We find an interesting mix of influences at work. The most dominant category of self-identification lies with the Emerging Church movement (7.3), followed by being Evangelical (6), Charismatic (5.3) and Liberal (4.6), Catholic identity (as they understand it) having the smallest role in their identity (4.6). The significant scores attributed to the Evangelical, Liberal and Charismatic identities resonate with dominance of 'being Emergent', – a movement that sees itself as free from the old church parties and able to draw from across the ecclesial traditions.

Church N respondents held their Evangelical identity as roughly twice as significant to them as 'being Anglican' (8.6 and 4.5 respectively); the other sub-traditions are almost seen as totally unimportant. Anglican identity, while significantly lower than their dominant Evangelicalism, is however markedly higher than the other identities, almost double the next highest score.

Church W's respondents held 'being Evangelical' as highly significant to them (9), more than double that of Anglican (4) or Charismatic identity (4). However they understand it,[245] 'being Emergent' is of average importance, while Catholic and Liberal identities were negligible to nil.

Church H's respondents found their core identity almost solely in the Evangelical tradition (9), with the other traditions (including Anglican) being close to the totally unimportant end of the spectrum.

Church D is somewhat of an oddity, drawing on Evangelical and Emerging identities (both 5.6), but not holding either as highly significant. However they define the terms, what the results highlight is the perceived importance of these identities in contrast with the low scoring given to Anglican, Catholic, or Charismatic identities.

Church E's respondents clearly see themselves as being a Charismatic (7.6) and Evangelical (7) church with low scores in the other fields, although 'being Anglican' was marginally above Catholic and Liberal identities.

The following responses are from Class III. While no less revealing for their personal views, these results do not show the perception of their church from across a number of multiple respondents.

Church B's respondent ascribed extremely high importance to being Evangelical (9), Charismatic (8), and Anglican identity (8), with the Evangelical strand being only marginally more important. Conversely, Catholic, and Liberal identity is seen as being totally unimportant.

[245] One of the two respondents for church W left all spaces for the sub-traditions other than Evangelical blank. I have interpreted this as meaning that he/she felt an absolute disinterest/identification with them, rather than simply missing the question.

Church Q's respondent placed 'being Evangelical' (9) as the most important factor in their church's identity; however, unlike many of the other churches with high importance attached to Evangelicalism, this respondent attached only slightly less importance to Anglican identity (8). The other strands however languished, ranging from the low side of average to total unimportance.

Based on the results from only one respondent, Church R appears highly unusual - with high importance attached to Evangelical (9), Liberal (8), Charismatic (10) and Emergent (8) identities (one wonders in practice what this might look like). But total unimportance attached to Anglican and Catholic identities. I repeatedly asked my contact to pursue the remaining questionnaires but failed to receive any further material, which is a pity as they are likely to have either modified or reinforced the perception of a highly unusual ecclesial self-identity.

While not universal and by no means exclusively, Evangelical identity was clearly the most significant strand amongst the Fresh Expression churches surveyed. The Charismatic and Emerging strands possessed significant traction amongst these churches. Anglican identity was highly important amongst some, but was not espoused particularly highly amongst two-thirds of the churches surveyed. I need to stress that this is their self-understanding. What is being tested here is not sentiment or self-perception but practice. If 'being Anglican' is, as I am arguing, defined by practice rather than sentiment, we need to see these figures alongside both their espoused use of Scripture (from the rest of the Phase One data) and more significantly from the Phase Two data covering the observed practices of Bible usage. How one asks a question will determine what sort of answer one receives. If I had defined Anglican in one way, it may have altered whether or not they were perceived themselves as Anglican and would likely have caused debate from correspondents also, challenging my position. By asking the questions without definitions we may access the perceptions of ecclesial identity from core members of these churches. The results from Phase Two will either confirm or overturn these perceptions on the basis of practice.

5.5 - Importance of 'being Emergent'

As has been noted earlier, some authors have sought to equate the Fresh Expressions movement with that of the Emerging Church, however my research suggest a different self-understanding from these Fresh Expression churches.[246]

On average, no church gave absolute priority to 'being emergent', although one gave it no importance, and another was extremely close to this point. Moreover as with Anglicanism, whether a church identifies as Emergent is contingent on their understanding of that term. With the exception of Churches C, J, and M, the churches surveyed did not focus their identity through being Emergent. Not unexpectedly IC-X gave 'being Emergent' the lowest possible score – this result ties

[246] See Appendix 3

with the literature that says the Emerging Church movement is seen as being antithetical to inherited forms of church.

5.6 - Importance of using the Bible

No church surveyed espoused using the Bible as being unimportant – what we are considering here is the commitment to using the entirety of the Bible.[247] Results such as those from churches C and R suggest not an outright rejection of using the Bible but their commitment to its breadth. Anglican liturgy has traditionally been committed to a continuous reading through the entire Bible (through the lens of Old Testament, Psalm, Gospel, and Epistle), and in using a variety of Scripture throughout the liturgy; we encounter both dissonance and resonance in Churches C and R over Anglican identity as I have construed it. Churches C and R suggest an espoused commitment to using the breadth of Scripture that is less than holistic. Simply reading the canonical Gospels does not qualify as matching the beliefs or espoused practice of the Anglican Church of Australia.

Curiously, the Inherited Church control did not score the highest in its attributed importance in using the different parts of the Bible. However, this can be explained by looking at the individual survey results; the congregational minister attributed the highest possible scores to engaging with all the different parts of Scripture outlined by this survey, but these results were lowered by those of the other participants.

The following table presents these commitments in regard to the individual categories of Biblical literature in the order of their overall rank:

[247] See Appendix 4 for the individual Church scores.

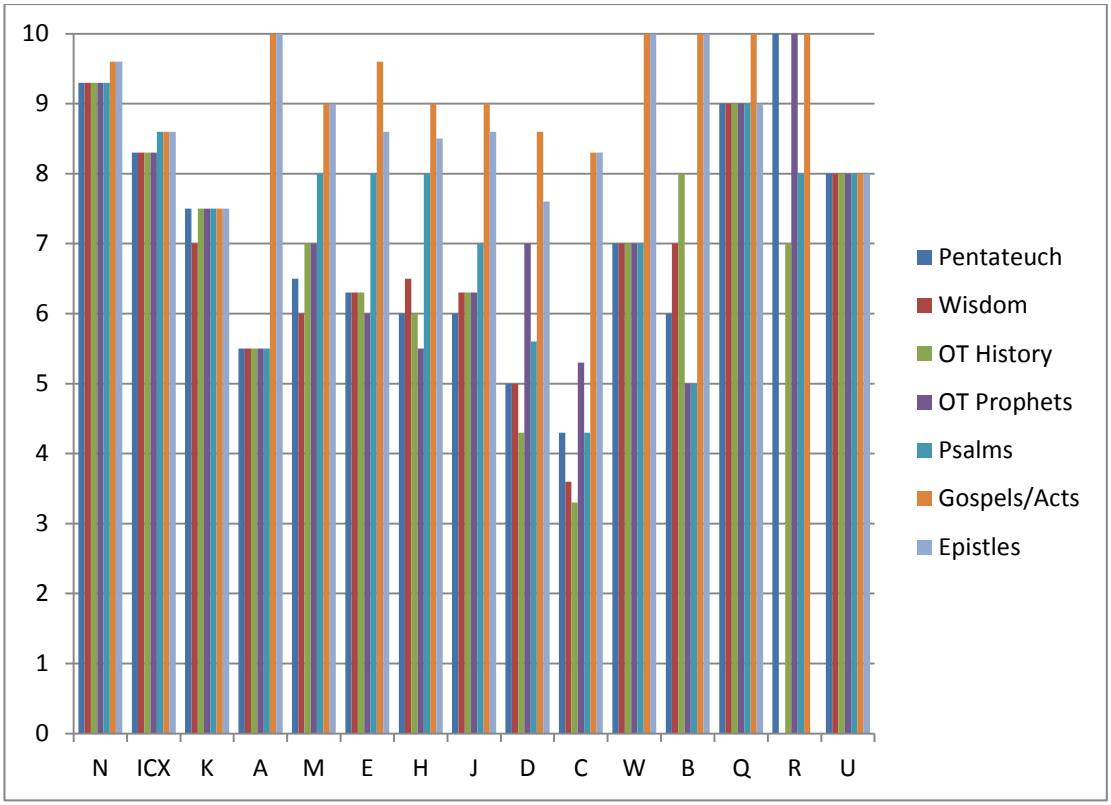

Figure 4 Espoused importance of Bible genres

This chart plots the espoused commitment to reading each genre within the church's leadership and senior members, not the actual usage. Some trends in commitments emerge from this data. First, the churches surveyed claim a high espoused commitment to the reading of the New Testament, in particular the Gospels and Acts. The second trend is more problematic; there is a major drop in the commitment to reading the Old Testament. This is not to suggest that they are formal adherents to that ancient heresy, but that through practice suggests a failure to cohere to the commitments that being Anglican entails, indeed to the commitments of the great Ecumenical Councils that the Church Catholic committed itself to as a standard of orthodoxy and orthopraxis. There are some obvious exceptions – Churches N, K, Q and U claim a more unified and holistic series of commitments, but the lower espoused importance amongst Churches A, C, M, E, H, J, D, W, and B is troubling. Limiting the range of Biblical material that is engaged with, even with the stated purpose of making Jesus accessible, may actually truncate the understanding of his person and work, and therefore also alter the nature of Christian discipleship and Christian community.

The church's use of the Bible is by no means limited to the formal readings; Leuenberger argued that Anglican liturgy is essentially an artistic arrangement of Biblical material.[248] Classic Anglican liturgy allows for four readings – these being Old Testament, Psalm, Gospel and Epistle. When we present the espoused

[248] Leuenberger, *Archbishop Cranmer's Immortal Bequest: The Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England: An Evangelistic Liturgy*. p.224.

commitments to hearing from Scripture according to these four categories, the results are stark:

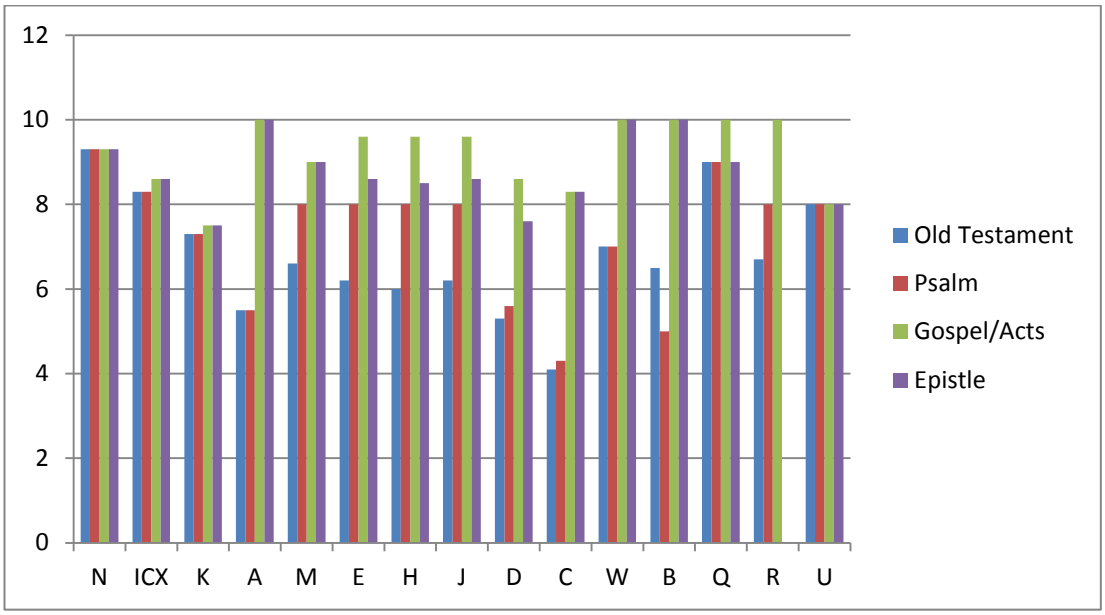

Figure 5 Espoused importance of Bible genres through Lectionary patterning

The general trend in the Fresh Expressions churches surveyed indicates a retreat from the reading of the Old Testament. The low usage of the Psalms in their public worship is particularly notable, given the strong use of Psalmody in Anglican worship. This challenge to traditional patterns of worship and identity is most profound in Churches A and C, for whom the commitment to the use of the Old Testament is roughly half of their New Testament commitments.[249] If this level of espoused commitment to the unity of the Bible and its usage is played out in practice, then Anglican theological identity is indeed being challenged and undermined in the Fresh Expressions of Church *generally;* there are of course some notable exceptions. Respondents from Church N hold to an extremely high commitment to Anglican commitments regarding the Bible despite their low rating of 'being Anglican'. So also the commitments at Church K are indicative of a commitment to the unity of the Bible. More broadly though, if practice indeed follows commitment, then the Old Testament is being silenced. While IC-X's respondents have espoused a high commitment to the Bible across its subcategories, we should not read too much into the commitment to and use of the Bible across the inherited church from this one church; the data from this church needs to be read in the light of its ecclesial commitments. IC-X is a strongly evangelical church; we would be surprised to see a lessened commitment to Scripture in the light of Evangelical claims of being the 'Bible' group within the Church. Further work is

[249] A Christological focus need not remove the Old Testament from usage – see the use of the Wisdom Literature among university student in the UK.
Jo Bailey Wells, "Ancient and Postmodern: Lessons from Wisdom for Ministry," in *Anglicanism: The Answer to Modernity*, ed. Duncan Dormor, Jack McDonald, and Jeremy Caddick (London: Continuum, 2003). pp.17-37.

required in understanding the commitment to and use of the Bible amongst the Inherited forms of the Anglican Church in Australia, and indeed internationally.

5.7 - Importance of using the Bible compared with the number of readings and books covered

We can begin to test the operational theology of the churches surveyed through their answer to the questions of what have they been reading as a Church over the last twelve months, and what they plan to read in the next twelve months.[250]

How then do we correlate the supposed importance of reading the breadth of Scripture with what has actually been read? In some cases this is not problematic – church N scored highest on their espoused valuing of the Bible and demonstrated this through listing an extremely broad list of Biblical material. Church A would seem to be at odds with their espoused importance regarding the Bible until we take additional information into account, such as it only meets monthly rather than weekly as church N does – the quantity of material read at that frequency of meeting will naturally be less. But how can church Q claim a high importance for their reading the breadth of the Bible in their church and yet have read only four books of the Bible? We see this also in church U which claimed a very high importance for its breadth of Bible reading but has read from only the Pentateuch and Acts, with a stated preference for having thematic talks in their group? Either they have overstated their espoused importance or have failed to fully report their reading. Curiously, IC-X claimed a high commitment to the use of the Bible but the respondents could only recall three books that they had read or preached on, and more worryingly, could not give any indication of what books they were likely to read in the next year.

5.8 - Importance of the Bible in shaping liturgy

With the exception of two churches (one of which is still in the process of trying to form a community and has no meetings or liturgy at this time) the churches as a whole expressed a strong espoused commitment to the use of the Bible in shaping their liturgy.[251] This commitment extended across all the different sub-traditions of identity. However this question does not allow us to explore what parts of Scripture they are using or being guided by in their liturgical work. If the same trends witnessed in the previous set carry over into the question of liturgy, we may find that liturgy amongst Fresh Expression churches is impoverished by its selection of Biblical texts to use. That said, here is a firm commitment to be tested through the second phase of this research – does their espoused theology match the operational theology?

Remembering its role as a control in this research it is worth reflecting on the results for IC-X who scored 9.6 of 10 in regard to this question. Given its use of traditional

[250] See Appendix 5 for the complete table.
[251] See Appendix 6

Anglican liturgy and high Evangelical commitments, IC-X espoused a very high commitment to the role of the Bible in its liturgy, though it was not the church with the strongest stated commitment. It is high, but was challenged for the top ranking by Church E (claiming 10/10). This highlights the necessity for fieldwork to compare the liturgical practices of these churches.

5.9 - Involvement of the Bishop

One of the views of Anglicanism's identity resides in its continuation of the episcopate – indeed at one end of the Anglican spectrum, Bishops are not simply a feature of the church, but a necessity for its essence.[252] If the Bible is not viewed by the Fresh Expression churches as one of the fulcrums of Anglican identity, then where is identity to be located? In the Episcopate? Just over half of the Fresh Expression churches in classes I and II placed the importance of Episcopate as being of less than average importance to them.[253] This is not a personal attack on their Bishops – the same question might even be answered in a similar manner among leaders in Inherited forms of Church, as seen by the importance ascribed to this by the respondents from IC-X. What is of interest to us is that the importance of the involvement of the Bishop was significantly less than that given to the Bible.

5.10 - Importance of the Bible beyond the liturgical service

Liturgy is not the only place where churches engage with Scripture – respondents were asked to rate the importance of the use of the Bible beyond the words of the liturgy itself in suggested activities such as the sermon, small groups, music and other meetings. The vast majority of the churches from classes I & II placed the Bible as being at a higher than average importance in their activities – with almost half of them placing it as being above 80%.[254] The question again becomes, is this purported importance going to be witnessed in their practice? From the espoused importance reported by churches E and IC-X would you expect to find a church in which the Bible is used in virtually every part of their programmes, liturgy, and ministry? Combine this with the answers of what parts of the Bible they have been reading and we see a picture of church that ascribes a high importance not only to the Bible but also appears to shape its practice in keeping with their beliefs. This pattern also appears to be repeated in churches N, A, and H. Churches M, K and W rate the use of the Bible in these activities as being of slightly more than average importance, whereas churches J, C and D see it as being of less than average importance. Perhaps significantly, alone of the churches surveyed, two of these three churches, when asked what parts of the Bible they had been reading, responded that they used the Lectionary. It would appear that Lectionary use might be seen to limit the Bible's use in the life of the Church – as long as the official readings have been done, 'all righteousness has been fulfilled'. Music, preaching, home groups, and staff meetings do not appear to connect with the Bible in these churches.

[252] Avis, *The Anglican Understanding of the Church: An Introduction*. p.19.
[253] See Appendix 7
[254] See Appendix 8

5.11 - General comments on Phase One results

This initial phase of research suggests that the Fresh Expressions of Church within the Anglican Church of Australia cannot simply be categorised as a simple homogeneous type. Their core self- understanding may include 'being Anglican' as a priority, or it may simply be one contributing element within the consciousness of their leadership. Using the Bible may be given a high importance, but when we begin to test practice we see division that marks a higher and lower practised theology of Scripture; of particular note was the profound silence from the Old Testament in many of these churches. The reported reading of the breadth of the Bible in some of these churches might be seen to be contributing to the very real problem of Biblical illiteracy. How are we to interpret this trend? Are the respondents in effect saying that the Old Testament is less important than the New Testament? Does their practice come from a concern that the people they are trying to reach are not familiar with the Old Testament and therefore do not use it as much as they would otherwise? Or, have they simply not seen fit to maintain a correspondence between their espoused theology and that which they practise? This highlights the need for further study into the practices of the Inherited Church – are the leaders within the Fresh Expression churches simply continuing the operational theology they have witnessed and practiced in their home churches and theological training? In its espoused commitments, IC-X has consistently indicated a strong usage of the Bible – as has been commented on previously, this is a helpful comparison for the Fresh Expression churches but should not be seen as indicative of the inherited church overall.

There are of course some very positive results here which would seem to validate the hypothesis we are testing, namely that the Fresh Expressions of Church are indeed legitimate expressions of the Anglican Church of Australia on the basis of their use of the Bible as put forward in the Anglican Formularies. Curiously, the churches that reported a high commitment to and high use of the Bible were not always those who felt a strong importance on 'being Anglican'. This serves to highlight the need to prioritise practice against sentiment; those churches which felt most strongly about Anglican identity were not those who had the most Anglican practices – Church J aptly highlights this point. They had the highest result for the importance of 'being Anglican' but were the second lowest respondent from Classes I and II (disregarding W for not actually having meetings at this stage) regarding the importance of reading a wide range of Biblical material. They did place a high priority on using the Bible to shape their liturgy, but we are left with the question of whether they have impoverished liturgy by limiting the scriptural elements they draw from. Outside of their formal liturgy, they seem to place little importance on using the Bible in their church's activities. There is the issue of whether one can be both

Anglican and biblical, but as argued by Colin Buchanan these categories are not incompatible.[255]

Of those churches surveyed, the following are particular worthy of further comment:

Church H placed a low importance on Anglican identity and the role of the Episcopate, but claimed a very high importance on both using the constituent parts of the Bible and shaping their liturgy by it. Their reported reading list argues for their commitment to these principles.

Church N likewise placed low importance on Anglican identity, but scored extremely highly for their breadth of Biblical commitment, for shaping their liturgy by the Bible, and also for using the Bible beyond the liturgy. This was evidenced in their impressive list of books of the Bible read in the last twelve months.

Church M is somewhat unusual; they placed a high importance on Anglican identity, on having a broad use of Biblical genres, and for shaping their liturgy with the Bible. They ascribed moderate to high importance to episcopal involvement and for using the Bible beyond the liturgy, but these espoused beliefs seem to falter when they actually list what parts of the Bible they have used in their common life. They listed very few books they had read, preferring to describe their pattern of teaching around topical or thematic talks. Anglican identity seems not to have resulted in the Anglican principal of reading large amounts of the Bible in a continuous ordered way.

Church E rated Anglican identity as of low importance, but like H and N ascribed high importance to using the breadth of Biblical material, in shaping their liturgy, and in their meetings beyond just the liturgy. Their reported reading suggests a strong correspondence between their espoused and operational theologies of Scripture.

Church A claimed a strong correspondence between a high importance on Anglican identity and their espoused theology of Scripture and their liturgical practice, as well as using the Bible beyond the liturgy. Their reading list was however truncated compared to others, but this may be explained by the fact that this church only meets monthly whereas the others meet on a weekly basis.

Church J placed a high value on being Anglican and in shaping their liturgy with the Bible. There was a drop off though in the breadth of Biblical material they were engaging with and a low importance placed on using the Bible beyond the liturgy. As discussed previously, their reported Bible reading was limited to their lectionary usage. It is worth noting that all three respondents described their Bible reading as being directed by the lectionary and all failed to actually list any books of the Bible itself.

[255] Buchanan, *Is the Church of England Biblical?: An Anglican Ecclesiology*.

Two of the churches of note are amongst the three Fresh Expression churches that I conducted further research amongst in the second phase (these being M and N) . Constrained by both time and geography, I chose to limit myself to those churches that I could reasonably attend. The third Fresh Expression Church I chose to conduct participant-observation research in was Church C.

Church C placed a very low importance on being Anglican, and only ascribed average importance to engaging with a broad range of Biblical material. This was supported by their reading over the last twelve months which only named three books of the Bible and their inability to list what they planned to read in the next twelve months. While they ascribed a high importance to shaping their liturgy with the Bible, their use of the Bible beyond that was low.

We cannot view these churches in isolation and therefore as noted previously. To establish a point of connection with broader Anglicanism I also conducted participant-observer research in an inherited form of the Australian Anglican church. One church alone will not allow us to grasp the patterns of Biblical usage in the wider Inherited Church; this example is to serve as a counterpoint to the Fresh Expressions churches. This church need only be committed to the following principles:

- Being a functioning and legal member of the Anglican Church of Australia
- Basing their liturgy in the authorised liturgy of the Anglican Church of Australia
- Not be described either by its members or external hierarchy as being a Fresh Expression of Church
- Operating under the normal ordinances of the parish system.

IC-X meets these requirements and is a suitable control against which to compare the Fresh Expression churches.

In conclusion then, what impression does the questionnaire data give us of the Fresh Expressions movement in Australia? Overall it holds Anglican identity lightly – with more attention being given to the sub-traditions within Anglicanism, in particular Evangelicalism, but with significance attached to the Charismatic and Emerging strands. There is a much stronger attention given to the New Testament than the Old. The role of the Bible is important, but it appears that this importance is more about the preaching of Scripture than the reading of Scripture - consider the Anglican matrix from Sykes and Leuenberger - Anglicanism is defined not merely by espoused belief but also by belief embodied in practice, combined with the understanding of Anglican liturgy being an artful arrangement of Biblical material and themes. While the churches agreed with the importance of using the Bible, the range of their material appears to be problematic. Frame's comments regarding the

place of the Bible in the Anglican Church in Australia seem to be applicable also to the Fresh Expressions also. But the questionnaire was chiefly concerned with reported espoused beliefs and practices. These claims remain untested at this point, which move us into the third element of the Whitehead's model – that of experience. What is needed is to test these beliefs, bringing them further into conversation with tradition, through the eyes of the researcher as embedded in these worshipping communities.

Chapter 6 - The Word in practice: embodied beliefs in liturgical life

In this chapter I will be explaining my participant-observer work in understanding the Anglican identity of the Fresh Expression Churches, building on my initial data from the questionnaire. Following this, I will be discussing my observations from the churches I attended.

6.1 - Participant-observation in Fresh Expression churches

What is it that necessitates the physical presence of the researcher to undertake participant-observation in a church? Churches, even from the same denomination, are not simply carbon-copies of each other. While the label of 'Anglican' is helpful, the nomenclature does not tell you everything about any given church; 'Anglican' is not the ecclesial equivalent of McDonald's Restaurants. In the fast food formula, there is a universalism that pervades the experience – menu, *décor*, and ambience are all regulated and controlled. You go into one of the chain and you know what to expect. But is this true for Anglicanism? Granted, there is likely to be a degree of conformity or familiarity through common worship, but each church is an unrepeatable community. Each community has its own history, and particular issues that are distinct to them. Being part of each community for the participant-observation process matters beyond simply trying to gather data that participants answering questions might overlook – the questionnaire is likely to operate at an *etic* level. While trying to ask about the participants and their churches in a sensitive manner, I run the risk of imposing language and assumptions onto them. Participant observation allows for an *emic* view – not simply what occurs with the Bible in a given Church, but what meaning and significance are given to those actions and events by the participants. Thus, in seeking to understand how the Bible is being used amongst Fresh Expression churches, we cannot ignore the questions of what significance is attached to these uses, and where the church is located. This issue of location matters most profoundly in Anglicanism: Avis holds that the church is incarnational by shaping its liturgy according to the situation of each autonomous province.[256] The Anglican units of Diocese and parish refer not to the constituent members, as one might find in a non-conformist tradition, but to the geographic territory that they cover.[257] Louise Lawrence, writing about how the Bible reader's context affects interpretation, submits that: 'Christians are a storied people, called to live out 'good news' within their day-to-day lives and allowing that story to identify, expose and challenge those alternative cultural stories that do not promote authentic manifestations of 'place' within their contexts'.[258] Moreover what Lawrence

[256] Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology*. p.51.
[257] Podmore, *Aspects of Anglican Identity*. p.82.
[258] Louise J. Lawrence, *The Word in Place: Reading the New Testament in Contemporary Contexts* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2009). p.135.

outlines regarding Christian discipleship is a vital insight for Fresh Expression churches tasked with engaging with the unchurched and de-churched to generate new Christian communities:

> …Christian formation needs to take something akin to 'cross-cultural' training seriously to tool and enable people to 'discern the word' in different contexts to render in contextually appropriate forms 'the poiesis and the praxis, the truth and the justice of God'.[259]

Incarnational missional theology and praxis demand the researchers' presence, not just their attention from afar. The context for each given church is key. Consider a church planted amongst university students. Literacy can be assumed, as can comprehension. We would feel safe in assuming that this grouping may on their own be able to integrate different theological texts. The use of the Bible amongst such a group is going to stand in sharp contrast with a church planted in an area of social disadvantage where education cannot be assumed, neither basic skills such as reading nor the higher capacity to integrate what is read or heard. A sensitive approach, an incarnationally informed approach, to both situations will be required for either church to 'go indigenous'. Both churches may be planted by an Anglican pioneer ministry. Both may be committed to being part of the Anglican family, but each will be different. The researchers' presence in either context will help determine whether the practices of these nascent Christian communities are congruous with espoused Anglican belief.

Undergirding the need to be physically present and not simply rely on questionnaire data is the observation that the Bible is not simply a book – it is as much a religious symbol itself as a crucifix, a totem, or Aboriginal cave art. Geertz posited that:

> …sacred symbols function to synthesize a people's ethos – the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood – and their world-view – the picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive ideas of order. In religious belief and practice a group's ethos is rendered intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life ideally adapted to the actual state of affairs the world-view describes, while the world-view is rendered emotionally convincing by being presented as an image of an actual state of affairs peculiarly well arranged to accommodate such a way of life. This confrontation and mutual confirmation has two fundamental effects. On the one hand, it objectivizes moral and aesthetic preferences by depicting them as the imposed conditions of life implicit in a world with a particular structure, as mere common sense given the unalterable shape of reality. On the other, it supports these received beliefs about the world body by invoking deep felt moral and aesthetic sentiments as

[259] Ibid. p.142.

> experiential evidence for their truth. Religious symbols formulate a basic congruence between a particular style of life and a specific (if, most often, implicit) metaphysic, and in so doing sustain each with the borrowed authority of the other.[260]

The Christian tradition is based around the idea that God is self-revealing through Scripture and through the person of God the Son incarnate as the human being Jesus of Nazareth – something itself that is promised, described and explained in Scripture. By Geertz's definition, the way in which the object and the content of the Bible are handled expresses how members of a church make sense of the universe and structure their lives individually and corporately. Seeing the Bible itself as a symbol means that the treatment of the Bible can therefore never be a casual or unimportant element in construing the theology of a given church. Geertz draws our attention to appreciate that a group's ontology and cosmology relate not simply to how they construct their morality, but is also the principle that undergirds their aesthetics;[261] working backwards from what is seen allows us to better assess what initially comes across through verbal or written communication regarding belief. How this occurs in practice necessitates the researchers' presence amongst the communities being considered.

Bernard warns that the amount of time spent doing field research makes a significant difference in the information disclosed by the people and communities being studied; more sensitive issues are only likely to be picked up on or disclosed in studies with a longer period of fieldwork.[262] The time periods I spent with the selected churches were much shorter than even a year; however what I am testing is not as sensitive as attitudes to sexuality or political feuds;[263] nor was I seeking to uncover attitudes to the Bible, but the practices of Bible reading against the Anglican Church of Australia's formal position. Because multiple groups are being considered, the time given to each community is of course limited compared to traditional longitudinal ethnographic research.

While as a researcher I may be considered as an 'outsider' by some in the communities I will be considering, I am also an 'insider', at least institutionally.[264] I have been ordained into the same organisation that they belong to, my office is transferable to any part of the Anglican communion – and I know the Anglican 'system' with which the leadership of the church must necessarily engage. Moreover, my status focuses the issue of my reflexivity as a researcher; who I am and my position with the denomination should not be hidden or disclosed as a means

[260] Clifford Geertz, *Clifford Geertz: Selected Writings* (Bhubaneswar: MAYUR Publications, 2005). pp.11-12.
[261] Ibid. p.58
[262] Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. p.140.
[263] Ibid.
[264] Elizabeth Arweck and Martin D. Stringer, eds., *Theorising Faith: The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Ritual* (Birmingham: Univesity of Birmingham Press,2002). pp.1-17.

of aspiring to an unbiased perspective. These are factors that contribute to and shape the research, as Pink notes:

> Reflexivity goes beyond the researcher's concern with questions of 'bias' or how ethnographers observe the 'reality' of a society; they actually 'distort' through their participation in it. Moreover, reflexivity is not simply a mechanism that neutralises ethnographers' subjectivity as collectors of data through an engagement with how their presence may have affected the reality observed and the data collected. Indeed, the assumption that a reflexive approach will aid ethnographers to produce objective data represents only a token and cosmetic engagement with reflexivity that wrongly supposes subjectivity could (or should) be avoided or eradicated. Instead, subjectivity should be engaged with as a central aspect of ethnographic knowledge, interpretation and representation.[265]

In 1999 Martin D. Stringer published an ethnographic account dealing with how the members of four churches from different denominations and traditions understood the meaning and purpose of their worship meetings.[266] I want to consider Stringer's work before turning to my own observations to highlight the methodological similarities and differences.

Stringer's interest lay not in what was performed by the congregation so much as in how the participants understood that worship. This was established not through looking at the authorised texts of liturgy, but by being present as a participant-observer in their worship and through interviews with informants from these congregations. Instead of asking what the service's significance or meaning was from the perspective of the tradition or even of the leader of the congregation (the question of from which '*stance*' the meaning of worship is to be received)[267], Stringer sought to answer his question of what worship meant to the worshippers themselves.[268] As he points out, too much of the discourse within liturgical studies and anthropology has neglected the personal significance of worship for the worshippers, concentrating instead upon the text of worship or the opinions only of authorised leaders.[269] Each of the four churches was from a different denomination, with six months allocated to each church.[270]

I have been testing normative theology against local practice, allocating one month to each church; in this I was restricted in part owing to the manner in which I have undertaken my research. The DThM is normally a part-time degree for people

[265] Sarah Pink, *Doing Visual Ethnography: Images, Media and Representation in Research* (London: SAGE Publications, 2007). p.23.
[266] Stringer, *On the Perception of Worship*.
[267] Ibid. p.62-63.
[268] Ibid. p.1
[269] Ibid. p.64.
[270] Ibid. p.15.

continuing to work as ministry practitioners, whereas I have been researching as a full-time student. This actually makes a significant difference to the time frame which I was able to spend in the field (two years for research and writing rather than the four years, albeit part-time, that other students have had). Where Stringer needed to define what he meant by 'worship'[271] (a vexed issue across theological traditions), I have a much more tightly defined sphere of interest, namely how the Bible is being used across a spectrum of four Australian Anglican churches. Likewise, Stringer was concerned with how participants understood their worship; I am not interested in whether an individual or congregation 'feels Anglican' but whether or not their practices regarding the Bible are coherent with those of the Anglican Formularies. This is not to say that perception of Anglican identity is unimportant, but rather I have sought to establish this through the questionnaires sent to the congregational leaders and significant members. In regard to fieldwork however, where Stringer was concerned with perception, I have been focused on performance. Or expressed another way, Stringer's concern was the unofficial (and usually unrecognised) discourse regarding the meaning of worship, whereas I have been focusing on the official discourse of the performance of worship itself.[272] This distinction has an impact on the time required for the fieldwork. As Stringer notes, by its very nature the unofficial discourse of meaning is not writ large in ecclesiastical or liturgical text books, so the participant-observer must spend considerable time listening, observing and joining in to account for data.[273] Conversely, my concern has been much more accessible because it is limited to the actual performance of worship. The more vexing question from my perspective has been the definition of Anglican identity and how Anglicans in the inherited church are using the Bible, as construed by the various authors surveyed earlier. The goal in this research has been to understand the practices of these Fresh Expression churches. The debates about identity and legitimacy have been occurring chiefly at a theoretical level (as in Fergus King's 2011 article expanding on the objections of John Hull to *MSC*).[274] While my approach allows us to avoid a purely theoretical analysis of the Fresh Expressions of Church movement and Anglican identity, it too is not without its challenges. As Denzin points out, while methodological reflexivity alerts us to there being an objective reality for researchers to represent in their writings, it is one communicated through experience and culturally laden frameworks.[275] In other words, what I present is an honest account and analysis of my time as a participant-observer amongst these four churches, but it comes to the page mediated through my own ecclesial, academic and personal biography.[276]

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[271] Ibid. pp21-41.
[272] Ibid. p.69.
[273] Ibid. p.74.
[274] Fergus J King, "Mission-Shaped or Paul-Shaped? Apostolic Challenges to the Mission-Shaped Church," *Journal of Anglican Studies* 1, no. 1.
[275] Norman K. Denzin, *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1997). p.219.
[276] Deborah E. Reed-Danahay, ed. *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the Self and the Social* (Oxford: Berg,1997). p.2.

There is always the very real problem that my own 'shadow' can obscure the very practices I wish to observe.[277] At the very least, by focusing solely on the question of Scripture usage, I have blinded both myself and my readers to other dimensions of these churches that may directly support or conflict with the question of Anglican identity. However as Stevens comments:

> Writers are not mirrors, not reflectors, but creators. This creativity does not invalidate the knowledge that writers produce, as if the presence of the writer somehow made knowledge less authentic. Instead, writers' creativity gives their knowledge the ability to become a new invention, something different, but nonetheless connected to other meanings through a complex web of relationships.[278]

Following McLean, my method is to relate my observations as honestly as I can, recognising how my own experience has shaped my understanding.[279]

6.1.1 - The tyranny of distance

In Chapter Two I stated that one of the difficulties in undertaking this research in Australia was the scale of the country.[280] Australia has been calculated to be 7,741,220 km^2, while the United Kingdom is 243,610 km^2.[281] Compare this to the work of Peter Bowes who undertook research in a single deanery in the Diocese of York[282] and my decision not to select the participating churches solely on the basis of their questionnaire data is better understood. In my initial process of locating the Fresh Expression churches an assistant Bishop had recommended one particular church to me for study. His description, together with the church's questionnaire data did indeed suggest them as a strong lead to follow. But to attend a single service (running for ninety minutes) would have required an eight to nine hour round trip. I would have had to make the trip on at least four different occasions in order to attend the requisite number of services. Despite a strong data set I was forced to reject it for study on the basis of distance. The key feature of church selection became reasonable ease of access – did they fall within an achievable commuting distance? It is difficult to say much beyond this as a general principle without endangering the anonymity of the participating churches. For the same reason I will not be commenting on the parent Dioceses of these churches, nor the churches' geographic locations. The congregations considered herein represent the best

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[277] A. McLean and A. Leibing, *The Shadow Side of Fieldwork: Exploring the Blurred Borders between Ethnography and Life* (Wiley, 2008). p.3.
[278] S.G. Brown and S.I. Dobrin, *Ethnography Unbound: From Theory Shock to Critical Praxis* (State University of New York Press, 2004). p.169.
[279] McLean and Leibing, *The Shadow Side of Fieldwork: Exploring the Blurred Borders between Ethnography and Life*. p.281.
[280] See 2.3 - Research Methods.
[281] "The World Factbook: Country Comparison: Area," Central Intelligence Agency, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2147rank.html.
[282] Peter Bowes, "Future Church: Envisioning the Church of England in Southern Ryedale in the Second Decade of the 21st Century." (Durham University, 2012).

possible diversity of Fresh Expression churches within a reasonable commute. The questionnaire data assists in considering how these individual churches fit in the greater Fresh Expressions movement in Australian Anglicanism.

6.2 - Inherited Church X (IC-X)

The Inherited Church that I attended is one of three congregations from a large evangelical church in a suburban area. There are approximately 150 worshippers present each week in this congregation, most of whom are retirees (or people late in their careers). However there are increasingly a number of young families present who have come from the other two services (because their children wake early or would not tolerate being up for the youth and young adult service in the evenings). There is a good balance of male and female in the congregation; there is also a very high proportion of professionals present. The church meets in a fairly modern building built around thirty years ago. The space is open with movable chairs rather than pews; the front of the church is dominated by a large solid lectern, behind which is the Communion Table. It is at this lectern that the service leader, readers and preacher all stand for their roles; physically the space communicates that the Bible is central to their identity and practices. The church of which IC-X is a part has a strong evangelical identity which permeates all three of its congregations. The other two congregations are a family focused service that follows in the morning (after the service attended for this research) and a youth/young adults service in the evening.

Each of the three congregations has its own liturgical style, this one being the most formal and the one with the most overt use of Anglican liturgy. The service, readings and books are all presented to the congregation via a display on an overhead screen. Despite the words of the readings being projected onto the screen, I noted that many people bring their own Bibles to the service although the exact numbers are difficult to know. This reminded me more of being in a Baptist church than a traditional Anglican one – there is a deliberate Bible focus here, at least on a physical level, though curiously there is no large Church Bible on the lectern; the accessibility of the Bible seems more important than the Bible as a singular object.

The following information comes from the 2011 Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures,[283] however to prevent disclosure of the exact location specific web address information has not been provided. By way of context, I will be comparing these with the 2001 ABS data. However I note that comparisons between the two Censuses need to be read cautiously as the delineation of occupations has changed over the intervening decade.

IX-C's geographic context closely follows the levels of males and females (male 49.6%, female 50.4%) to both its immediate broader urban geographic context (49.5% and 50.5% respectively) , and also compared to the national average (male 49.4%, female 50.6%). This saw a slight change in the 2001 results with males at 48% and females at 51.4% in the suburb.

Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders in IX-C's geographic setting have slightly higher representation (2.2%) compared to the broader urban context (1.5%), and is

[283] http://www.abs.gov.au/

marginally lower than the national figure (2.5%). This is only a minor increase on the 2001 rate of 1.4%

The country of birth data shows that people living in IX-C's immediate context are most likely to have to been born in Australia (76.9%) compared with both its broader urban context (71.4%), and the national population (69.8%). This is marginally down from 77.3% in 2001. Those born outside of Australia were most likely to come from England (4.3%, compared to 4.2% nationally); New Zealand (1.3% compared to 2.2% nationally); India (0.9% compared to 1.4% nationally); Scotland (0.8% compared to 0.6% nationally); and Italy (0.8% compared to 0.9% nationally). The 'White Australian' image conjured by these figures resonated with my observations at the services I attended. This marked some variation in ethnic representation in the area – in 2001 the top five countries of birth other than Australia were England (4.7%), New Zealand (1.0%), Scotland (1.0%), Germany (0.8%), and Italy (0.8%.

Unemployment in IC-X's immediate setting (3%, down from 5.1% in 2001) runs lower than that in the broader urban context (3.6%) and the national figure (5.6%). Professionals made up 25.7% (compared to 21.3% nationally); Clerical roles were 19.8%, (14.7% nationally); Managers 13.6% (12.9% nationally); Trades People were 11.5% (14.2% nationally); Community and Service Workers 10.2% (14.2 nationally); Sales Workers were 8.2% (9.4% nationally); while Labourers made up only 5.0% (9.4% nationally). In 2001, Professionals were 15%, Clerical roles 13.3%, Managers 6.5%, Tradespeople 6%. Demographic shifts are harder to consistently measure between the censuses as how the differing categories are defined changes. In 2001 Intermediate Clerical and Associate Professionals were distinct categories that have disappeared from the breakdown in 2011. My reading is that the region has not undergone a move to a more professional orientation, but rather, how roles themselves are assessed has changed. The income per household was higher than the national average, but slightly lower than the average given for the broader urban context of which FXC-C is a subset.

Marginally more professed no religious affiliation (27.7%) compared to the national figure (22.3%). There is a significant increase from 2001 when 18.4% claimed no religion. The rate of people identifying as Anglican (17.2%) was almost identical to the national rate (17.1%), this was down slightly from 2001 when the rate was 20.6%. This drop in religious affiliation was present across the denominations, representative of a lessened commitment to organised religion overall, rather than the catastrophic decline of a single institution.

By way of social context, the IC-X is in a suburban parish in an area with a large number of professionals, though there are a number of tradespeople in the area as well (much higher levels than shown in FXC-C's geographic context). The church appears to be representative of its setting, but is socially disconnected from it. The church's strongest links are with an adjacent independent Christian school. Though

not a universal feature, both have a number of strong Young Earth Creationists. While friendly and welcoming, the IC-X has a sectarian feel to it: the congregation is representative of a conservative Evangelical view of the Bible; for some in the congregation this is expressed through an extremely strong complementarian view on gender and ministry. Doctrinal purity and their understanding of 'holy living' in contrast to the world are core to understanding this church's relationship as being 'against' its geographical and social setting. While the current incumbent does not hold this view, it still undergirds much of the congregation's position.

6.2.1 - Questionnaire profile

The data provided by the respondents indicates IC-X is a church that is strongly evangelical in its identity, coupled with a reasonably strong appreciation for being Anglican. This identity can be seen as partisan against other traditions within the denomination; one of the recipients had not only assigned a low score to 'being Catholic' but had written in Anglo-Catholic to reinforce the point. This sense of Evangelical first, Anglican second, and a total rejection of other strands within Anglicanism is a consistent feature, with the lowest possible scores being assigned to the other traditions. The data was indicative of a very high espoused commitment to the use of the Bible across the breadth of both the Testaments, and within their constituent books; while the Old Testament scored slightly less, there was a strong espoused commitment to 'proclaiming the whole counsel of God'. They were however only able to list three books that had been preached on; although there are two points to note. Firstly, all three respondents interpreted the question in terms of what books had been preached on rather than what books had been read. Secondly, IC-X tends to have long sermon series, so the listing of only three books is not an unreasonable response to this question. This is a curious Evangelical phenomenon; does Scripture only matter if it is preached on? Why is this? Why is there such an abundance of Evangelical Anglican publications on preaching?[284] One senses here the inheritance of the early English Christian humanists, for whom the accessibility of God's word through a variety of mediums would result in the reformation of English society.[285] The English Reformation set as its prize the exposure of the English people to the Bible so as to renew the faith and godliness of the nation - MacCulloch describes Cranmer's goal as creating a 'morning marathon of prayer, scripture reading and praise, consisting of matins, litany, and ante-communion,

[284] As evidenced in: Peter Adam, *Speaking God's Words : A Practical Theology of Preaching* (Leicester: IVP, 1996).
Donald Howard, ed. *Preach or Perish: Reaching Hearts and Minds of the World Today* (Camden: Donald Owen Howard & Nan Elizabeth Howard,2008).
Keith Weller, ed. *'Please! No More Boring Sermons': Preaching for Australians - Contemporary Insights and Practical Aspects* (Brunswick East: Acorn Press Ltd,2007).
Keith Weller and Adrian Lane, eds., *'Better Be a Good Sermon': Preaching for Special Occasions and Contexts* (Brunswick East: Acorn Press Ltd,2011).
Guerin Tueno, "An Instrument for Reviewing Preaching in the Anglican Church" (Master of Minstry Research Project, Charles Sturt University, 2009).
[285] Maria Dowling, "Cranmer as Humanist Reformer," in *Thomas Cranmer: Churchman and Scholar*, ed. Paul Ayris and David Selwyn (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1993). pp.89, 110-113.

preferably as the matrix for a sermon to proclaim the message of scripture anew week by week…'.[286] Despite verbal appeals to the efficacious nature of the Bible, do Evangelicals not hold to this doctrine in their practice? A more generous interpretation might be to see preaching itself as a model of how God communicates in Scripture itself – God sends not simply a book, but people to explain, illustrate, and apply it also. It is worth remembering O'Donovan's point that the Anglican reformers were not primarily concerned with ensuring preaching but with hearing the Scriptures[287] - though this arises out of a time when the Bible that people heard in church was the Vulgate in a language that was not 'vulgar'. Similarly, none of the respondents was able to identify what books would be read and preached on in the next twelve months. They state that IC-X normally has three readings. Looking beyond the readings to the liturgy itself, the respondents ascribed nearly the maximum score to the importance of the Bible in the shaping of liturgy; what this data doesn't answer is what they understand by the Bible in the liturgy. Are they thinking of the importance of having readings and a sermon, or are they thinking of the architecture of the liturgy itself, and the usage of the Bible as the divine voice with God as a participant in the meeting too – Bartlett's point about worship being responsive relies on having the divine word to respond to.[288] What comes through from the questionnaires is that in their self-understanding, these people see themselves as giving the Bible central importance in their common life. They believe they structure their discipleship through it, and they prioritise its usage across the spectrum of their activities.

6.2.2 - The familiarity of the liturgy

IC-X's mandate is to provide traditional worship in the Anglican tradition, using the orders of service contained in the current Australian Prayer Book (APBA). I have grown up in the Anglican Church of Australia, and its wording has had a profound impact on my own spirituality; indeed in choosing to put myself forward as a candidate for ordination I chose to embrace the discipline and approach of Anglican liturgy. Attending IC-X for this research was familiar territory for me, simply because I did not have to guess what element of the service was going to come next, allowing me instead to concentrate on how the Bible was being used in it.

6.2.3 - God's call to worship

Does it matter how a worship service starts? For three years I attended a Baptist church and the service always began the same way – the musicians would play. Three to four choruses would then be sung after which the service leader would greet people and mention what the pastor would be speaking on that night. Anglican worship may begin with a personal greeting from the service leader (i.e. '*Good morning and welcome to St Bartholomew's*') but by the Prayer Book its first movement is Scriptural. Indeed, IC-X's started with a reading from Scripture which

[286] MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*. p.511.
[287] O'Donovan, *On the Thirty-Nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity*. p.50.
[288] Bartlett, *A Passionate Balance: The Anglican Tradition*. p.171.

functioned as a greeting or exhortation from God. Whether this was to remind the congregation of their identity and status through God's redemptive work (1 Peter 2:9-10; 1 Peter 1:3), or of God's attitude towards his people (2 Corinthians 13:14) was not commented on, rather the passage's message was left open for listeners to ponder. I found the use of Scripture in this way particularly striking in my third week there, when the service began with quotes from Psalm 105:1-3 and 1 Peter 2:9 which communicated both that our reason for gathering was to praise God for his works, and that our identity is as of God's people, holy and rescued to bring God praise. These were not always comfortable words; they also carried with them weighty expectation, as in the reading of Jesus' Great Commandments (Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:30-31).

These Biblical words all called for response, which the congregation proceeded to do with further words from Scripture about God or about their intention in meeting with God. This was quite stark after the Great Commandments as, rather than proceeding with a worshipful song in response, the congregation responded with the Collect for Purity. In other weeks, the Psalms, as the Biblical hymn book, were used to frame the congregational response to the opening words of Scripture.[289]

There is a logical progression between the elements – this is not the quoting of a Psalm or passage because it featured in the service leader's devotional readings during the week and which they now wished to share. There is a progressive conversation going on between the liturgical elements and the Scriptural passages that frame them. People gather to be told that this is no ordinary meeting but an assembly of God's chosen and holy people. God's saving works are alluded to or named directly and praise is the fitting response. God's holy nature and standards are on display and people who are justified by faith in Christ rather than their own works respond with humble prayer and confession.

What was impressed on me through this was the idea that the service was not simply worship *of God* but a meeting *with God*. There is in Anglican liturgy a consciousness that worship is not something that we perform for God, but something we do with him, as he leads us through the use of Scripture in liturgy.

6.2.4 - Confession/absolution

The idea that the service exists as a dynamic conversation between God and the people through Scripture is confirmed as the service continues in the confession and absolution of the services at IC-X. When the service leader declared that 'The Bible tells us to approach God confidently…' this was not done on the basis of the quality or volume of the congregation's singing or the sincerity of their prayers, but rather, as has been evident throughout the liturgy, on the basis of God's saving action in Jesus, the principle being that God through Scripture directs the service and gives us both the means and the motivation for our liturgical actions. We see this in the

[289] The Psalms used in this way were: Psalm 95 (Week 1); Psalms 51 and 118 (Week 2).

liturgy across my time at IC-X, with perhaps the clearest expression of this principle coming during a Morning Prayer service. The service leader read from 1 John 1:8-9 to annunciate our need for confession and then after the common confession had been read, assured us of our forgiveness through the comforting words of 1 John 2:1-2. The sense here is that Scripture is in conversation with Scripture – the motivation for confession and our assurance of forgiveness are related through a common Scriptural source. Likewise, at the other Morning Prayer service that I attended, the service leader introduced confession using Hebrews 4:16. After the confession and the declaration of forgiveness Hebrews 7:25 was used to demonstrate that forgiveness was granted by God, not because of the service leader announcing it, but because of the Biblical understanding of the work of Christ.

However this dynamic was broken at the two Communion services I attended. In one, the service leader recited the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17); in response to this presentation of *Torah*, the congregation then recited a prayer of confession that was followed by the service leader pronouncing the Absolution. While biblically resonant there was however no Scripture paired with the Absolution this week – my sense was that this weakened the pattern – what picture of God is presented if only confession is given a Biblical mandate? How certain is the declaration of forgiveness? What seemed to be being communicated was more of a Biblical condemnation of sin, rather than a declaration of forgiveness. For a long-term attendee, this might be unimportant given the usual practice I encountered at IC-X, but I wonder what it would communicate to a newcomer or casual visitor.

The other Communion service presented a different challenge; after reading out the Pauline warnings about eating and drinking unworthily (1 Corinthians 11:26-30), the congregation moved into a time of confession, as was appropriate as a prerequisite for partaking in the Supper. However, it was not tied to the same passage of Scripture for its absolution or comforting words. Instead, the words of the absolution drew up allusions to Exodus 34:6, Psalms 103, 86, and 145, all read through a New Testament understanding of the person and work of Christ as the climax of God's saving work. This announcement of forgiveness was reinforced through quotations from John 3:16 and 1 Peter 2:24. The strength of this was that it brought a variety of elements of Scripture into conversation with each other; the weakness was that the internal logic of the individual passage (1 Corinthians 11) was broken.

6.2.5 - Intercessions

Perplexingly, the dynamic wherein God speaks and we respond by echoing the words of Scripture broke down at the Intercessions. There was no Scriptural call to prayer, just the service leader saying that a congregational member would continue to lead us in prayer. This time of prayer was always concluded with the congregation reciting the Lord's Prayer.

In one service there was an exception to this when in addition to the Lord's Prayer we prayed guided by the words of Scripture, beginning with a quotation from Psalm 57:

> Leader: Be exalted, Lord, above the heavens,
>
> Congregation: Let your glory cover the earth.
>
> L: Keep our nation under your care,
>
> C: And guide us in justice and truth.
>
> L: Let your way be known on earth,
>
> C: Your saving power among all nations.
>
> L: Send out your light and your truth
>
> C: That we may tell of your saving works.
>
> L: Have mercy on the poor and oppressed.
>
> C: Hear the cry of those in need.
>
> L: Hear our prayers, O Lord,
>
> C: For we put our trust in you.[290]

We then read the collect of the day together, after which a member of the congregation led us in the Intercessions. These culminated in the service leader saying a prayer with strong references to Matthew 18:20, Mark 10:30 and Luke 18:30:

> Lord, you have given us grace to agree in these our prayers and you have promised to grant the requests of two or three gathered in Your name. Fulfil now, Lord, our desires and prayers as may be best for us. Grant us in this life knowledge of Your truth, and in the age to come, life eternal. Amen.[291]

Why this matters is that Scripture is our tutor in worshipping God – in our approach, in our praise, and in our address to him. Praying without the words of Scripture is not wrong in a moral sense, but it leaves the congregation to its own devices in saying appropriate common prayer. As Peter Adam rightly comments:

> …the people of God are taught and edified not only by the reading and preaching of Scripture, but also by the Bible-shaped response they make in the words they say in the services. It is the book of 'Common Prayer',

[290] IC-X 4
[291] IC-X 4

not least in that prepared prayers enable the congregation to say the prayers together, whereas spontaneous prayers preclude this practice.[292]

6.2.6 - Holy Communion

Both of the Holy Communion services followed the authorised liturgy of the current Australian Anglican Prayer book, and were steeped in Biblical language, imagery and allusion. This is significant because the nature and meaning of the Eucharist are disputed between (and in) church traditions. While not precluding such discussion and even disagreements within the Anglican Church of Australia, the use of Scripture in the liturgy frames the observance and meaning of the Lord's Supper within Scriptural boundaries.[293] This is done though rehearsing elements from the Gospels and Epistles, also most importantly by quoting Jesus' words at the Last Supper (as recorded by the Gospel writers) and 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

As well as anamnesis through rehearsing Jesus' words, we experience prolepsis through the command to repeat sharing this meal until Christ comes again (1 Corinthians 11:26). Looking both back to the cross and forward to Christ's return, the congregation uses the words of Revelation 5:12 in affirmation of their faith and in celebration of the work of Christ. This is then followed by the Pauline reminder of our unity with each other and with God from 1 Corinthians 10:17 – 'we are one body for we all share in the one bread'. Here we see Peter Adam's comment with particular poignancy. This verbal response, combined with a sharing in the Peace before Communion, means that Communion cannot be interpreted in simply binary fashion (between God and the individual), but must also have a horizontal dimension – the Eucharist is a common action by the congregation *with* God, remembering God's own saving work.

Likewise, the Bible is used to guide the congregation in how we should continue to respond after the Communion rite; led by the priest, the congregation responded with a prayer that has strong allusions to 1 Peter 2:5. The priest led the congregation in responding to Christ's sacrificial death with our own worship ('…accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving…'). This idea was echoed immediately afterward with another congregational prayer that uses the language of Romans 12:1, declaring our intent to be 'living sacrifices' to God.

6.2.7 - Dismissal

How a service ends is important. In my own pastoral work I have helped oversee a youth and young adults' congregation; the service is styled as being non-liturgical, which in practice means that the official liturgy exists but has not been written down. In that congregation I observed that the various service leaders all imitated a previous minister in their wording – 'Let's go out tonight remembering what [the preacher] said – that [a memorable line from the sermon]'. In that setting, the

[292] Peter Adam, *The Very Pure Word of God: The Book of Common Prayer as a Model of Biblical Liturgy* (Latimer House, Oxford, 2012). p.53.
[293] Ibid. pp.25-32.

preacher has replaced Scripture as the voice of God. This is not the model found in historic Anglican liturgy which uses biblical doxologies or direct quotes to conclude the service, the idea being either that the congregation are sent out by God or that the congregation reflects Biblical truth back to God and are sent out in Christ's name.

What then does IC-X practice? Twice we were addressed with a quotation from Scripture (Numbers 6:22-26 and Jude 24-25). Once we were given a Trinitarian blessing – while not a quotation, it expresses Biblical truth, but without the Biblical wording.

Anglican liturgy has a progressive logic to it, culminating in God's people being sent out again into God's world. The words of Dismissal are the last official part of the liturgy before people either leave or share refreshments together. Peace is an important Biblical concept (i.e., Romans 5) but there is far greater potential to use the words of Scripture than is being done in half of the services at which I was present. As a participant, to me it felt anticlimactic to finish without the words of Scripture.

6.2.8 - Scripture readings

As witnessed in its liturgy, IC-X expresses a strong Anglican identity that far exceeds the stated level of importance held by the questionnaire respondents. The formal ministry of the Word in which Scripture was read and preached upon was very much consistent with, and an adornment to, the overall content and direction of the service; there was no sense over my time there that the Bible usage was limited to the readings.

The Psalms were a consistent feature of the services, but their use was also a complicating factor in the use of the Old Testament generally. For example, in my first week there the service featured a responsive reading of Psalm 95 by the service leader and the congregation. Later in the service, the Old Testament reading was itself a Psalm (Psalm 29) – the preacher was speaking on the topic of worship, and the Psalm was chosen by him as a foundation for the sermon. But this meant that while a large amount of material from the Psalms had been heard, no other Old Testament material was heard that week; in the subsequent weeks there was no formal reading of a whole Psalm, but there were elements of common reading and worship in weeks three and four (Psalms 119:25-31 and 71 respectively).

After the first week, there was a consistent use of the Old Testament in IC-X's services; in week two the preacher was speaking about Communion. The Old Testament reading for the service was Exodus 12:12-20. This suggested a strong unity between the Testaments – a key Anglican feature [294] - the theology of the Lord's Supper does not come solely from the canonical Gospels and 1 Corinthians. The New Testament understanding of anamnesis comes from the Israelite rehearsal

[294] Articles of Religion VI & VII

of God's saving act in the Passover. One person I spoke to after the service confided that:

> 'That was really helpful today; I'd never made the link between what the Jews did and what Jesus did.'[295]

The key element to notice is that the readings and preaching worked together to establish an intelligent and unified reading of the Bible.[296] In week three the church began a new series going through Romans 6-8. The Old Testament reading this week was Jeremiah 31:31-34 which supported the New Testament reading with God's promise of a new covenant with his people, and his law written on their hearts rather than merely on stone tablets. A similar pattern was present in week four when Ezekiel 11:11-21 was read to illustrate God's promise of hearts that live replacing cold dead hearts of stone fulfilled in the message of Romans.

The Epistle readings were present every week. In the first two weeks they were the primary platform for the preachers in their messages about the Biblical understanding of worship (Revelation 4:1-11) and the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-34); in the second half of my time there, the Epistle readings were the basis of the sermon series the whole church was having across its three congregations on Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

The outstanding issue here is the absence of the Gospel readings. Certainly, the Gospels were used in the liturgy, but as a feature of the dedicated 'Ministry of the Word' they were absent. Certainly, Jesus was central to each of the four sermons, and the preachers quoted the Gospels, but the public reading of the Gospels was a missing feature of the services. This absence was most noticeable in a traditional service format – the Gospel reading comes last as Jesus (God incarnate – the Word made flesh) is the pinnacle of God's revelatory work. Besides questions of legality and canon law, does the practice communicate a trumping of Gospel by Epistle?

Another key issue is raised by my time in IC-X is whether the sermon is considered more important than the readings. This is not to create a false dichotomy between the two, but simply the question of whether a reading from the Bible has meaning and significance in and of itself, or whether all the readings of a day should be yoked to the primary passage used by the preacher. IX-C's use of Scripture certainly can be described as intelligent, but with the exception of the series in Romans it was not a sequential reading of Scripture. But this problem is not unique to Evangelical parishes that replace the Revised Common Lectionary with a reading programme of their own devising: the Lectionary itself often subsumes the other readings around the Gospel readings (especially during important events in the Liturgical year) and also often pairs the two Testaments (i.e. the Psalm illustrates or interacts with the

[295] IC-X 9
[296] Varcoe, ed. *A Prayer Book for Australia: A Practical Commentary*. p.38.

Old Testament reading, while the Epistle reading serves a similar function to the Psalm, but in regard to the Gospel reading).

Reviewing the church's preaching programme suggests that they have engaged with the Gospels for extended periods, especially where they have formed the basis of a sermon series. While over the course of a year the congregation would be exposed to all four readings envisaged in the prayer books, the casual or irregular visitor would not necessarily witness the full breadth of Scripture. Does this matter? The person of Jesus was at the heart of all the sermons I heard; there was no doubt that Christ was central to this Christian gathering. But the lack of a dedicated Gospel reading slot (rather than just a generic New Testament one) has the potential to marginalise the person of Jesus. While it may be a false dichotomy, the question is still a helpful one – are the Pauline descriptions of the work of Jesus more important than the evangelists' depictions of Christ? As already noted, IC-X does indeed regularly engage with the Gospels, but in doing so it often loses one of the other classical Anglican categories of Scripture.

6.2.9 - The sermons

The first sermon I heard was on the topic of worship, which was in itself illuminating as to how both the individual minister and this particular church understand their liturgical work. The sermon drew from across the breadth of Scripture, which spoke to the unity of the Bible while maintaining a strong Christological focus. We were told that:

> Christ brings change to the Old Testament pattern of worship, but not to the necessity of worship.[297]

Moreover, the place of the Bible in Christian worship was elaborated on – the preacher was clear that Evangelicals were not bibliolaters - Scripture was central in our understanding of God, and moreover our attitude towards Scripture was indicative of our relationship with God himself:

> Just reading Scripture is an act of worship.[298]

> This is why in Protestant churches the Bible and pulpit are front and centre.[299]

It is worth noting here the alignment between the questionnaire data and the theology used in the sermon: this church is Evangelical/Protestant before it is Anglican. Note that the comment concerns Protestant churches, not all Anglican churches (either in Australia or across the Anglican Communion). In many Anglican parishes it is the Communion table that is 'front and centre' not the pulpit or lectern.

[297] IC-X 2
[298] IC-X 2
[299] IC-X 2

> We do not come to hear a lecture; we come to hear God speak.[300]

But as noted, is the conviction one of primacy of the passage of Scripture or of the preacher? While beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth considering what data would emerge if Stringer's methodology[301] were applied here. What meaning is attached by the congregation to the service? Would they believe that God had spoken if there had been no sermon and only readings? What is the connection between the passage and the sermon? At the level of practice though, this was clearly a church that was committed as per the Formularies to the reading and preaching of the Scriptures. *Contra* Archbishop Carnley's view that reduces the Bible to symbol and mystery,[302] Scripture is essential to the business of knowing of, relating to, and speaking about God, as one preacher made clear:

> Worship requires theology, which comes from God's Word.[303]

While there was a notable absence of the canonical Gospels in the period of time I was present as a researcher, I was able to find numerous past sermon series on the Gospels on IC-X's website that were available to download. Likewise, while there may indeed be some resonance with the caricature of Evangelicals in close orbit with the (Pauline) Epistles (especially Romans), in this case there is no substance to the charge of their not reading beyond this; their website includes much outside of this genre, from across the Biblical canon.

In their sermons the preachers were clearly committed to a unified reading of Scripture; there were never any attempts to set Jesus against Paul, or Old Testament against the New. Instead, there was the conviction evidenced that the Bible was a theological unity centred upon the person of Christ. The capstone for this position was evidenced in the sermon on the Church's theology of the Holy Communion; the preacher began not with the Gospels, but with Exodus and the Passover. The preacher linked the two great salvation history moments together and also their memorial meals:

> The Exodus was an act of both judgment and salvation. The Passover Meal was a sign of faith and obedience to the Word of God…What Jesus did at the Last Supper has deep parallels with the Exodus. Both speak of salvation through the shedding of blood.[304]

This is not simply verbal commitment to the unity of the Bible but unity embodied through the practice of both reading and preaching. Scripture is not made repugnant to itself. And while there is a characteristically Evangelical focus on the Bible, this

[300] IC-X 2
[301] Stringer, *On the Perception of Worship*.
[302] P. Carnley, *Reflections in Glass: Trends and Tensions in the Contemporary Anglican Church* (HarperCollinsPublishers, 2004).
[303] IC-X 2
[304] IC-X 3

sermon in particular also spoke to the Anglican Articles' statement that the true church exists wherever the Bible is proclaimed and the Sacraments celebrated. Both Testaments speak together about the saving purposes and methods of God: foreshadowed in the Old and completed in the New. The liturgical responses employed in the services also communicated an equality between the different readings; all readings were followed by the reader saying, 'This is the Word of the Lord', and the congregation replying with 'Thanks be to God'; this pattern remained unchanged regardless of the material being read (meaning that there was no liturgical differentiation between the Gospels and the rest of Scripture by the readers instead uttering, 'For the Gospel of the Lord').

6.2.10 - IC-X considered

In an earlier chapter I posited a schema for considering Anglican identity and practice.[305] As we have seen, IC-X has a strong commitment to the unity of the Bible in its liturgical use and reading of the Bible. Where there may exist a potential weakness is over the elevating of the Epistles in their preaching. It was perhaps unfortunate that I was present at the start of the Romans series as it would seem to confirm one of the chief Evangelical caricatures. However when viewed against their preaching cycle for the last twelve months this seems anomalous - it is hard to square the caricature next to a church that dedicates seven weeks to preaching through Esther, or five to preaching through Habakkuk. When viewed with more perspective, IC-X is conscious of pursuing a reasonable balance between the two Testaments, their genres and authors. This would also seem to satisfy the principle of a unified hearing and intelligent understanding of the Scriptures. In regard to the question of the sufficiency of the Scriptures for salvation, it was clear that there was a commitment to the Bible as the sufficient means of knowing God in Christ and as the basis of Christian discipleship. Indeed, to suggest to the staff or members of IC-X that there was saving knowledge in any other source would have provoked a strong rebuke. The role of the Bible operating as God's proxy in leading the common worship was also witnessed in both the IC-X's leader's espoused beliefs and the congregation's common practice. Likewise, the congregation also participated in the service through the use of, and response to Scriptures, for example through the reciting of various Psalms and in confession and absolution.

My overall sense from attending worship amongst this congregation was of being addressed by Scripture, not merely being addressed about Scripture. The distinction is crucial as it relates to the central issue of practice. Imagine a church that in its promotional material or website spoke about its high view of the Bible as the word of God. In attending this church you found Scripture was only read once in the entire meeting and that the real heart of the service was the sermon or the music. Irrespective of how large this singular reading might be, we should note that the duration of a reading or sermon are not indicative of a commitment to Scripture *per se* – indeed in practice the Bible might be seen as mattering less than the preacher's

[305] See 5.4

opinion. But IC-X not only spoke about Scripture, but also used Scripture throughout their meetings. Most liturgical events occurred with a Scriptural rationale or in response to Scripture. There was certainly a balance between hearing from both Testaments – if anything IC-X's use of Scripture in its formal readings was slanted towards the Old Testament given there was a Psalm read in addition to the Old Testament reading each week, while there was only ever a single New Testament reading. One failing though was the lack of Scripture in the closing of the services; while there was a consistent sense of Scripture calling us together and addressing us in the body of the service, this was missing from half of the conclusions to the service. Beyond this criticism however, IC-X's practice resonated with their espoused commitments to Scripture as discussed in their questionnaire responses. While they did not rate Anglican identity itself particularly highly, the services themselves were overall Anglican in practice.

While beyond the scope of my research, I raise the following for future speculation and work. What would be revealed by comparing the earnestness for Scripture in IC-X with their individual and corporate lives? Are the lives of congregation members actually demonstrating the sanctification that the BCP envisaged coming about from immersing ourselves in Scripture. As I note also in my writing on FX-C regarding fellowship, subsequent to my time researching in their meetings IC-X went through a protracted period of high level conflict between members of the staff and the congregation. This suggests a significant disconnection between their normative beliefs (supposedly sourced from Scripture) and their practice. There are also questions that remain unanswered regarding their harmonisation of Scripture – are textual or ethical issues too quickly brushed aside? Were the ethical ramifications of God's actions in the Old Testament given full consideration? This is not just a modern or liberal concern – scholars within the Evangelical tradition also raise this as a problem.[306] Does IC-X embrace uncritically the troublesome parts of Scripture, or do they avoid them? I raise here the need for research into the pastoral and theological use of the difficult parts of Scripture across churches that encompass both lectionary usage and those that structure their own programme.

[306] See Christopher Wright, *The God I Don't Understand: Reflections on Tough Questions of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Books, 2009).

6.3 - Fresh Expression C (FXC-C)

To engage in writing ethnography is to touch upon deeply held views and vital practices for both individuals and communities. Writing is an exercise in power; to pretend that we are merely neutral observers presenting 'facts' to our readership is highly problematic. I encountered this in presenting my writing to the leadership of FXC-C. This chapter has been redacted to more fully hide the identity of the participant church. Reality is transmitted not simply by what is observed, but how it is processed and presented by the writer. Reflexivity in ethnographic research necessitates that not only do I present my known biases as honestly as I can, but I listen to the feedback provided by those who have graciously given their permission to be studied. This is not to say that the researcher will accept all that is said uncritically, but we cannot simply collect cultural samples and claim to present the practices of a group with no reference to the active voice of our subjects regarding what has been reported from them or about them. Moreover, reality is construed by the reader, not simply on the basis of the author's words, but also on the political positioning and goals of the reader. My goal in undertaking this research was to test the identity of these Fresh Expression churches within that of the Anglican Church of Australia through their usage of Scripture, but my research could equally have the opposite effect in that critics of the FXC movement could use my writing to further attack both churches and individuals. The following presentation of FXC-C has been reworked to take into consideration the deeply held concerns and reservations of the church's leadership and also protect my participants. This is not a failure of method on my part but part of the process of research and discovery itself, as shown in Stringer's method of presenting his findings with each church and then where necessary reconsidering his findings after receiving dissenting feedback or alternate perspectives.[307]

As noted in my methodology chapter, writing (and rewriting) this chapter has not been easy owing to a variety of factors. The first is at the emotional level – I wither internally at the thought of causing pain to the FXC-C community and leadership group. The second is the need to present my observations and reflections in such a way as not to mute my own voice, while still paying attention to theirs. Not everything we write as researchers is going to be palatable to or accepted by those we have written about.

Like IC-X, FXC-C stands apart from its social context, but for very different reasons. As detailed later, FXC-C broke away from its parent church and sought a new physical space in which to meet and worship. They currently meet in a community building – this space is close to one of the city's central hubs. There are a large number of professionals who live nearby, but also a large number of government housing projects (with whom FXC-C is trying to engage with missionally and socially). The members of the church come from a variety of locations around the

[307] Stringer, *On the Perception of Worship*. pp.89-95.

city and come together in this location for Christian community. That said, now they are established in that place, they are seeking meaningful engagement with people in the geographic location. While originally a network church, they are seeking to set down roots in their setting.

As with IC-X, the following information comes from the 2011 Australia Bureau of Statistics figures together with the 2001 figures for context,[308] however to prevent disclosure of the exact location specific web address information has not been provided.

FXC-C's geographic context has a slight increase of males to females (male 53.1%, female 46.9%) to both its immediate broader urban geographic context (49.5% and 50.5% respectively) , and also compared to the national average (male 49.4%, female 50.6%). This means that there is an increasing proportion of men in the population, as in 2001 the proportions locally were men 52.7%, and female 47.3%.

Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders in FXC-C's geographic setting are underrepresented (1.2%) compared to both the broader urban context (1.5%) is still significantly lower than the national figure (2.5%). The rate in 2001 was 1.1% - there has been little change in this regard.

The country of birth data shows that people living in FXC-C's immediate context are less likely to have to been born in Australia (53.6%) compared with both its broader urban context (71.4%), and the national population (69.8%). Those born outside of Australia were most likely to come from China (4.5%, compared to 1.5% nationally); England (3.1% compared to 4.2% nationally); Vietnam (3.0% compared to 0.9% nationally); India (2.2% compared to 1.4% nationally); and Malaysia (1.9% compared to 0.5% nationally). Those within the church itself were for the vast majority in conformity to the statistics – with only one person visibly not of European or English ancestry. Compare this to 2001 in which after those born in Australia, the most common countries of birth were England (4.8%), New Zealand (1.6%), Vietnam (1.5%), Singapore (0.8%), and Scotland, (0.8%). While those born in Australia still make up the bulk of the population, there is a real increase in the number of those born in Asian countries living here. One explanation for this is the presence of a large tertiary education facility nearby – the changing ethnicity levels may reflect the number of overseas students moving in to the area for proximity for their educational venue. I can only speculate that this may connect with the increased number of male residents in the area – families may be prioritising sending their sons to Australia for tertiary education.

Unemployment in FXC-C's immediate setting (6%) runs higher than that in the broader urban context (3.6%) and the national figure (5.6%). This figure is

[308] http://www.abs.gov.au/

dramatically lower than that of a decade earlier, when unemployment ran at 9.4%. Professionals made up 41.5% (compared to 21.3% nationally); Clerical roles were 16.9% (14.7% nationally); Managers 15.1% (12.9% nationally); Community and Personal Services were 8.2% (9.7% nationally); Technicians and Trades People 6.3% (14.2 nationally); Sales Workers were 5.4% (9.4% nationally); while Labourers made up only 4.0% (9.4% nationally). Put alongside the results from the 2001 Census, and a picture of change in the local area emerges. Previously, Professionals made up only 20.6% of the population – this may indicate that the proximity of the location to the city's CBD has undergone a period of renewal. Even allowing for the different categories used in the different censuses a decade apart, the number of professionals rose by over a quarter; those in management were about half the current level (then at 7.6%); the number of tradespeople has roughly tripled (2% in 2001). The income per household was slightly higher than the national average, but lower than the average given for the broader urban context of which FXC-C is a subset.

A significant group professed no religious affiliation (39.9%) compared to the national figure (22.3%). The rise of no religious affiliation is more pronounced than in IX-C, with FXC-C's immediate setting at 25.4%, now rising to almost two fifths of the population. The rate of people identifying as Anglican (7.1%) was significantly lower than the national rate (17.1%). This shift away from religion was reflected in almost a halving of the number of Anglicans in 2001 (then 13.1%).

FXC-C's local setting is a mix of both professionals and office workers together with a number of unemployed people. Its inner city location goes someway in explaining this with both a large number of designer apartments and government housing areas. While this goes towards describing the area in which FXC-C is seeking to minister, it should be noted that the members of FXC-C live in other parts of the city, and travel together to meet as explained in discussing the group's history.

6.3.1 - Questionnaire profile

FXC-C's respondents rated the importance of being Anglican as just slightly less than average importance to them. But where both other Fresh Expression churches researched showed a considerable identification chiefly with Evangelicalism, FXC-C appears to include elements from across the Anglican spectrum; from a low average importance for 'being Catholic; to a strong pull towards Evangelicalism and 'being Emergent'. As discussed in a previous chapter, the Emerging/Emergent church definition is not straightforward; Belcher's tripartite definition of the movement allows for a variety of churches to appropriate the title while holding far differing attitudes to denominational identity and the existing corpus of Christian theology. The question at hand though is not whether FXC-C is an Emerging Church or not, but does it use Scripture in a way that is consistent with Anglican theology. Walford warns against the dangers of generalisation in ethnographic writing – drawing broad

conclusions from too small a sample.[309] Nonetheless, heeding this wisdom that it is not possible to generalise as to the legitimacy of all Fresh Expression churches within the Anglican Church of Australia, through observing and considering the churches presented we can test the plausibility of the movement within Anglicanism. I do not claim to be writing about the whole culture of the Fresh Expression movement – on Walter's definition,[310] I am writing case studies not classic ethnography. My interest is limited to their use of Scripture, not their entire culture.[311]

FXC-C had the second lowest score for the importance of using all the constituent parts of the Bible at 53.7%. The Pentateuch, Wisdom literature, History books and the Psalms were all rated as being of less than average importance. Curiously the Old Testament's Prophets were rated as being of just above average importance. With no follow up questions to explain how the particular rankings were assigned, I can only speculate as to why the Prophets should rate above the others. My working theory is that they were seen to support the social justice and cultural critique that FXC-C's events seemed to promote. The Gospels and Epistles were much more highly valued. This seemed to be borne out in their responses to what books of the Bible had been read in the prior twelve months – only three were listed, and of these only one was from the Old Testament. The respondents were unable to state what books were to be read in the next year; however what I initially took as indifference is I believe more a sign of their flexibility to their pastoral needs and cultural setting. FXC-C was also one of the lower ranked churches for the importance of liturgy being shaped by the Bible. However their average score on this was seven out of ten – their low rank is a function of the large number of churches whose respondents gave an extremely high espoused importance to this and is not a rejection of the Bible in liturgy. I note that the questionnaire may have been unhelpful for FXC-C at this point. Given their past relationship with parts of the Inherited Church, the word liturgy may be an unhelpful term, bringing up negative associations with a formulaic following of a liturgical text, or an uncritical use of the RCL. What my question was aimed at interrogating was 'what importance does the Bible have in shaping what you do when you meet?' This may have prompted a different reaction and answer. This dynamic also plays a role in their reported view of the importance of the involvement of the episcopate. While possessing a low score, FXC-C was still one in the middle of the churches who took part in the questionnaire by virtue of the level of importance reported across the participating churches. However, with regard to Scripture, it is also worth noting that the FXC-C respondents also rated the use of the Bible in settings other than their worship services as slightly less than average importance, but FXC-C has no other meetings – it is a small church. The personal

[309] Geoffrey Walford, "Everyone Generalizes, but Ethnographers Need to Resist Doing So," *Studies in Educational Ethnography* 12(2007).
[310] Sue Walters, "'Case Study'or 'Ethnography'? Defining Terms, Making Choices and Defending the Worth of a Case," *Studies in Educational Ethnography* 12(2007).
[311] Ibid. p.93.

and congregational needs that would prompt a church like IX-C to foster small groups do not exist as FXC-C's members already get the opportunity for interpersonal relationship and spiritual support through their meetings. This response should not be interpreted as putting less importance on engaging with Scripture.

In FXC-C we have a church whose espoused commitments make it hold loosely to Anglican identity (however we construe it). Part of my conversation with the leadership of FXC-C in response to my initial writing has, however, led me to some reconsideration. While not overturning my observations, there are three other factors that bear discussion: congregational history, the place of innovation in response to a changing world, and the criteria by which we evaluate something such as 'being the church'.

Discussing congregational history is both vital and vexed: churches do not exist in a vacuum; they are shaped and conditioned by events and people.[312] But such a discussion becomes difficult when we are seeking to ensure confidentiality. While the other Fresh Expression churches considered have been planted as part of the ministry of another Inherited Church, FXC-C had a more painful birth that placed its members in a complicated relationship with the traditional church from which it came. Diocesan leadership felt it important to allow the group to continue as a non-territorial church and altered the ordinances accordingly. Poorly handled, the situation could have led to the individuals concerned becoming part of the closed de-churched. FXC-C continues to exist as a ministry unit of its Diocese: 'being Anglican' may not be rated highly (less than five on a scale of one to ten) and yet they remain within the relational and legal web of Diocesan life. Rejection of the majority modality does not preclude one from Anglican identity. There is the need for an acknowledgment at this point that the Inherited Church is sometimes its own worst enemy, taking the creative and positive missional impulses of some of its members and at best ignoring them, at worst trampling them. FXC-C exists in a place that is not aggressively antithetical to the inherited church despite past pains and looks outward for growth. It is no mere wounded fellowship, but a positive and creative community. This moves the discussion to the third issue, that of how we understand (and assess) the nature of 'the church'.

Article XIX states that the visible church exists wherever in the congregation of the faithful that the Word is preached and the Sacraments duly celebrated.[313] This may be a necessary definition of what it means for something to be part of the Church, but is it a sufficient definition? In discussion with the leadership of FXC-C, the topic of the importance of community which is composed of the open de-churched was brought in as a parallel consideration. We can hypothesise a place where people gather and the liturgy is scrupulously rehearsed each week, with both preaching and Sacraments present, but at the end of the services people leave and have no contact

[312] See: James F. Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures* (Minneapolis: Augsberg Fortress, 2006).
[313] Anglican Church of Australia, *A Prayer Book for Australia*. p.480

with each other until they congregate again the following week. Is this 'church'? The definition of the church needs to be multivalent rather than singular. We cannot restrict our gaze to theology and liturgical practice alone, but must also consider the place of fellowship as a key element of the church's *esse*, fellowship (κοινωνία) that holds all things in common not just an act of public worship; that shares the range of human experience; that enables and encourages the ongoing discipleship for believers in both joy and trial.[314] Indeed, to draw from the Apostle, if I have a range of readings from across the Bible but do not have love I am nothing; if I preach from both Testaments, but do not have love, I am nothing.[315] The quintessential Christian quality is not naked orthodoxy or strict liturgical practice, but αγαπε; indeed, it is only in the presence of this sacrificial concern and care for the other that any practice is indeed distinctively Christian. This is however beyond the scope of my research, and indeed the question of fellowship is much closer to Stringer's work in how worship is perceived by its participants. My research is limited in scope to the liturgical and homiletical use of the Bible; in this I am seeking to test the plausibility of these individual churches cohering to Anglican identity as I have construed it. That is, I am presenting an approach to Anglican identity and practice, not the sole approach. Mine is one that draws from Anglicanism's foundational documents, but is not the only measure of 'the church'. My comments regarding FXC-C need to be read in the context of my particular appreciation of the matter at hand. Moreover the need to consider the practice of fellowship is a helpful rejoinder in reflecting on my experience of the previously considered IC-X; that church has experienced major relational difficulties subsequent to the period of my research there. Its strong espoused commitments and disciplined liturgical practices from the prayer book have not spared it from deep self-inflicted wounds. If agape love (αγαπε) is indeed the distinguishing feature of the church, then IC-X is challenged regardless of how well they may cohere to the Formularies in their liturgy and preaching. Mobsby I think rightly expresses this issue as Western Christianity allowing orthodoxy outweighing orthopraxis in community.[316]

At the time of my fieldwork I approached my visits to FXC-C with some interest in how the church's espoused and operational theologies would relate. Were they functioning as Anglicans with a distorted sense of self, or would their practice bear out commitments that indeed departed from those of historic Anglicanism?

Upon attending the group, it was clear that the group was small, allowing its meetings to easily move into discussion with a high level of individual participation. The adult members all seemed to be well educated, and in their thirties and forties; the children present were the offspring of the adults involved. The numbers ranged up from ten, but never above twenty attendees.

[314] Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998). p.1064.
[315] c.f. 1 Corinthians 13
[316] Mobsby, *God Unknown*. p.45.

6.3.2 - Bible in the liturgy

Each week I attended FXC-C there was a single Bible reading; these were (in order) John 2:1-11; Matthew 13:10-17; and Matthew 24:36-46. Note that there are only three readings recorded. In one week, the reading and homily were represented by a 'Bible Mash-up', discussed later.

Of particular note, the dynamic of Scripture operating as God's voice in a liturgical setting was missing from the meetings I attended. The discussions used the Bible and it was reverently read. No idea was ever voiced that Scripture was unimportant. However, Scripture was not calling people together in worship, nor did it send the church back into the world. Their prayers contained worthy items for intercession, and I noted that their common prayer did use Scripture to frame their prayers. With the exception of two songs, there was a complete absence of the Old Testament; the New Testament's dependence on the Old would seem to be challenged by FXC-C's practices over my time there. I never heard anything decrying the Old Testament there, but I noted its functional silence in the time I was present. What is the long-term trajectory for the belief of the church in the light of their practice? Is four weeks too short a period to test this? In fairness to FXC-C, yes, especially in that they are working to a long-term perspective. Also not every liturgical activity needs to happen each time the church meets. Stringer allowed six months for each of his four churches[317] – but my time was more limited. However, as the historic expression of this position, traditional liturgy would have heard from across more of the Bible (even if the preacher failed to look beyond the Gospel readings) and there are numerous places in the liturgy where the Old Testament could be used. What happens to the shape and content of the *evangel* when the Old Testament is silent? The absence of the Old Testament in both homiletical and liturgical practices challenged my understanding of what a presentation of the Word would entail. As a preacher myself, I know I do not use all the Scripture over the course of each and every sermon, but the Old Testament struck me as under-utilised in my visits. As a reflexive aside, I find myself trying to balance the recognition of FXC-C's alternate approach, with my own experience in the Inherited Church as a reformed Evangelical. I understand that their method ascribes no less importance and worth to the Bible, but it is a reasonable observation that the Old Testament was chiefly silent in my period with them.

6.3.3 - Welcome

In traditional Anglican liturgy, Scripture 'bookends' the service, calling the congregation together and sending them back out through direct quotation or strong allusions. This approach was absent in my experience at FXC-C. In one week the service leader referred to the hospitality of God in the Wedding at Cana. In the final week, the service leader made reference to the naming of the current year's theme as

[317] Stringer, *On the Perception of Worship*. p.15.

coming from 1 Corinthians 13. In another week, we started with the notices for the church, and then moved into a prayer which asked for:

> …a fresh revelation and a fresh encounter with you, God.[318]

Where was this fresh revelation to come from? How and where was God to be encountered? God was someone to entice to meet with us, rather than the one who calls us together. No Scripture was used to justify or explain why this was an appropriate request, or how it might be answered. To be fair, the implication might be that this encounter would come from Scripture or be found amidst the fellowship of the church, but the particular phrasing employed was ambiguous. Evangelicals can sometimes operate out of the paradigm Niebuhr categorised as 'Christ against culture', but FXC-C took a more generous approach not limiting where God's gracious activity could be found, an appreciation of Christ both in, and transforming culture.[319] This fresh revelation could equally have been in the reappraisal of how God was communicating through the broader cultural milieu or the nature of Christian fellowship itself.

6.3.4 - The addresses: exegeting ourselves and culture

What FXC-C did very well, was to read and reflect thoughtfully on the prevailing attitudes and practices in the culture around us, and acknowledge our own situatedness within that culture. In my first week present, the theme was 'Finding God in the kitchen'; at one point in the service, we had a group discussion around three questions:

- Who invites me into their kitchen?
- How do I see grace in this space?
- How could I better embody these qualities?

Likewise, in another week, we were meeting with the theme of 'Meeting God in the TV room'. In the speaker's address the climax of the movie *Chocolat*[320] was shown in which the Mayor of the town succumbs firstly to wrath and then to greed, only to be confronted by the proprietor of the violated chocolate boutique and we were asked to consider:

- How does this scene illustrate love, hope and faith?
- What Bible stories would you pull into conversation with it?
- What tensions do you observe?

[318] FXC-C 18
[319] Helmut Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1952).
[320] Lasse Hallström, "Chocolat," (United Kingdom/USA2001).

In my final week present, the speaker was addressing the topic of 'Finding God in the TV Room', this time through the lens of Science Fiction. After the talk, we were asked to consider: How are hope, faith and love found in Jesus' experience in Gethsemane (Matthew 24:36-46)? In particular, we were asked to answer:

- How do we see the humanity of Jesus in the story?
- How do we see the future of Jesus?
- What makes a difference to Jesus?
- What do the stories I watch say about life, what it means to be human, the big picture and where I fit?
- How do I see love, hope and faith in that space?
- How could I better embody these things?

These were fascinating discussions that refused to cede divine activity solely to the action of the church, recognising that the themes and aspirations of the gospel could be found in our culture, but needed Christ to be fulfilled. What linked week to week was the theme of the series, not the sequential reading of the Bible. Having grown up and worked in a variety of Anglican churches in Australia, I have seen a range of practices therein. In certain seasons of the Church Year, the RCL at points follows the systematic reading of the gospels, but brackets this with other readings that are appropriate to the calendar but are not a continuous reading of Scripture. Evangelicals tend to place a higher priority on this concept of a continuous reading of Scripture from contiguous passages, but they may break this method in addressing a series of topics. At first glance, FXC-C may appear problematic for my thesis. However, as will be discussed, FXC-C offers two helpful correctives to seeing Scripture as the only determining factor regarding Anglican identity, and also in recognising the gamut of social and cultural changes that *MSC* presented as the impetus for envisaging the church afresh.

It is worth noting that FXC-C's practice holds some strong resonance with existing practices that I have observed amongst the Inherited Church. Of particular note is the 'Bible Mash-up'; this formed the summation of the second week's reflection on Scripture. The idea of the 'Mash-up' is to run together a series of different parts of the Bible on the same theme to create a text that reads as one continuous message. For me, this raises significant hermeneutical questions regarding how Scripture is used and received. Authorial intent and the historical-grammatical approach are neglected as sections of the Biblical text are threaded together without consideration of meaning in situ. The text selections came from *The Message* and were presented without any information about what parts of Scripture they were taken from. The idea is to create a 'letter' from God to both individual believers and to the church as a whole. The practice might be seen as akin to the sampling that occurs in the music

industry, where existing texts have some part of themselves taken out of context and added to with additional lyrics by a performer. This is a significantly different process from what happens in Systematic Theology where there is an attempt to synthesise the message of Scripture on a topic or into an overarching theological system.

For example:

> My beloved child
>
> For I so loved you, for I so loved this world, that I would send Jesus to die for you so that our relationship would be made perfect; my heart is for relationship with my children.
>
> You are the focus of my love, before I laid the foundations of the earth, I had you in mind. I adopted you into my family through Jesus Christ. You are my child. I choose you.
>
> I am love. I am a passionate lover; it is the core of who I am. As my children, watch what I do and imitate it, learn a life of love.
>
> When you take up permanent residence in a life of love, you live in me and I live in you. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and matures in you. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life – fear of death, fear of judgment – is one not yet fully formed in love.
>
> Love extravagantly, love from the centre of your being. Don't fake it. Be good friends who love deeply and put others first; serve others through love. Be people rooted in love so that you know how to love others as yourselves; as I love you – LOVE unconditionally, LOVE patiently, LOVE kindly, LOVE forgivingly, LOVE understandingly, LOVE passionately, LOVE selflessly, and LOVE extravagantly.
>
> Love should shake you to the core of who you are, so that no matter what you say, believe or do, you are bankrupt without love. Love never fails.
>
> Be rooted in this love, my dear children, let's not just talk about love; let's practise real love. This is the only way we'll know we're living truly, living in my reality. It's also the way to shut down debilitating self-criticism, even when there is something to it. For my love is greater than your worried hearts and knows more about you than you do yourselves.
>
> We, though, are going to love – love and be loved. First we were loved, now we love. I loved you first.

Dwell in my love, so that love is evident in your life by how you love others.

Lots of love, your heavenly Father.[321]

The strength of this approach is that it resonates with the methodology of Anglican liturgy in that the words of Scripture are understood to be addressing the hearers as the words of God. That is, Anglican services traditionally begin with a sentence of Scripture not because they are pleasant words, or simply match the liturgical season, but because these are God's words to his people. Where traditional liturgy spreads these throughout the service, here they run together as a single unified address. Indeed, Anglican liturgy could be understood in some senses as a liturgical Bible Mash-up, with the exception that the Prayer Book usually (though not universally) shows its sources at least in regard to direct quotes. That said, the Bible Mash-up can be understood as a fresh expression of Anglican theology of the Bible, even if its practice looks quite different to its antecedents. However, I do have a serious question over this practice: What does it do to the words of Jesus, Paul, John, and the others? Can we place them together in such a way that preserves authorial intent as best we can within the limits of the historical-grammatical approach to interpretation? While it may be a pleasing arrangement for the purposes of a reflection on the Biblical material using the word love, I found myself asking whether the divine and human authors had erred in their own arrangement of the Biblical material.

6.3.5 - Holy Communion

Holy Communion was shared once in my time as a participant-observer among them. The Thanksgiving prayer used in the Eucharistic celebration is significant; it refers to the events recorded in the three synoptic Gospels and 1 Corinthians 11 without actually quoting it, just as it also makes no reference to the Old Testament in the unfolding of the typology and events of salvation history. Moreover, where are the words of Institution from across the available sources? It is not that the form used is opposed to the Scriptures, but I noted the absence of the Scriptures themselves in the prayer. There are strong allusions here, such as the upstairs room, and likening of the Spirit to the breath of God, but I missed the quotations and allusions I normally associate with sharing this meal.

Lord Jesus Christ

Present with us now,

As we do in this place what you did in an upstairs room,

Breathe your Spirit upon us

And upon this bread and this wine,

[321] FXC-C 18

That they may be heaven's food and drink for us,

Renewing, sustaining and making us whole,

And that we may be your body on earth,

Loving and caring in the world.

You are above us, O God,

You are beneath.

You are in air, you are in earth,

You are beside us, you are within.

O God, you are the betrayed and suffering people of our world,

Just as you were in the broken body of Jesus,

We pray now for all that concerns us

As we sit at your table together.

Let us offer our own prayers

Both spoken and unspoken.

(Breaking bread)

Look,

The bread of heaven is broken for the life of the world.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

(Sacrament is shared).[322]

While we may know God truly through Jesus, as He is the very 'image of the invisible God' (Col 1:15), how is it that believers come to know Jesus, other than in the words of Scripture? The good work FXC-C does in reading the gospel into the surrounding culture is contingent upon knowing the gospel from Scripture itself first.

6.3.6 - The missing Testament

With one reading each week at FXC-C the Anglican principle of a sequential and intelligent reading of Scripture seems challenged, at least insofar as I have construed

[322] FXC-C 19

it. There was neither an internally generated nor externally produced selection of readings that governed the reading towards the goal of hearing from the majority of the Bible over a given period, or at least none evidenced in the meetings. The characteristic Anglican discipline of hearing from across the breadth of Scripture was not met; in none of the weeks for which I was present was the Old Testament read out. It was alluded to in a children's song and referred to in one of the talks, but where was it actually read and listened to? The Old Testament was never disparaged but I noted its absence; practice communicates the theology that we inhabit, and that we then grow others in. In my time present the only formal readings were all taken from the New Testament – specifically the Gospels. Granted I was present for only four weeks (something rightly noted by FXC-C), but it still raises the issue of the intersection of ecclesial practices and Christian discipleship; how would this church serve as a nexus for the enculturation of Christians? Their ability to read the culture around them would probably be acute, but their ability to articulate the Bible's metanarrative or understand how the Old and New Testament relate, or to make sense of individual books of the Bible may be lacking. While the group is currently attended by those with a Christian background, who are schooled in how to read the Bible, their activities are perhaps less important, but what would happen if residents of the nearby government housing decided to come to church with them?

6.3.7 - Initial consideration of FXC-C

FXC-C was a warm and welcoming group, and its members are to be commended for their often thoughtful engagement with culture. In regard to the extent to which their practices embodied Anglican theology and identity, I initially found myself having to argue that it challenged my understanding of these things.

Jesus was clearly important in their use of Scripture; however, as already noted, the Old Testament was silent in the period of my research. Besides 1 Corinthians 13:13 for their current series, there was a minimal amount of input from the Epistles. Was their reading of Scripture intelligent? It certainly sought to engage intelligently with culture, but was not an ordered reading in the sense of an ongoing sequential approach. Intelligence may however have more than one appreciation – FXC-C has given priority to the reading of Scripture through the cultural setting in which they find themselves, rather than through a Lectionary set by those with no connection to them or their context. I have found it helpful to reflect on Richard Hooker's approach to the Church's situation in his day. Steering a course as he was between the extremes of Roman Catholicism and Puritan Presbyterianism, Hooker's position as argued in Book II of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* was that worship in the Church of England should be Biblical in its character but not limited to the Bible,[323] that is to say that Scripture sets what should not be done in Church, rather than what must be done.[324] The fourfold pattern of readings is not one mandated by Scripture

[323] Richard Hooker and Christopher Morris, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (London: Dent, 1907). pp.233-282.
[324] Ibid. Book II, Chapter IV, vv4-5, p245-246

itself, but an attempt by the Church to structure its reading by its theological convictions and history. This approach might be seen to commend FXC-C for their engagement with culture, seeing that tradition is not sacrosanct, but also encourage them to broaden their engagement with Scripture. Limiting the number of readings to one goes beyond just challenging liturgical form though – as Sykes points out, the Anglican method and liturgical approach should take the Bible out of the hands of just the ordained and give it to the people to reflect on and consider; in limiting themselves to a single reading there is the risk of an equivalence being drawn between what the Bible says and what the preacher (lay or ordained) says[325] – readings without a sermon break this trend and instead help maintain the Words of Scripture as the primary authority, not the preacher. Michael Jensen described the liturgy of Cranmer as 'a feast of Scripture in the English tongue in his Book of Common Prayer, such that the Scriptures could scarcely be avoided.'[326] This should not be seen as being challenged in FXC-C in that the ministry of teaching was not limited to a single person, nor just to the ordained, as the Bible Mash-up was delivered by another member of the Church. Were the Scriptures operating as the divine proxy or at least in the same manner as it does in Inherited Church? Scripture was present, but as I noted in visiting FXC-N, the Bible can become a subject, not a participant in the meeting. Of course, it is possible to visit an Inherited Church where there are four readings and the preacher addresses none of them. While Scripture was of importance in the FXC-C meetings, it was still about God addressing us, and did not form the means of our address to God, a feature Peter Adam argues was a significant part of the BCP revolution[327].

FXC-C values creativity in their worship and in their engagement with the surrounding culture, and while the Bible is indeed present, its use and placement in their meetings appears to be operating from the edges of the paradigm that has informed historical Anglicanism. In his feedback the leader of FXC-C put the point to me that we live in a time of liturgical diversity, with a significant number of Australian Anglican churches diverging from the current Prayer Book, even with the breadth of liturgical options it presents. Moreover, their argument is that historic Anglican liturgy needs to be read as a product of its times, shaped by the political needs of England and the social understanding of living in Christendom. As we now live in a post-Christendom world, the differing social and personal needs and pressures necessitate a different approach and language in shaping the Christian meeting. I agree that liturgical diversity is not only a reality, but a necessary corollary of seeking to operate within an incarnational paradigm of mission and ministry. This research is not about subjecting the participating churches to a simple comparison to the authorised liturgy, but rather a more generous question of asking to what extent do they show a family resemblance to the broad Anglican family. The question then arises, where in that spectrum does FXC-C fit?

[325] Sykes, *Unashamed Anglicanism*. p.155.
[326] Jensen, "Scripture, Preaching and Reformation Anglican Worship."
[327] Adam, *The Very Pure Word of God: The Book of Common Prayer as a Model of Biblical Liturgy*.

Like the other FXCs considered, FXC-C highlights the crucial role played by the leader of these groups. In conversation with the leader of FXC-C in my time present in the church and in the process of soliciting responses to my research, it was clear that he was well aware of both the liturgical character of historic Anglicanism and also of the activities and reasons for FXC-C's practices. It is a difficult path to tread – remaining in conversation with the practices of the Anglican tradition, while pastoring and nurturing a community that has had significant tensions in its past with elements of an Anglican parish, as well as others who claim no denominational identity at all.

As in the following discussion of FXC-M, a question needs to be asked about where FXC-C is in its growth and maturing; no church or organisation is ever static, no matter how tradition bound it believes itself to be. Even when the pace is glacial, change is still happening. In the case of FXC-C, change has not been slow; from its inception, to its present, its history has featured rapid change. The issues of who the group is and what it is seeking to do have not fallen into the pattern that most established churches take for granted. Adolescents try on and experiment with different identities as part of the process of determining the self. IC-X has had decades for the ecclesial version of this process to occur; FXC-C is significantly younger and is not a finished project. A significant issue arises from this that goes beyond FXC-C, namely, what does maturity actually look like? Historical and traditional practice does not necessarily equate with maturity – indeed the measure of maturity in Ephesians 4 is Christ-likeness. Moreover, if the guiding principle of the Fresh Expressions movement is one of contextualisation and the Incarnation, it is a false expectation that maturity will be uniform across churches, just as it is across individuals. The task the Church's leadership faces is one of working with the Church to determine what it is they want to be, and what practices around the Bible they wish to develop. What would FXC-C look like in five or ten years? Would a new pattern of Bible usage have emerged, or would the practices I observed have become *habitus*?

6.3.8 - Antithesis: FXC-C's reply

In addition to concerns of confidentiality and the depiction of their church (concerns that are absolutely legitimate and reasonable), FXC-C outlined ongoing concerns with the thesis, namely:

> …the criteria derived from the Formularies are grounded in Christendom and a conservative evangelical interpretative framework …. This loads the argument. While you want to see FXC stretch the envelope, I'm not sure the chapter sufficiently argues the point about there being a legitimate spectrum of positions concerning the criteria identified. It still treats it as a pass/fail measure which I think fails to adequately address the contextual issues surrounding both contemporary mission (where being Anglican is not a concern for members at least of FXC-C which reflects the post-denominational world they live in) or the highly

> confessionally charged context from which the Formularies emerge and are subsequently reinterpreted. [328]

Also challenged was how my appreciation of how the Scripture operates as the divine voice:

> …it implies that the divine voice/presence is only heard through a specific form of Scriptural presentation, which excludes other ways of operating. The divine proxy is not simply words of the king (which is a very Anglican idea) but Scripture as words of a friend… Just how does the divine proxy work and how you evaluate its presence just because it is not declared 'thus sayeth the Lord'?[329]

Regarding my comments on the absence of Scripture in calling people together, and sending them back out, their reply was that:

… the whole point was to call people to consider God's word and then to go out into the world. What we are doing is reframing it away from misplaced monarchical vision.[330]In correspondence, I was asked if it was fair to assess a church against the Articles of Religion, when in my time present they were not discussed, nor I did question the church regarding them.

6.3.9 - Synthesis

I am indebted to the leadership of FXC-C beyond the virtue of allowing me to conduct research in their church community. Their feedback gives added vitality to the method of dialogical theological reflection proposed by Whitehead and Whitehead that I have sought to engage in. Their feedback has aided the conversation about the tradition, their practice and my experience as a researcher. I now turn to looking for a possible synthesis.

The point that we no longer live in the confessional context of the Formularies is correct. The independent Church of England had to carefully navigate between the confessional and structural demands of Rome and yet also resist the calls that the English Reformation had not gone far enough in stripping away extraneous structures down to a simple 'Biblical faith' (albeit as various reformers understood it). McGrath argues that:

> Anglicanism represents an attempt to ground the Christian vision in a specific culture, at a specific time. Its distinctive features may be argued to lie in its application of the gospel to a specific historical situation – England, and subsequently the British colonies.[331]

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[328] FXC-C 20.
[329] FXC-C 21.
[330] FXC-C 22.
[331] A.E. McGrath, *The Renewal of Anglicanism* (SPCK Publishing, 1993). p.19.

The Church of England and its descendants have adopted a variety of positions regarding their theological inheritance from the Reformation. As noted earlier, for the Anglican Church of Australia the Formularies are the Book of Common Prayer, the Ordinal, the Articles of Religion, and the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia. While there are voices calling for a formal revision of the Articles, at this time this has not happened. It is Diocesan ordinances that have been amended to allow for non-territorial churches to function, and as such it is the Formularies in their current form that clergy are questioned over in giving their oaths and declarations to their licencing Bishop. Are the Articles in need of revision in the light of the current cultural milieu? Perhaps, but until such work is carried out, it is not unreasonable to examine the practices of member Churches both inherited and fresh in their light, if only to highlight the dissonance between what authority is granted to them on paper, compared to their living function. Whatever critique I have of FXC-C, I note the vitality and attention that they pay to the Bible as a positive and strength.

Regarding the question of authorial bias, as I have outlined earlier in my reflexive introduction concerning my revealed personal position – I am writing from an evangelical Anglican perspective. This is a position that falls within the boundaries of historic Anglicanism and the Formularies and also looks to them as an ecclesial authority. While not a sacred text, it is worth reflecting on the direction proposed by *MSC*, namely that the Fresh Expression movement was mooted by the Church of England not because of a changed appreciation of the Formularies, but in recognition of the social and cultural changes in English society.[332] Indeed, as discussed in an earlier chapter, *MSC* states that the key element in its methodology for planting new churches is that they will retain the creedal positioning and faith of the Church that has planted and fostered them.[333] I do not presume that the approach I have taken to the nature of Anglican identity and the status of the Formularies will have universal support, and there are indeed conscientious objections to the historically conditioned nature of the Articles or the suitability (in one direction or another) of both the theory and practice of Anglican liturgy. I note at this point that there is divergence between the Church of England and the Anglican Church of Australia in the wording of their respective Declarations of Assent. The Australian version requires candidates to assent to the Formularies as being 'agreeable with the Word of God',[334] whereas the English version draws a distinction between the faith revealed in Scripture and the Creeds, to which the Church of England's historic formularies bear witness.[335] Formally therefore, one would expect to find a closer conformity to the theology of the Formularies in the Australian setting. In my writing, I am adopting

[332] Church of England. Missional and Public Affairs Council., *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*. pp.1-15.
[333] Ibid. p.81.
[334] Anglican Church of Australia, "Oaths Affirmations Declarations and Assents Canon 1992," www.anglican.org.au/governance/documents/canons/canon%201998-15%20oaths.pdf. p.3.
[335] Church of England, "Common Worship: Authorisation, Preface and Declaration of Assent," http://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/mvcontents/preface.aspx.

one plausible line of enquiry as allowed by the Formularies themselves, rather than the only legitimate approach. If *MSC* was championed to the Church of England, and the Anglican Church of Australia, on the merits of the Fresh Expression churches not overturning the historic faith, it is not unreasonable to examine their practices to verify this claim. Belcher's insight regarding the Emerging Church as a spectrum of attitudes to denominational structure and belief is helpful here. Of the three types,[336] FXC-C would seem to fall into the second category, that of Reconstructionists, as their response goes beyond the nature of 'Relevance' but falls short of the total ecclesial and theological overturning envisaged by the Revisionists.

The questions regarding the possible ramifications of the decline and death of Christendom on the confessional statements and frameworks of Church traditions set in the seventeenth century are beyond the scope of this research. I am concerned with practices in the light of espoused belief as it is currently formulated.

Regarding the question of a 'pass/fail' measure, I would hope that my approach is more a lens to see through, rather than a checklist, by which a pass or grade is established. In creating my criteria, I have not established a hierarchy or determined set activities, but rather sought to ask the broader question of character. The idea of pass or fail is one that has been generated from FXC-C in responding to my material, whereas my own approach is, I believe, one that relies more on evaluating a lesser or greater level of coherence or challenge to the character of Anglicanism as I have read it. What we have is not a disagreement about practice (the actions themselves) but about the interpretation of practice.

The question of how the divine voice operates through Scripture is I believe overblown. I find myself in agreement with my FXC-C interlocutor as I wholeheartedly agree that God speaks in a variety of ways and means across the breadth of Scripture, certainly as King, but also as father, brother, mother, lover, gardener, storyteller and many more. Given this very breadth of forms of address and speaking, the question then follows, why not use the range of divine voices more in their meetings together? This is not to encourage proof-texting according to the elements of the liturgy or to reduce creativity, but to encourage creativity further. I would also comment that the monarchical voice is still one from Scripture, even if it is not one that connects as readily in our current cultural setting. Indeed, I am not advocating proof-texting – but I do believe that there is room for a thoughtful engagement with Scripture beyond the reading and message.

What then, is the way forward? I have been operating out of an approach that looks to the practised theology of Scripture as a way of bringing into focus the question of Anglican identity. It is, however, not a wrong approach but rather one of a family of considerations in the nature of Anglicanism. At the core of *MSC* and the Fresh Expressions movement is the theological principle of proclaiming the gospel afresh –

[336] Belcher, *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional*.

that is, presenting the gospel and the gospel community in culturally accessible ways to the de-churched and unchurched. Fresh Expression churches are not about doing mission and ministry differently for the sake of change and novelty, but for the purpose of mission through an incarnational method. As Robinson and Brighton contend 'Fresh Expressions of church are needed for those living a long way from the church, for whom our way of doing things is simply too foreign.'[337] Coming from the Church of England's ordination charge to priests, proclaiming the gospel afresh is itself a core part of Anglican identity arising from the Formularies. In focusing solely on the use of Scripture, there are other legitimate sets of data that I have not collected, the chief being the question of where the people attending these churches have come from. While IC-X and FXC-N have expressed a strong Anglican identity through their use of Scripture, I can only speculate that their contact, engagement and inclusion of the de-churched and unchurched would look radically different to that of FXC-C and FXC-M. IC-X relies primarily on an attractional model; it relies on people moving to its city seeking a church with the 'correct' Evangelical pedigree. FXC-N was planted with a number of people from its sending Church, with others from the same Church over time also making it their home. From my own experience, as a 'cradle Anglican', I see this critique as highly significant. One of the churches I attended growing up ran services that faithfully used services straight from the authorised prayer book, with all four Lectionary readings present. Scripture was regularly used in the elements of the service but mission and evangelism were never discussed, there was no impetus to either invite or to go out, nor any consideration that the language of our gathering might not be a language that would address someone from beyond those of an upper-middle class, educated, English descent, and professional set. That Church's apparent high fidelity to Anglican identity through their liturgical practices was undercut by the absence of participating in the *missio Dei* to those beyond the Church. Innovation was absent because the service was carried out 'correctly' without consideration to the contemporary use of language or the surrounding culture. Moreover, on reflection, it is the very flexibility and innovative nature of FXC-C that makes it so significant. In my initial writing I asked what would their current pattern of meeting do to discipleship if members of the local government housing community started attending. In an Inherited Church, the services would likely continue according to the set pattern of the prayer book employed. Because FXC-C is not rigid in its improvised liturgy, it is better able to 'incarnate' itself according to its attendees. The very thing that I initially critiqued is the very feature that may enable it to fulfil the mission of the Church.

One final consideration is that of the dialogue between culture and the church. I want to be very clear on this point – this comment is in not directed towards FXC-C but is about interrogating the principle of enculturated mission itself (which speaks

[337] Stuart Robinson and Wayne Brighton, "Fresh Expressions of Church," in *Facting the Future: Bishop's Imagine a Different Church*, ed. S. Hale and A. Curnow (Melbourne: Acorn Press, Limited, 2009). p.21.

to the whole Fresh Expressions movement). Is there any limit in pursuit of 'culturally appropriate' or incarnational ministry? How are churches to find the line of demarcation between appropriate incarnational ministry and those which lose the gospel *kerygma* or transgress Christian ethics? The Sheffield Nine O'clock service stands as a salient warning against allowing an uncritical engagement with culture and syncretic approach to practice.[338] But FXC-C had a very different stance towards culture – it was playfully critical. In particular the talk on 'meeting God in the television room' was as much a Christian analysis of culture as it was an appropriation of the medium for the purpose of communicating the gospel. And to be clear, the loss of orthodoxy and a departure from biblical ethical standards can also beset the Inherited Church, as witnessed in a holiness sect that had established itself in various Australian Anglican and Presbyterian churches.[339] To return to the Fresh Expressions movement, the question needs to remain one of ongoing dialogue – how far may we go in enculturated ministry? Stuart Piggin, one of the leading historians of Evangelical Christianity in Australia, argues that both the vitality and internal conflicts of within Evanglicalism stem from the three authorities of Word (the Bible), the (Holy) Spirit, and the World (meaning how the surrounding culture is read and appraised).[340] The evangelicalism of IX-C was based strongly (perhaps defensively) on the Word, FXC-C, while by no means rejecting the Word, was on my experience giving greater consideration into how the Spirit might be at work in the World – as seen through the creative use of popular culture to bring out the themes of 1 Corinithians.

I am wholeheartedly in agreement with FXC-C that Anglican identity is not reducible simply to a particular pattern of Scripture usage; that said, the use of the Bible in any Church community is a reasonable area of academic inquiry. FXC-C does not constitute a failure of my method, nor does my research invalidate their place in the Anglican family; rather, their objections are a reminder that my approach needs to be read against the broader background of Anglican identity. Consequently I would hope that my research also provokes consideration amongst Anglicans generally as to the correlation between our espoused and practised beliefs, as indeed is commented on by FXC-M later in their reply.

[338] See: R. Howard, *Rise and Fall of the Nine O'clock Service* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1996).
[339] See: D. Millikan, *Imperfect Company: Power and Control in an Australian Christian Cult* (William Heinemann Australia, 1991).; M. Zwartz, *Fractured Families: The Story of a Melbourne Church Cult* (Parenesis Publishing, 2004).
[340] Piggin, *Spirit, Word and World: Evangelical Christians in Australia*.

6.4 - Fresh Expression M (FXC-M)

The very nomenclature 'Fresh Expressions of Church' can be problematic. Even when people understand that a Fresh Expression church plant may do things differently from how they are done in the Inherited Church, they will still invariably think of a worshipping community. Within the Christian tradition we hear 'the church' and our minds fill with whatever understandings of worship we have imbibed through experience, education or even the popular media. When does an activity of Christians become 'the church'? Our use of that word is problematic as we call the buildings where people assemble 'the church' but in the New Testament that term speaks of the people of God – whether gathered in a particular location (as in 1 Corinthians 1:2) or as an expression of the sum total of God's people (as in Colossians 1:24). As Winter comments, the church exists as both modalities and sodalities – the former taking in the breadth of the ecclesial community and its functions, while the latter is a grouping restricted by various factors (age, gender or the purpose of the group).[341] Both are expressions of the church; so it is that a mission agency or charity work of a parish might be considered legitimately to be part of the church, but at what point does a sodality move into being a modality? When does para-church become simply the church? Or, more acutely for this research, when does a fresh expression of mission become a fresh expression of the church?

Like IC-X, FXC-M is a suburban church, but while there are still a number of educated professionals in the district, there is also a significant degree of social disadvantage nearby. But I was left with the distinct impression that the reason for FXC-M undertaking the ministry it does is not solely due to setting, but its orientation – it is outward looking. It seeks engagement with the disadvantaged around it. IC-X could equally run such a ministry in its own social setting but they have chosen not to, focusing instead on themselves.

The following information comes from the 2011 Australia Bureau of Statistics figures,[342] however to prevent disclosure of the exact location specific web address information has not been provided. Information is also included from the 2001 Census for comparison.

FXC-M is identical to the gender representation (male 49.5%, female 50.5%) to its immediate broader urban geographic context, and also extremely close to the national average (male 49.4%, female 50.6%). This is almost unchanged from 2001 (male 50%, female 50%).

Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders in FXC-M's geographic setting are low (1.6%), which while marginally higher than that of its broader urban context (1.5%)

[341] R.D. Winter, *The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission* (William Carey Library, 1995). p.6.
[342] http://www.abs.gov.au/

is still significantly lower than the national figure (2.5%). This is a marginal increase on the 2001 Aboriginal population in the area (1.1%).

The country of birth data shows that people living in FXC-M's immediate context are highly likely to have to been born in Australia (78.8%) compared with both its broader urban context (71.4%), and the national population (69.8%). Those born outside of Australia were most likely to come from England (4.6%, compared to 4.2% nationally); Scotland (0.8% compared to 0.6% nationally); Germany (0.7% compared to 0.5% nationally); New Zealand (0.7% compared to 2.2% nationally); and Italian (0.6% compared to 0.9% nationally). In 2001 77.5% were born in Australia – those born overseas were chiefly from England (4.5%), New Zealand (1.3%), Germany (0.8%), the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (0.8%), and Scotland (0.7%).

Unemployment in both FXC-M's immediate setting and broader urban context are below the national figure (3.6% for both compared to 5.6%). In 2001 the local rate was 5.4%. Professionals made up 25.1% (compared to 21.3% nationally); Clerical roles were 21.3% (14.7% nationally); Managers 14.4% (12.9% nationally); Technicians and Trades People 12.9% (14.2 nationally); and Community and Personal Services were 9.5% (9.7% nationally). In 2001 the number of Professionals was comparable (24.8%), as were Clerical roles (21.9%), Management roles seem to have increased strongly (from 5.8%), as did Tradespeople and associated roles (6.7%).

A larger group professed no religious affiliation (28.4%) compared to the national figure (22.3%). The income per household was higher than the national average, but lower than the average given for the broader urban context of which FXC-M is a subset. The rate of people identifying as Anglican (17.2%) was almost identical to the national rate (17.1%). In 2001 the rate locally for those with no religion was significantly lower (16.6%), and those identifying as Anglicans was comparably higher (20.8).

From this, I would assert that those attending FXC-M as recipients of aid are not representative of the parent Church's social context. FXC-M appears to have engaged with a network of social disadvantage. Those staffing the project were likely to be socially distinct from the project's cliental if they had come from the Church that had established the food bank, while those volunteers who had not been part of the Church were more likely to be socially similar to those receiving aid.

6.4.1 - Questionnaire profile

FCX-M's questionnaire data presented the church as one for whom Anglican identity was of slightly greater than average importance; but as with other churches presented in this thesis, their Anglican identity was eclipsed by their allegiance to other sub-traditions. Like IC-X and FXC-N, FXC-M possesses an extremely high Evangelical identity, but unlike these churches, FXC-M's Evangelicalism is alloyed with equal

commitments to being Charismatic and Emergent. Both of these identities ranked only marginally behind 'being Evangelical' and all three scored above the church's allegiance to Anglicanism. Its allegiance to Liberalism was given the lowest possible ranking, although the respondents rated being 'Catholic' as having some importance for them.

In its espoused commitment to using the Bible, FXC-M respondents had an average rating of 75% - clearly the Bible as a whole is very important to them but their commitment to using every part of it is not as significant. This was manifested in a very strong commitment to the New Testament and the Psalms, with the rest of the Old Testament languishing below. This was not an outright rejection of the Old Testament as Scripture, but rather a diminishing of the importance of using the Pentateuch, Prophets, Wisdom material and Historical books. At this point though the questionnaire data become problematic: in answering what books of the Bible FXC-M had read in the last twelve months, and what was planned to be read in the next twelve, no parts of Scripture were listed. So how can their espoused commitments and indicated practice be reconciled? The problem escalates when we consider extremely high espoused importance to the use of the Bible in shaping liturgy, and the high importance attached to using the Bible in activities other than their primary worship meeting. On this discrepancy alone, FXC-M would warrant further investigation. How can such high espoused commitments apparently fail to manifest in practice?

6.4.2 - When is a Fresh Expression not a church?

Put simply, the Bible is not being used in FXC-M; however, this stems not from a deep-seated rejection of either the Bible or Anglican identity, but rather it stems from where in the possible life cycle of a Fresh Expression church it is located. *MSC* noted two things that are extremely important in the following discussion. Firstly, Fresh Expressions of Church have as part of their genesis a philosophy of loving service to others beyond the church.[343] Secondly, Fresh Expressions of Church start as immature plants with the goal of becoming mature.[344] The goal is not conformity to the structures of Inherited Church, but embodying in themselves the features and dynamics that make the Church. For this thesis, that move to maturity has as its goal its theology and use of the Bible. One might ask whether FXC-M is actually a Fresh Expression of Church at all given its lack of coherence with the criteria discussed early.[345] However, I would contend that FXC-M occupies an important place within this thesis. The Food Bank is certainly engaging with a network, but there is a new community forming. This is a liminal fresh expression of the church. There is the possibility of a stillbirth – the network remains one of aid and clients. But, if the burgeoning community

[343] Church of England. Missional and Public Affairs Council., *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*. p.36.
[344] Ibid.pp.21-22; 120-123.
[345] See pp.36-37.

By their own admission FXC-M is still in the phase of gathering community, through a food distribution network to the needy. One key point here is that while many recipients of the aid and members of the community are local, many are not, living beyond the parochial boundaries of the church that runs this project. The point is that this burgeoning Fresh Expression follows the network model as they seek both to assist and to gather a new Christian community. What the data from the questionnaire represents is not simply the self-identity of the Fresh Expression project itself, but the parish church that started and continues to staff the food distribution ministry. The volunteer team consisted of about ten people each week, with about twenty to forty recipients of aid also attending.

The programme runs two days each week. On the first day it runs solely as a food and aid distribution ministry. On the second day, there is a free meal provided which has people attending from the parish that runs the food pantry project and also from the project's recipients. Community is more obvious amongst the aid recipients on the first day rather than on the second. The meal on the second day gives people the opportunity to locate themselves on tables either by themselves or in small groups, whereas on the first day, the recipients are all together around large tables that can seat fifteen to twenty people. While refreshments are available, they are shared in common rather than in private.

As the days progressed, the parish Rector and other team members talked to me about the challenges they faced with this project as regards how to shift from a community based around need, to a worshipping Christian community. Within a few weeks of commencing the ministry they had tried playing Christian music in the background as people waited their turn to select their items but this had been received badly:

> We had a real issue with Christian music. We tried it, but backed off. It was a flaming Zeppelin.[346]

This practice had been stopped then, but had recently been revived although this time with positive comments from those attending for aid. Prayer, however, was no problem – on each of the days I was in attendance all those present (both the volunteers and the recipients of the food aid) gathered in a circle to pray. The prayer was spoken by one of the leaders from the volunteers and was extemporary in nature. God was named simply as 'God' or sometimes as 'Father'. On one occasion I noted attendees asking for prayer – people were happy to receive this one-to-one, but no other prayer or liturgical work occurred. The Bible was not read at this point, nor at any time.

Those attending this group were mixed in their reasons for needing aid and for attending the group. Some categories of attendees were: government welfare recipients, single parents, residents at a local women's shelter, first generation

[346] FXC-M 12

immigrants. Some had a high level of competence and educational qualification but were at present struggling financially, for instance because of abandonment by a spouse. The network the group reaches is large, being estimated at around five hundred in total, of whom about fifty may attend each week. The volunteers were, in the main, from the parent parochial church which had established the programme, but interestingly not all. One was from a different religious faith but who believed in the goal of helping others and so had volunteered even though he is not of Christian conviction. Some volunteers were either past or present recipients of aid from the group. The measure applied will determine the result obtained, and I am approaching 'the church' through the lens of Scripture, but this is not the only possible lens to consider. In critiquing *MSC*, John Hull argued that the common life of the church must of necessity result in justice and love.[347] In this regard, what I encountered is very much an experience of 'Church', even though the Bible was absent.

The network this project ministers to is one of social disadvantage on various fronts, a major one being that literacy for many is poor and that for many English is at best a second language. Expecting those attending to possess the level of literacy required in a typical Anglican service may be asking too much of them. More than one volunteer in addition to the Rector commented to me on how they understand that while they wanted to progress the group from just assistance to becoming a community of faith, they recognised that classic evangelism would not work there – slick or pre-packaged outreach methods such as *Alpha* would not be well received by those attending the group.

My time amongst the group has raised for me the question of how the Bible is to be meaningfully heard and engaged with in this group. In starting with loving service rather than worship, the parent church has been able to forge significant links with both the de-churched and unchurched in this network of social and economic disadvantage. Using the model of 'Belonging-Believing-Behaving'[348] there is a real sense of belonging here – there is community here. The conversations that occur are more than just passing time until it is their turn to select items from the pantry. The project has been running for approximately three years, and while there are learnings for the group about how best to care for those in their network, they are still wrestling with the issue of how to help give birth to a new Church in the midst of those they minister to – the essential problem is one of going beyond 'belonging' to 'believing'. The issue of belonging before believing is also significant when we look at the volunteers themselves. Most of the volunteers were drawn from the membership of the parent church, but not all. The current programme co-ordinator was herself a past recipient of the aid provided by the ministry. She had come from a Roman Catholic background, but now has made the parent church and this

[347] Hull, *Mission-Shaped Church : A Theological Response*. p.19.
[348] M. Gray-Reeves and M. Perham, *The Hospitality of God: Emerging Worship for a Missional Church* (Church Publishing Incorporated, 2011).

burgeoning Fresh Expression group her spiritual home. Her story might be read as reaching the group *MSC* labels as the de-churched.[349] As George Lings candidly commented, the Church of England has had the majority of its success in reconnecting to the de-churched; reaching the unchurched is on the whole done less frequently and less well.[350] It was with some interest then that I was introduced during my time at FXC-M to one of the volunteers who was a migrant and an adherent to another world faith. His comments were telling:

> I don't share their faith in Jesus; but when I saw what they were doing, I was confronted about what I believed…their faith in Jesus had them caring for people in this way, and I thought, shouldn't my own faith do that too? I still don't believe in their God, but I keep coming here to do this.[351]

However we may define 'being Anglican' here is an example of outreach that actually connects meaningfully with a person outside the church. He had no interest in attending the worship services of the parent church, but was committed to being part of this expression of the church's mission. As Bishop Stuart Robinson reflected on his own missional work, to expect people to move from the creativity and belonging of a fresh expression of church to conforming to a particular version of the Inherited Church runs the risk of turning away the very people you have sought to engage with the gospel.[352]

To put this in a broader perspective we should turn back to Archbishop Aspinall's view from *For the Parish* that makes the Inherited Church and the parish system the primary locus for ecclesial work and identity[353] – any parish could attempt to run a food distribution ministry with the hope of it acting as a feeder into its existing services (as well as being a laudable social action in and of itself). What we are considering here in FXC-M is making the outreach programme itself a new form of the church, with its own life, and an existence beyond seeking to prop up existing structures, or more than a charity delivery system.

However, for the purposes of this thesis, there is no Bible usage here, and no liturgy beyond the initial opening prayer, but in casual conversation with the volunteers it soon becomes evident that the Bible has informed both the church's decision to run this project and their own reasons for volunteering. The key questions raised by my time as a participant-observer here are: how is Christian community to emerge from

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[349] Church of England. Missional and Public Affairs Council., *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*. pp.36-41.
[350] George Lings, "Dublin Diocesan Growth Forum," http://vimeo.com/51398528.
[351] FXC-M 14
[352] Stuart Robinson, "I Killed a Church," Sydney Anglicans, sydneyanglicans.net/blogs/missionthinking/i_killed_a_church_stuart_robinson.
[353] Aspinall, "The Whole Church Engaged in the Whole Mission: President's Address – 1st Session, 77th Synod, Brisbane Diocese, 18 June 2011."

the network this project has tapped, and as Christian community (a church) forms from it, what role will the Bible play amongst it?

This Fresh Expression of Church is an embryonic one – there is the potential for cells to grow and form a new ecclesial body, but in the meantime the parent church's actions embody service, faith and love. This is no simple metaphor; George Lings posited a changing appreciation of how church planting occurs – shifting from a mechanical, to an agricultural, to a parent/child model.[354] Fresh Expression churches take some characteristics from their parent, but what grows is no mere regulated product or carbon copy of what has come before. Fresh Expression churches are 'birthed', but their future growth to maturity is not planned or measured by what has come before. Whether the new body upholds Anglican identity in its use of the Bible will need to be tested in the future, but they are at present receiving a positive experience of the Christian faith and of the Anglican Church of Australia. The recipients of aid may never attend the church, or they may in the future attend another church altogether. The volunteers and Rector seem at peace with this – they are operating out of a Kingdom rather than just a church paradigm – if their work here prospers another part of God's Kingdom elsewhere, they rejoice in it. For example, most of the Chinese community who attend for aid are already members of a Chinese Christian Church and they brought and introduced their pastor to the Rector resulting in the two churches working together at an annual community outreach event. This project is not done simply to bring people to their own church, but rather is done with a perspective that makes the Church larger than just their own gathering. They are operating out of a view that makes mission about more than just church growth and planting.

6.4.3 - Behind the scenes: leadership, scripture, and church planting

Derek Tidball surveyed a variety of Biblical images and metaphors for church leadership.[355] In the Biblical metaphor employed by Jesus and Peter, Tidball noted that the Christian leader was a shepherd – guiding the flock as they seek pasture and protection.[356] As my research with FXC-M continued I began to strongly identify this metaphor with their leadership practices. At my first visit to FXC-M I unexpectedly spent some time in conversation with the parish's Rector – I had not sought an interview with him as I had felt that the information gathered from the questionnaires was sufficient. I discovered through this conversation that he was acutely aware of the issues that I was also observing; how to make the transition from a compassionate ministry from an Inherited Church to a Fresh Expression of church attended by those who are currently clients of the parish's aid programme:

[354] George Lings, in *Evaluating Fresh Expressions* (St John's College, University of Durham, 2010).
[355] D. Tidball, *Skilful Shepherds: An Introduction to Pastoral Theology* (Apollos, 1997).
[356] Ibid. pp.44-48; 85-87; 138.

> Prayer is no problem. The Bible and liturgy are problematic. One-on-one with people works.[357]
>
> We can't roll out programmes – that won't work here. Classic evangelism doesn't work here. Faith here is infectious. People have to catch it.[358]

Starting a Fresh Expression church is a risk. There is no formula to follow, and no guarantee of success. On Lings' metaphor, there is always the risk of a stillbirth in the gestating of new ecclesial life. The leader (in this case the Rector of the parent church) is responsible for what sort of 'DNA structure' is established for the new church and cannot control its life, but can help establish the underlying character and traits for the church. A theologically literate and ecclesiastically informed leader is the carrier of tradition – not just the Gospel message, but the core theological identity of Anglicanism that we seek to foster in a fresh expression of both Christianity and Anglicanism.

In conversation, the Rector did share two opportunities that had begun to shape his thinking about how the project could evolve into a worshipping community, both of them through the understanding of 'loving service'. Many churches celebrate an annual service for the blessing of animals – ranging from the stock of farming communities to the pets of the highly urbanised. This service has been held in the past for this network and the concept was enthusiastically embraced. In this service God, through the agency of the Church, is seen to be validating and engaging the worth and lives of both the pets and their owners. The second point of contact between the network and Christian worship has been through the opportunity afforded by personal tragedy: one of the recipients of the project's food distribution ministry recently lost family members who died overseas in their home country. The person was unable to travel internationally to attend the funerals and grieve with her family; she approached the Rector and asked if some sort of memorial service could be held. The woman was from a Roman Catholic background but was comfortable in asking the Anglican clergy person (with a Charismatic perspective) to officiate – the Fresh Expression community was her community, not the local Catholic Church.

What both of these opportunities present is the paradigm of Christian worship generated through the life events and concerns of the community. Is this not the heart of the Fresh Expression approach, worship that comes from the grassroots, and is not imposed from above? The challenge herein is for the Rector and the team to identify further felt-needs that may be responded to liturgically and also to consider what part Scripture will have in these activities. If people experience worship that

[357] FXC-M 12
[358] FXC-M 12

speaks to them in the language they speak (the Anglican principle of worship in the vernacular),[359] then they are more likely to request it or seek it out.

What this situation highlights is the crucial role played by the Rector in the project - not so much in the running of the food aid itself – but rather in the transitioning from charity to worshipping community. As the theologically and liturgically educated authorised church leader, it is his role to serve as the reflective (dare I suggest reflexive) person to establish the interface between the Church's liturgical life and the particulars of the network the project has established. How he understands Anglican theological identity and Biblical usage will directly impact the embryonic life of this particular Fresh Expression of Church – in this we observe that Shier-Jones is right in her claim and focus on the training of Fresh Expression leaders and pioneer church planters as the pivotal issue for the movement.[360] In particular there is her crucial insight that not only should pioneer ministers be nurtured and sustained by Scripture,[361] but it should also be the well-spring of their ministry. How churches approach the Bible, how they model how to read it, and what place it has in the life of God's people is crucial since neglecting the Bible or subverting it leaves open the door to heresy and apostasy.[362] Perhaps a botanical illustration serves better here – the pioneer minister is not a midwife assisting in the birthing of new ecclesiastical life but rather a sensitive arborist, noting and incorporating both the form inherent in a young sapling and also the context into which it is being planted. How its limbs are pruned or shaped will have a foundational and profound effect on its growing appearance and structure over the course of its life. While the maxim of Anglicanism is often stated as *lex orandi lex credendi*, not all Anglicans will be conscious of the structure of what it is that they are practising. It is one thing to talk about the Nicene Creed as a summary of Christian belief through the Christological travails of the early church, it is another to be aware of the more subtle movements and usages of the Bible in the liturgy. How many Anglicans think critically about the how, why, and where of the Bible in their liturgy? *Praxis* too easily can become *habitus* unless critically engaged and evaluated. This is however what should be expected of a theologically trained and literate licenced minister. The role of the clergy is not simply to preside at the table in communion – it is to serve as a repository of an expounded knowledge of an ecclesiastical tradition.

6.4.4 - FXC-M considered

If we look at FXC-M alongside the criteria I have determined, it fares poorly.

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[359] Bartlett, *A Passionate Balance: The Anglican Tradition*. p.173.

[360] Angela Shier-Jones, *Pioneer Ministry and Fresh Expressions of Church* (London: SPCK, 2009). pp.18-19.

[361] Ibid p.25.

See also: David Goodhew, Andrew Roberts, and Michael Volland, *Fresh! An Introduction to Fresh Expressions of Church and Pioneer Ministry* (London: SCM Press, 2012). p.187.

[362] Ibid pp.29-31.

The only possible criteria FXC-M could satisfactorily address is in regard to approaching God in prayer by speaking his words back to him. We see this in how God is addressed in terms the Bible itself uses (Father). This is a very slender thread, clearly unable to bear the weight of identity and practice we are seeking. But the problem is not one of failed Anglican identity but of the issue of when my participant-observer research was carried out. To return to the metaphor employed earlier, at what point do we begin to measure something as part of the church? We do not apply the full range of measures we would to an adult to a child still *in utero*; we should not apply these measures, however correct they might be, to a fresh expression church that is still but embryonic. Is FXC-M Anglican by its practices through the lens of Biblical usage? The answer is not 'No', but 'Too soon to tell – come back later'.

6.5 - Fresh Expression N (FXC-N)

Is Anglicanism felt or practised? As discussed below, FXC-N self-identifies in the first place not as Anglican but as Evangelical. Does this matter? Rather than pre-empt the following discussion, I ask whether one can be Anglican by practice alone without wanting to be part of that denominational tradition?

The following information comes from the 2011 Australia Bureau of Statistics figures,[363] however to prevent disclosure of the exact location specific web address information has not been provided. Information is also included from the 2001 Census for comparison.

FXC-N's geographic context has marginally fewer males than females (male 48.3%, female 51.7%) to both its immediate broader urban geographic context (49.5% and 50.5% respectively), and also compared to the national average (male 49.4%, female 50.6%). The last decade has seen a negligible adjustment in the genders (ten years prior the rates were 48% male and 52% female).

Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders in FXC-N's geographic setting are have slightly higher representation (2.1%) compared to the broader urban context (1.5%). The local representation is however marginally lower than the national figure (2.5%). Significantly the proportion of indigenous peoples at the local level has roughly doubled since 2001 (then 1.2%).

The country of birth data shows that people living in FXC-N's immediate context are most likely to have to been born in Australia (76.6%) compared with both its broader urban context (71.4%), and the national population (69.8%). Those born outside of Australia were most likely to come from England (3.3%, compared to 4.2% nationally); India (1.1% compared to 1.4% nationally); New Zealand (0.9% compared to 2.2% nationally); Philippines (0.9% compared to 0.8% nationally); and Sri Lanka (0.7% compared to 0.4% nationally). My time attending FXC-N would seem to confirm that the church was representative of the ethnic ratios in the community – the church was almost exclusively attended by people with English or European ancestry. The ethic make up seems relatively stable – in the 2001 census 77% were born in Australia; those born overseas were chiefly from England (4.1%), New Zealand (1.3%), Scotland (0.8%), India (0.7%), and Sri Lanka (0.7%).

Unemployment in FXC-N's immediate setting (2.8%) runs lower than that in the broader urban context (3.6%) and the national figure (5.6%). Clerical roles made up 24.1% (compared to 14.7% nationally); Professional roles were 20.3% (21.3% nationally); Managers 14.1% (12.9% nationally); Trades People were 12.4% (14.2% nationally); Community and Service Workers 10% (14.2 nationally); Sales Workers were 8.8% (9.4% nationally); while Labourers made up only 5.3% (9.4% nationally). The income per household was higher than the national average, but almost identical for the broader urban context of which FXC-C is a subset. Ten years prior

[363] http://www.abs.gov.au/

unemployment was almost double that of 2011 (4.2%). In 2001 25.5% were classified as Professionals, 25.4% were Clerical/Service, 6.6% were in Management, Tradespeople were 7.2%, while Labourers were 2.6%.

The rate of people identifying as Anglican (17.6%) was almost identical to the national rate (17.1%). In 2001 the rate was 19.8%. In 2011 23.1% claimed no religious affiliation compared to the national figure (23.1%) – in 2001 it had locally been 15.5%.

This area's demographic mix is appeared to be represented in FXC-N. It is located towards the edge of its parent city, and the number of professionals is lower than other suburbs closer to the CBD. This is still a well off area, but less white collar than the areas in which FXC-C and IX-C are located.

6.5.1 - Questionnaire profile

FXC-N presents us with an interesting situation; from its questionnaire data it puts a low average value on Anglican identity, but attaches extremely high importance to 'being Evangelical'. Indeed, the other sub-traditions are rated as almost entirely unimportant. In the leadership circles of this church there can be no mistaking their primary identity is as Evangelicals – with a strong commitment to the importance of the Bible as the means of God's self-disclosure of both his identity and his saving purposes culminating in the death and resurrection of Jesus. This understanding is backed by their responses to the questions regarding their commitment to using the various parts of the Bible. Their cumulative score was by far the highest of any church surveyed (higher even than IC-X), with a near total commitment to the use of all the constituent parts of the Bible. Highly significant was the near parity between using both the Old and New Testaments equally; at least in their espoused beliefs and self-attested practices they were far from the scourge of Marcionism. Indeed their recorded readings covered eighteen different books of the Bible, with plans to read from two more new books in the next twelve months (in addition to continuing to read ones previously engaged with).

This professed commitment to the Bible was not simply limited to their choice of reading material but was also evident in how they believe they shape their liturgical practices. Interestingly they placed the involvement of the Bishop as being of average importance to them, which resonates with the importance attached to 'being Anglican'. At its most extreme, Evangelicalism can place so much weight on the Bible that other elements of the Lambeth quadrilateral retreat into obsolescence, but as the authors of *MSC* comment, the centrality of Scripture is but one of the characteristics of Anglicanism.[364] FXC-N members understand themselves to be holding their extremely strong commitment to the Bible without annulling other hallmarks of Anglicanism. Unsurprisingly, their commitment to the centrality of Scripture means that they also are committed to its use in a variety of settings

[364] Church of England. Missional and Public Affairs Council., *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*. p.100.

beyond that of their public worship. On paper at least, FXC-N looks like it provides exactly the sort of evidence I am searching for, (a high commitment to the Bible, with high Biblical usage), in order to test the legitimacy of the Fresh Expression church as authentically Anglican. The issue at hand becomes, is there correlation between their espoused commitments and their practice?

6.5.2 - The researcher as conditioned worshipper

FXC-N felt a lot like home for me in that it functions within a reformed Evangelical ethos, with a high espoused commitment to knowing God through Scripture. In my own upbringing and Christian discipleship this was where I felt most at home. Evangelicals pride themselves on being 'Bible Christians' – while not a universal feature of Evangelicalism, there are strands within it that dismiss other traditions within the Church as 'not taking the Bible seriously' (and in turn Evangelicals are sometimes dismissed by other parts of the Anglican family for failing to give sufficient weight to tradition and reason). In their work investigating a student congregation in Oxford, Fiddes and Ward identify four tenets that mark conservative Evangelicalism: the prominence of the Bible, an emphasis on personal conversion, the ministry of Christ being primarily understood through the doctrine of penal substitution, and a 'hearty' system of singing.[365] I find their summary resonates with my own experience, and moreover such a description fits very well with IC-X and FXC-N especially. The high point of Evangelical worship in these churches was undoubtedly the sermon; more time is usually given to the exposition of Scripture than to hearing Scripture itself. Indeed, my own shaping of this research stems from my own Evangelical Anglican commitments. So, it was that I, along with approximately one hundred others, came each week to hear 'the Word' proclaimed at FXC-N. There were a conspicuously high number of young adults and children present, but older age cohorts were also present too; overall, FXC-N seemed to have a reasonable demographic spread of age in attendance.

6.5.3 - Introduction/welcome

Only once did the service start with Scripture. In my third week, the service leader began by quoting from John 10 and Hebrews 3. The message was to remind the gathered congregation of both their theological identity as God's people (Jesus' flock), and to call on them not to fail to listen to God as Israel had done in the wilderness. At each other occasion the various service leaders began with a warm monologue expressing their personal welcome to visitors and how good it was to gather in Jesus' name. The Bible was mentioned but not used; it had become another item (however important) in the service rather than God's address through the liturgy.

[365] C.B. Scharen, *Explorations in Ecclesiology and Ethnography* (W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012). p.58-59.

6.5.4 - Confession/Absolution

In the current Australian prayer book (APBA)[366] confession and absolution are mandated in both orders of Morning and Evening Prayer, all three orders of Holy Communion, the service of Prayer, Praise and Proclamation, as well as the services for Baptism and Ordination. Only in the Daily Offices do the rubrics allow them to be optional.[367] Yet, in only one of the services I attended at FXC-N was there a public confession and absolution; this was the same week that communion was celebrated, and the confession was perhaps a nod to the normal Anglican practice of self-examination prior to sharing in the Eucharistic meal. More tellingly, Scripture was not used to call the congregation to repentance, nor was there any obvious shaping of the content of the confession by Scriptural passages. I found I was disappointed but not surprised when the declaration of forgiveness was said without a Scripture passage upon which to justify the assertion that those who had confessed and believed in Jesus would be forgiven. The problem is twofold; one of the essential elements of the Anglican appreciation of Scripture has for the better part disappeared. I was reminded in part of my three years worshipping at a Baptist church, where I never once experienced a public collective act of confession, nor was assured through the reading of Scripture that my (our) sins had been forgiven. For the purpose of this thesis, the more important element would be that when confession was practised, it was without reference to or use of the Bible. As Adam argues, one of the three goals of the English Reformation was edification – growing in godliness and Biblical faith through the church's liturgy, reading of Scripture and preaching.[368] Or as Archbishop Neill stated 'The aim is not that of producing immediate emotional effects, but of gradually building up a resolute purpose of holiness based more on the direction of the will than on the stirring of the emotions.'[369]

Reading the Book of Common Prayer and its lawfully authorised daughter-texts demonstrates that edification was to be achieved through the use of Scripture in the liturgy, not through simply having the necessary liturgical elements. Anglican liturgy is drenched in Scripture, rather than simply restricting it to the formal readings. In this regard, while the loss of confession and absolution in all bar one week was lamentable, the real issue was the shearing of it from Scripture when it was practised. While I can only comment on practice I witnessed, if this pattern exists as part of FXC-N's modus operandi, it presents a serious challenge to my assertion that the Fresh Expressions of Church are Anglican on the basis of their use of Scripture.

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[366] Anglican Church of Australia, *A Prayer Book for Australia*.
[367] Ibid. pp.383, 431 (note 1).
[368] Adam, *The Very Pure Word of God: The Book of Common Prayer as a Model of Biblical Liturgy*. p.32.
[369] Neill, *Anglicanism*. p.418

6.5.5 - Intercessions

The use of Scripture in the Intercessions was sporadic at FXC-N. In the first and third weeks the Intercessions lacked any scriptural grounding or rationale. In the second week the service leader used a reading from Acts 2, wherein the early church is recorded as having devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and to prayer. In this case both Scripture and the practices of the early church are taken as normative for the practices for churches today. As a call to prayer, it was superb, and also was very much in keeping with FXC-N's Evangelical identity and espoused commitment to the Bible (and especially the Apostolic writings). Where I felt this usage was lacking was in not continuing to use the Bible obviously to shape the prayers that followed it (not that they prayed for anything inappropriate or counter to Scripture). However there was a lack of a cogent reason for the issues and people we prayed for. This principle was far better evidenced in my fourth week present, when the Intercessions were based around two Biblical texts, 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12 and 1 Timothy 2:1-2. In the former following the Apostle's practice we were exhorted to and led in giving thanks for other Christians and also in praying for faithfulness and endurance for Christians undergoing persecution around the world. In the latter, we were called to:

> Do as your servant Paul calls us to, and pray for those in high office and government.[370]

Praying in this way need not be exhaustively legalistic every time. The point of this method is to present a Biblical rationale in what a congregation prays for – as Peter Adam rightly comments, doing so prevents a drift towards a solely self-centred approach to prayer, and teaches Christians how to pray in line with what the Bible espouses as important to God.[371]

6.5.6 - Holy Communion

The Lord's Supper was only celebrated once in the time I was present at FXC-N. The very fact that the Communion was celebrated could be understood as following Jesus' commands for his disciples to continue to remember his death through sharing bread and wine in an appropriation and transformation of the Exodus Passover meal but for a church with as high an espoused commitment to the use of Scripture in shaping its liturgy, there was a disconnect with the Biblical text at this point. Anglican Eucharistic liturgy is normally at pains to rehearse again the Gospel writer's account of Christ's last supper, or to frame it through the Pauline corrections to the errors in Corinth. Here the use of the Bible in the Lord's Supper was pared back to the brief instruction of:

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[370] FXC-N 15

[371] Adam, *The Very Pure Word of God: The Book of Common Prayer as a Model of Biblical Liturgy*. p.55.

'Take and eat this'[372]

While similar to the wording of Luke 26:26, this is still not the actual words of Scripture. Does it matter if churches have Scriptural practices but fail to present the Scriptural mandate for them? Yes it does matter; not owing to any magical quality of the words, but because the way in which Scripture is or is not used in liturgy has a didactic function for the assembled church. There is a disconnect here between the voiced importance of the Bible around the day's readings and preaching, and how it is used elsewhere. It also seems problematic given the historical appreciation of Anglicanism as a church of both Word and Sacrament; this is not simply to distance itself from the extremes of medieval Roman Catholicism's emphasis on the Mass or the Word focus of the Continental Protestant Reformation but also to emphasise the link between the two. The Word not only calls Christ's follower to perform the dominical Sacraments but also explains their meaning. The absence of Scripture at this point in FXC-N's liturgy is inconsistent with their commitment to the use of Scripture, irrespective of their pattern of readings and sermon series.

6.5.7 - Dismissal

Historically, when Anglicans have left their public worship it has been not with a whimper, but a bang – a theological crescendo of a doxological formulation, a Trinitarian statement, or a suitable direct quotation from Scripture. Only in half of the services that I attended was there a suitable use of Scripture to conclude the service. In the first of these instances, this was simply a revisiting of a passage from early in the service; this was the week that the service leader had introduced the Intercessions with the quote from Acts 2 and the quotation was repeated again as a summary statement for the church's activity over the last hour, as well as an encouragement to continue in prayer and reading the Bible. This meant that the focus was not about God dismissing his people, but about the church's own activity. This was not the dialogical pattern of Anglican liturgy. In the rush to the Evangelical goal of the authority of Scripture, the more subtle consideration of how Scripture can be suitably used in the liturgy had fallen by the wayside. In the second instance, the service leader (the Rector) used the Aaronic blessing from Numbers 6; this, I felt, was far more in keeping with the Anglican approach to Scripture and liturgy – God-given words, used to bless and dismiss God's people. This was, through human agency, sending his people out. Significantly this service, led by the Rector, was also the one that had begun with the use of John and Hebrews; he alone of the service leaders seemed to express sensitivity to how Scripture could operate in the service in a way that resonated with traditional Anglican liturgy.

6.5.8 - Readings and sermons

Scripture speaks with many voices – something that Anglicanism has recognised both in the number of readings a prayer book service allows for, and in what parts of Scripture are used in the liturgy itself. While there was a prominent sermon each

[372] FXC-N 16

week at this church, its leadership sought to maintain balance in having more than one reading each week. One reading was always the basis of the sermon, but what struck me was how considered the selection of the other reading was. There were three strengths I noted in this practice. Firstly, it was a genuinely independent reading, not merely a supportive or related text for the 'primary' (sermon) reading. Secondly, it was a continuous reading – over a number of weeks, a large section of the designated text was read out, each one being contiguous with the preceding and subsequent weeks. Indeed they had designated this as their 'serial reading', denoting a commitment to an on-going engagement with Scripture. Thirdly, the serial reading was afforded additional weight by the inclusion of questions about it for either personal or corporate reflection. This prompted a creative response in me – why isn't something like this used in inherited forms of church? All too often the readings not being preached on are allowed to pass without comment or consideration. The Anglican commitment to an 'intelligent' reading of Scripture must mean more than 'continuous'; at some points in the liturgical calendar the Epistle reading is often is related to, or illuminates, the primary text for the day (being the Gospel reading). But FXC-N's practice goes beyond this, allowing readers to listen thoughtfully to a variety of texts and consider them on their own terms.

During my fourth week the service leader (the Rector) remarked that:

> We think so much of the Bible that we like to read through different parts of it. Today we're up to Psalm 82.[373]

This comment has the hallmark of authentic Anglicanism to it, but the question is whether such a claim can be sustained. FXC-N does indeed read a diversity of Scripture – over the course of a year they would hear from a variety of genres and authors, but the total amount of Scripture heard each week is not particularly heavy – indeed the longest readings would be the Psalms. The question needs to be asked as to whether the goal is simply to present a variety of readings or if it is to read the majority of Scripture within a given time period. It is also worth considering how the Psalms were read in the same way as any other piece of Scripture, rather than responsively. It was information to be heard and processed, but not as a meditative or worshipful text.

Significantly there was a balance of both Old and New Testaments at each of the services I attended. There was a conscious effort for both Testaments to be heard from; indeed over the course of my visits, both were preached on. The Old Testament was understood through a Christological lens. In preaching on Saul, the Rector contrasted him with Christ – Saul was disobedient to God through his disregard for Samuel, but the counterpoint for Saul was not his successor David, but Jesus:

[373] FXC-N 15

> Our King chose obedience to God in the face of fear.[374]

Also of significance was what was not read. Evangelicals are often caricatured as being too focused on the Pauline Epistles, in particular Romans, but in the course of my time at FXC-N, the Pauline Epistles were not read, nor were those passages that were read and preached on forced through a Pauline aperture. The fear of a canon-within-the-canon appears to be unsustainable in this Evangelical Fresh Expression church's practices.

There was one moment though that, for me, resonated with Anglican practice and conviction; in my final week the readings were introduced by the Rector with a quotation from Psalm 19. In this quotation, there was an equating of Torah with the Bible more generally and thus Scripture was to be understood as being:

> Sweeter than honey, more precious than gold, and that 'by it your servant is warned.[375]

Upon further reflection, while I could appreciate the comment in regard to FXC-N's readings and preaching, it failed to be *consistently* manifested in how Scripture was used in the service beyond the readings.

6.5.9 - FXC-N considered

How were my criteria for Anglican usage of the Bible met in FXC-N?[376] The unity of the Bible through Jesus was undoubtedly a core tenet of this church. There was a consistent inclusion of Biblical material from across the canon, and a conscious methodology of the opportunity to hear from both Testaments. However, Scripture did not consistently operate as God's proxy.

Beyond the day's formal readings, Scripture was present but neither in the quantity nor the function that BCP envisages. The essential change is a move from a dialogical paradigm to a more monological one. In FXC-N Scripture is highly valued and the sermon is in the heart of the service; however, Scripture does not reliably function as God's proxy in the service, it is not consistently used to call people to meet with God and each other, nor to send them back out into the world, and it rarely shapes the prayers. There is no strong sense that God speaks (through the words of Scripture) and that we then respond and reply to him; this is not a dialogue through the Bible. The more common paradigm present is monological as God speaks through the day's readings (and the sermon) but there is no invitation to respond in the liturgy. The shift is from God as a participant in a conversation to being the subject for elucidation. This change is found not simply from the divine side of the conversation but also on the ecclesial – in Anglican liturgy Scripture not only is God speaking to us, but rather God also provides His people with the form and content of our words back to Him. In changing the reading of the Psalm from a

[374] FXC-N 15
[375] FXC-N 15
[376] See 4.4

whole congregation activity to one done by a single reader, the Psalm ceases to be God's words for us to address Him with, and simply more of his monologue to us. The Psalm is no longer schooling us in how we may *address God*, to simply addressing us *about* him.

Across the month of my attendance, what struck me was the inconsistency in Biblical usage. Those leaders who have been both theologically trained and ordained within the Anglican Church of Australia are usually the ones who make the better usage of Scripture in the liturgy. I saw this acutely as I reflected on the differences between who led the services on which weeks. What seems to be occurring is that those shaped most by the Anglican tradition through education and training are better able to apply the Anglican principles regarding Scripture in public worship – good Biblical teaching and understanding alone are not the key here, but rather the modelling of a method of thinking and worshipping using the Bible. Starting the service is more than simply telling the congregation that the preacher will be speaking about a certain passage or topic today. In Anglicanism it begins with the conviction that God speaks to us in Scripture, and thus when we gather to worship God, we do so listening to him speak to us, engaging us throughout the service through Scripture.

Each week attendees were urged to join a Bible study group; each week we were told of the importance of the Bible in knowing God. When it was announced that we were now to have the Bible readings for the day, the vast majority of those present produced their Bible, or read from their iPad or smart phones but there was little consistency in using the Bible throughout the liturgy beyond the readings and sermon. As a visitor, I found all the elements I knew and expected but they were shorn from the scriptural warrant and explanation for their practice.

While this is a welcoming community, with a commitment to reading the Bible, I am left wondering whether the Bible was simply an information-bearing object, or was used as God's means of address and engagement with congregational worship. Not every service leader took care to ground the differing elements of the service in Scripture. Only once was Scripture used as the rationale for the content of the prayers. Confession and Assurance of forgiveness were done without a Scriptural call or warrant for comfort after the event. We were told that God (through the medium of the Bible) was clear that the Bible was important, but how was this evidenced? The fulcrum for how the Bible is used relates squarely with who is leading. There was a quantifiable difference between week four, and the previous week – it is not coincidental that in the fourth week the Rector was the service leader. I found myself wondering, as I did at FXC-C, what a life-time of this pattern of worship would enculturate in those who attend here as their church. While I found the sermons to be thoughtful, with a strong Christological focus, I found myself asking if members would see the connections between Scripture and liturgy. Would the deep patterns of Anglican liturgical worship be repeated here? Moreover, what was the centre of the service, its focus? Was it Scripture as the word of God or

the sermon as divine? Having the second reading helped make the Bible bigger than just what the preacher wanted to talk about, but on the whole the service lacked the sense that God was addressing His people throughout the meeting through the words of Scripture. If sin is characterised primarily as being against God, then it is God's role to call for repentance. As the injured party, it is God's right to declare that sin has been forgiven and the two reconciled. Only once did we begin with Scripture – and we were dismissed and sent out by the words of Scripture only half of the weeks that I was in attendance. This is a serious matter – Christian gatherings play a significant role in the discipling of believers. What are future generations of Christians learning here, both about the faith (content) and about Christian practice? Confession, absolution and assurance tied to Scripture only occurred once, the week Communion was shared. Again, what does this enculturate for new or returning Christians? Again, when these elements are disconnected from a publicly stated Scriptural rationale and content, what will be the end product? There was only one week that the Intercessions were linked to a part of Scripture - without this, what pattern of prayer is being learned here? Without reference to Biblical priorities and models of prayer, what is to prevent prayer from devolving into a simple exercise in wish-listing?

Leuenberger's observation that Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer is a skilful and beautiful arrangement of Scripture[377] forms a critical counterpoint to contemporary Anglican liturgy. If the BCP is indeed the benchmark not only for Anglican theology but also for the principles of Anglican liturgical practice, then I struggle with the relative paucity of Scripture in the services I attended. This is not to say that the message of Scripture was not read or diligently studied, but that the essential character of the service was not the Scriptural encounter that Leuenberg claims to be the character of historical Anglicanism. While many of the service elements from traditional Anglican liturgy were present, Scripture did not regularly bracket the service or shape the liturgy. There was not a consistent sense in which Scripture as God's voice led worship. God thus became a subject rather than either a participant or leader in the service. There were scriptural allusions in most songs, but these were not operating as the divine voice, and if a listener was unaware of the Scripture behind these allusions, they might miss God addressing them through what was being sung.

Upon reflection after my time there, I have also begun to question the liturgical architecture employed at FXC-N. Harrison commented that the strength of Anglicanism was that even if the sermon was heretical, at least the gospel was present through the liturgy itself.[378] Could the same be true here? The Bible itself was present in the service, but did it shape the service according to the gospel? I'm

[377] Leuenberger, *Archbishop Cranmer's Immortal Bequest: The Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England: An Evangelistic Liturgy*. pp.224-225; 337.
[378] D. E. W. Harrison, *The Book of Common Prayer, the Anglican Heritage of Public Worship* (London: S.P.C.K., 1962). p.126.

not convinced that FXC-N's liturgy functioned in this way – the Bible was indeed central to their meeting in the readings and sermons, but the service itself was not a liturgical argument or journey that worshippers embarked on.

6.6 - Right of reply

My aim in presenting my reflections on my participant-observer fieldwork has been to be critical. This does not mean being unduly negative, but critical in the academic sense of applying due reasoned consideration of each church and its practices. It is right and proper that I give them an opportunity to engage and respond to how I have portrayed them and their churches. I undertook this research because I want to see the Anglican Church of Australia engage in enculturated mission, while still preserving its theological character. While I have sought responses from the leaders of the churches I have studied, I have sought to maintain their anonymity because there is power in ethnographic writings for good and ill – we cannot as researchers pretend that knowledge is a neutral commodity.[379] At a practical level, if the identities of these churches were disclosed, then it could affect the relationship between their leaders and the Diocesan hierarchy. Linguistic representation of the 'other' is always fraught; in writing on the problems of ethnography and epistemology though the lens of African Spiritual Churches, Thomas Kirsch draws our attention to the chasm that can exist between depiction by the researcher and the internal understanding and appreciation by their 'subjects'.[380] Moreover, questions arising from critical ethnography and feminism about the political dimension of writing further problematise the task: 'Who benefits from this research? Whose interests are at stake?'[381] The process is still difficult because as the writer I am commenting on their responses, but I have included their replies unredacted to allow them the courtesy of their voices being heard.

6.6.1 - IC-X

The Assistant Minister responsible for this service has subsequently left the church so for completeness, I have included comments from him and the Rector of the parish who has ultimate responsibility for all three services.

Both the Rector and the Assistant Minister were in agreement with my depiction of the services, though the Assistant Minister felt the need to defend his practices regarding my noting the lack of Scripture in the dismissal of the services:

> I would take issue with that point. I always had, and have, in my Bible, a booklet of biblical quotes comprising invitations to worship, benedictions and dismissals and it was my settled practice to read a verse from Scripture before the "Go in peace to love and serve etc….. I also issued a copy of said booklet to each of my service leaders.[382]

[379] S.R. Jaarsma, ed. *Handle with Care: Ownership and Control of Ethnographic Materials* (University of Pittsburgh Press,2002). pp.17-27.
[380] O. Zenker and K. Kumoll, *Beyond Writing Culture: Current Intersections of Epistemologies and Representational Practices* (Berghahn Books, 2010). pp.89ff.
[381] Brown and Dobrin, *Ethnography Unbound: From Theory Shock to Critical Praxis*. p.4.
[382] IC-X 2

> This is a helpful profile of the particular features and practices of our church. It is 'strongly evangelical in its identity.' "Its identity can be seen as partisan against other traditions within the denomination" – this accurately reflects a somewhat deeper view that we have been against certain things rather than for others and to no small extent this is what defines us.
>
> It seems to me that this has provided both an accurate reflection of the nature of services and use of the bible at (IC-X) whilst offering some astute observations and challenges, all of which are worthy of consideration.[383]

6.6.2 - FXC-M

Similar to IC-X, the reply from FXC-M left my writing unchallenged, but instead sought to give further context to their ministry and target network.

> The opportunity to reflect and respond is appreciated. The author has provided a balanced and reasonable assessment against his criteria with which I agree. The assessment is "Too soon to tell" and this is true. However, I believe that the success of FXC-M will not be does it achieve a recognisable state of being "Anglican" but rather can the community as gathered be externally recognisable as living and acting out of a "Believing" faith that is biblically robust and informed.
>
> In reality FXC-M is not, and never can be, a single community. The people who gather on each day are separate communities and within each day are diverse faith and ethnic and language groups that are hard to integrate into a cohesive community. Issues of language and literacy make the continuous reading of Scripture in an '*ordered and intelligent manner*' across any of these sub-communities will always make this a challenging criteria to achieve. Each network within the gathered group needs its own engagement strategy – but each network is also a rich opportunity for faith engagement and growth. Pastoral services provide one clear, but limited, avenue of engagement and two weddings, a baptism and a funeral have recently been conducted.
>
> As noted by the author, ministry leaders need to be nurtured and sustained by Scripture and have it as the well-spring of their ministry. This is strongly supported by our observations. We are heavily reliant on oral transmission of faith and Scripture rather than the read it and study it yourself approach. The first day revolves around a common table, a communal hospitality but not communion setting, where conversation is often of matters of import and God can be brought into the discussion. This requires faith and biblical understanding in the leader and in the

[383] IC-X 3

ministry team. This common table has evolved to lunch after the shopping for the ministry team volunteers and provides a place where ethos is communicated but also where faith can be encouraged and formed. What has the first potential to arise as a worshipping community is this volunteer team as it draws more workers from the gathered community, initially through the hearing, healing from previous experience and reintegration of the dechurched into the team. The biblical literacy and personal importance on bible reading and reflection inherent in the founding team members is an essential contribution to the DNA of the new church – we love, we serve and we role model our faith. This provides not only a plausible pathway from the community to "FX church" but in time the pathway from FX Church for some into the parochial congregation.[384]

6.6.3 - FXC-N

As with the previous two churches, FXC-N accepted as accurate my presentation of their services. Their reply was rather an apologia for their practices, arguing that the presence of Scripture in the liturgy does not safeguard against heresy and mere formalism without robust biblical preaching.

> I would say that you have given an accurate depiction of the practices you observed.
>
> I have been prompted to think through this triangle:
>
> 'Anglican name' (in one corner, with the implied consent and aim to use Scripture consistently with denominational expression),
>
> 'Use of Bible' (in the next corner, with intentional and unintentional deviations from Anglican standards), &
>
> 'Low value on being Anglican' (in the last corner, where the gap between high value of Scripture and low match to Anglican standards finds some explanation)
>
> Also, the contention of Harrison, mentioned at the end of the section on us, I find less than compelling, both from experience and from Scripture. From experience: heretical sermons matched with close adherence to set liturgy appears to produce formalism (without the living gospel being preached, the hearts are untransformed and the liturgical response can become 'works'). From Scripture: the Apostolic response to heresy was to teach the faith, ensure that it is passed on intact and warn of false teaching. Cranmer's Bible-soaked liturgy is a great blessing to the church, but hardly can be said to have preserved the

[384] FXC-M 12

Church of England from heresy in times when preaching scratched itching ears.[385]

[385] FXC-N 15

Chapter 7 - Conclusion: Scripture, Anglicanism and the Fresh Expressions of Church

In this chapter, I conclude the theological reflection on the conversation between the reviews of the Formularies, the practice of Scriptural usage in the Inherited Church, and my research gathered from the questionnaire and participant-observer fieldwork. I believe that my original hypothesis is valid, but that the practices encountered regarding the use of Scripture encountered are not uniform, and that two Fresh Expressions with functioning worship services approach the issues of Anglican identity and praxis differently. The third Fresh Expression church is currently engaged in the questions of how to use Scripture in ways that connect with their network, while remaining true to their Anglican lineage. Chiefly through my engagement with FXC-C, I have been drawn to a re-examination of the scope of the Formularies. Moreover, it should be pointed out again that the theology and use of the Bible is merely one (albeit a not insignificant one) of a number of axes that establish Anglican identity. Based on this I will be making some concluding suggestions for the future development of the Fresh Expressions movement within Anglicanism and the training of Fresh Expression ministers.

In the analysis of my completed participant-observer research I have already entered the heart of the Whiteheads' model of theological reflection, bringing the threads of experience, culture and theological tradition into dialogue with each other in testing the thesis that the Australian Anglican Fresh Expressions of Church express Anglican identity through the practices regarding their use of the Bible.

I am indebted to FXC-C at this point, as my dialogue with them refocused my attention on the role of the surrounding culture. Without taking into the surrounding culture context, there runs the very real risk of turning my criteria in 5.4 into a simple checklist. Culture matters because just as we must consider context in establishing the meaning of a text, so too we need to consider the context of the readers and hearers of that same text. Cultural context must of necessity play a significant role in understanding how indeed the gospel is to be proclaimed afresh to each generation. Consider again the contexts for the four churches surveyed:

- IC-X is an Evangelical community whose internal culture resonates with the influence of Sydney Anglican Evangelicalism. The surrounding culture is of less significance in approaching Scripture than the weight of (Evangelical) church history. The expectation is that those new to the faith or the Australian Anglican Church will adopt a pattern of worship settled some centuries ago, with reworking in the 1970s and 1990s. This is not to denigrate their practice and reading of Scripture, merely to note that culture is

not the determining factor here. On the whole their practices of Scriptural usage were easy to reconcile with the Formularies, with the exception being the charge to proclaim the gospel afresh. This seems to have been interpreted, as it has historically been in Anglicanism, as simply repeating the message without considering culture. The chasm between the Bible and the world is left in the hands of preachers as they seek to explain and apply the text.

- FXC-C has given priority to the need to engage with a postmodern world. That world is one in which denominational identity is a fading currency and indeed one in which the de-churched and unchurched are dominant modalities. In their approach, a single passage of Scripture is treated in-depth through their meeting. They seek engagement with God and their surrounding culture. The idea of meeting God in the kitchen or through the television was not limited to a single illustration, but present as a serious question that treated culture with respect rather than as an enemy. I also note the flexibility of their method; because FXC-C is committed to cultural engagement, they are willing to change what they do on a needs basis. If the group's focus does indeed shift from those at risk of becoming the de-churched, to instead include the unchurched that they have sought to engage, the leadership is foreseeing a further change in their approach to Scripture so as to best communicate with them. The outstanding issue for churches like FXC-C is the question of how far does the commitment to 'taking culture seriously' allow them to go? Is there a point at which the commitment to culture takes away something important from how Scripture is read, or which parts of Scripture are read? Can a commitment to culture cause a church to lose sight of the metanarrative of the Bible?

- FXC-M is wrestling with the very question foreshadowed by FXC-C; how to engage with those from the surrounding culture and society for whom both church and Bible are foreign. As I commented, they are still in the early stages of a community forming. Whether it coalesces into a worshipping community or a form of community engagement by the existing inherited church congregation remains unanswered at this time. Through trial and error, they are still learning the nuances and subtleties of cross-cultural communication. Learning how a culture thinks, what it values, and how it communicates is core to thinking through how to proclaim the gospel afresh, and not simply repeating past modalities.

- FXC-N is a half-way house between the historically structured services and approach of IC-X and the encultured method of FXC-C. It retains the features of historic Anglican liturgy but in a more relaxed and freer style. Scripture is used in more locations than just the readings and sermon, though this was often a feature associated with particular leaders rather than a universal constant in their liturgy.

One church leader asked if there was a hierarchy in the criteria I have developed in this research. My answer is no – the characteristics I have been working with are better conceived as a web than a checklist. Through them I can argue for a given church demonstrating a weaker or stronger resemblance to how I have construed the Anglican doctrines pertaining to the Bible. FXC-C which did not read the Old Testament while I was present responded that they worked to a longer pattern than a month in ordering their reading of Scripture. It is important to note that they were vociferous in refuting any hint of rejecting the Old Testament. Rather, they felt it was appropriate to engage in 'deep' reading of a text rather than hearing from a variety of texts where the majority of which were not explained or reflected upon. While my own preference would be something closer to what I encountered in FXC-N, I recognise that FXC-C is driven equally by another motivation arising from the Formularies, namely, the re-appreciation of the missional task of proclaiming the gospel anew.

Avis's point that Anglican is not our primary identity bears some weight here – the catholic elements come before our denominational ones in grounding who we are as Christians. In this case, we note that the Bible itself is silent about the manner in which it is to be read in the Christian gathering. The Whiteheads' model calls us to attend to tradition, a category which while definitely including the voices of church traditions, also includes Scripture. While Scripture can be seen as having a high view of itself (from the affective delight of Psalm 119, to the Apostle's words to Timothy regarding the authority and efficacy of Scripture in 2 Timothy 3, to Jesus' high self-understanding regarding himself and his words in Matthew 24:35), there is no prescriptive method given for how Scripture is to be read amongst the churches. Moreover, while Scripture speaks of the centrality of certain doctrines in order to be saved, it does not detail a singular mode of governance by which churches are to be run; indeed, there seems to have been a plurality of models of leadership amongst the New Testament churches. What the New Testament seems much more concerned with is the missional task in the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The churches I have surveyed are in that respect less concerned with 'being Anglican' than they are in the mission of the Church. Their use of Scripture has some resonance with the Anglican Formularies but falls short of matching its patterning in all areas. On the axis of the theology and use of Scripture we can speak of positive elements but how Scripture is being used is not yet a full apologia against those who have sought to denigrate the movement.

As noted earlier in this thesis, I was reliant on academic writing in order to assess the possible use of Scripture in the Anglican Church of Australia. Two points bear some discussion here: the first is that as it is appropriate to consider practice regarding the Fresh Expressions, so too it is appropriate in future research to consider how the Inherited Church is using the Bible and also how it is engaging in mission. Proclaiming the gospel is about much more than simply having a reading from the canonical gospels in a weekly service. Archbishop Aspinall sought to champion the

Inherited Church on the basis of its universal welcome and ministry to the breadth of the community. Such a claim warrants investigation – does praxis match the rhetoric? The second point is that my research shows some wings of the Anglican Church of Australia (as indeed is also the case in other parts of the Communion) do indeed contravene the theology of the Formularies, chiefly in failing to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture, and making parts of it repugnant to others. The failure to read with integrity the texts of the Old Testament is much more problematic for Anglican identity than whether or not a church operates within the parochial system.

The other matter that arises from this research is the importance of leadership within the Fresh Expressions movement. The leadership of all three Fresh Expressions churches considered was pivotal in reading the surrounding culture and in seeking to connect their church with it. Moreover, it is through the licenced leaders of these churches that modelling and training in how to use the Bible in public worship occurs. In ensuring that Fresh Expression churches demonstrate their place within the Anglican family, Bishops need to be selecting and nurturing leaders who are committed to the principles of the deep patterning of Scripture usage I outlined in 4:3. As I have raised at various points throughout this thesis I wish to state again my concern that inherited forms of the church should face similar questions about their espoused and practiced beliefs. Bishop Frame's comments in 4:7 serve as a salutary warning about the marginalisation of Scripture in both the Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic wings of Anglicanism. I invite the Inherited Church to engage in serious reflection about the theology of the Anglican Formularies (to which they have given their agreement in their Oaths and Declarations) against their own practices. Bishops and theological training facilities need to ensure balance in their curriculum and expectations. Simply having an understanding of the Bible is insufficient. Likewise, reading culture without being able to see how the Bible and Christian tradition might engage that culture is likewise deficient. To further complicate the juggling act these pioneers and Fresh Expression leaders must perform, they should also be both conversant with, and able to converse with, the Inherited Church. Archbishop Williams' mixed economy does not speak to two orders of the one institution, distinct and affected by each other, but rather a capacity to learn from and engage with each other, not in competition, but in familial discourse. Belcher's insight into how the Emerging Church is not a single undifferentiated mass reminds us that the Fresh Expressions churches are not a single type – there is a spread of activity and identity across them. The criticism of Archbishop Aspinall and books such as *For the Parish* do little to engage with practice, preferring to lampoon caricatures. Rather than denigrate them and their ministry, critics of the Fresh Expressions movement should be encouraging Fresh Expression churches to mine the rich treasures of the Inherited Church for the traditions that might yet speak anew to parts of the emerging cultures in our society. Likewise Fresh Expression leaders have a role to play in revivifying the interest in, and practice of, social engagement and outreach by the Inherited Church. Bishop Sykes said that Anglicanism is

marked not simply by saying we believe a doctrine, but that we practise it.[386] This extends not simply to Scripture and liturgy but to mission too. Are church leaders being adequately trained to operate in the areas I have outlined? Creativity in the use of Scripture in new Christian gatherings should be something to be fostered and paired with the ability to accurately identify different cultures and exegete them. What place do the Psalms have in student culture? How do the voices of the prophets address our prosperous culture? How can the Biblical authors not only tell us about God but also give us models of how to speak to God? How can the verbal playfulness and provocative narratives of Jesus model how to address people? Fresh engagement with culture must of necessity mean fresh engagement with God and the Bible as God's own self-revealing. As Robinson and Brighton contend:

> We need new systems capable of recognising the value of entrepreneurial leaders and welcoming pioneer leaders. Dioceses need new selection guidelines and processes for identifying pioneers. We need specific training options that sharpen entrepreneurial skills in context. This will mean re-visioning how we might prepare effective missionaries for a Western context because at present, mission is often submerged in our theological education by a variety of other pressing needs.[387]

Being Anglican is not a straightforward matter that can be measured through a checklist. It is relational and needs to be considered through a longitudinal method. How Scripture is used is part of that process but not the only consideration. How these Fresh Expression churches grow and develop will take time. The Inherited Church has had centuries to consider how to embody its theology. Grace would suggest that we not rush to conclusions too hastily on both the viability and identity of these churches too soon. The wisdom of Gamaliel in Acts 5- is this of God? Do not rush a conclusion, rather, wait. See if God is at work. Do not presume too quickly that that which is new does not bear the divine mandate.

I want to conclude with a different question. Does it matter whether Fresh Expression churches are 'Anglican'? I want to give a qualified 'yes' to this, not because I am discounting Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, or any other denomination or ecclesial tradition. I am Anglican by virtue of my own personal journey, together with being satisfied intellectually of the agreement of Anglicanism with the faith once for all delivered. I greatly esteem the liturgical and theological witness of the Anglican Church of Australia – but surely the chief question is not whether a Fresh Expression church is Anglican or not, but is it actually reaching the de-churched and unchurched? As David Wilkinson has asked, are the Fresh Expressions really driven by mission?[388] The same question must then equally be

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[386] S. W. Sykes, *The Integrity of Anglicanism*, American ed. (New York: Seabury Press, 1978). p.47.
[387] Robinson and Brighton, "Fresh Expressions of Church." p.31.
[388] David Wilkinson, "What Are the Lessons from Evangelism and Apologetics for New Communities?," in *Mission-Shaped Questions: Defining Issues for Today's Church*, ed. Steven Croft (London: Church House Publishing, 2008). p.103.

answered by the Parish system also. I love the Anglican Church of Australia, as I also love my experience of the Church of England, but surely the point of both Fresh Expressions and the parochial system is to proclaim the gospel in this world to all people and to prepare God's people for Christ's reappearing as Lord. Are we passionate chiefly about not being something (be it either alternate or traditional), or is our passion about joining in the *missio Dei*? The significant question I hope my thesis raises is, how is the Bible being used in both Fresh and Inherited expressions of the church in the dual processes of evangelism and life-long discipling?

Appendices

Appendix 1 - The importance 'Of being Anglican'

Ranking	Class	Church ID	Aggregate Score	Average (of 10)
1	I	J	23	7.6
2	II	A	13	6.5
3	I	IC-X	19	6.3
4	II	M	12	6
5	II	K	10	5
6	I	C	14	4.6
7	I	N	13	4.3
8	II	W	8	4
9	II	H	5	2.5
10	I	D	6	2
10	I	E	6	2
	III	B	8	8
	III	Q	8	8
	III	R	1	1
	III	U	2	2

Appendix 2 – The importance of Anglicanism and its sub-traditions

Class	Church ID.	Sub-Traditions	Aggregate Score	Average	Anglican Identity
I	J	Evangelical	6	2	7.6
		Catholic	19	6.3	
		Liberal	19	6.3	
		Charismatic	17	5.6	
		Emergent	26	8.6	

Class	Church ID.	Sub-Traditions	Aggregate Score	Average	Anglican Identity
II	A	Evangelical	17	8.5	6.5
		Catholic	2	1	
		Liberal	2	1	
		Charismatic	12	6	
		Emergent	8	4	

Class	Church ID.	Sub-Traditions	Aggregate Score	Average	Anglican Identity
I	ICX	Evangelical	28	9.3	6.3
		Catholic	3	1	
		Liberal	3	1	
		Charismatic	3	1	
		Emergent	3	1	

Class	Church ID.	Sub-Traditions	Aggregate Score	Average	Anglican Identity
II	M	Evangelical	17	8.5	6
		Catholic	6	3	
		Liberal	2	1	
		Charismatic	15	7.5	
		Emergent	15	7.5	

Class	Church ID.	Sub-Traditions	Aggregate Score	Average	Anglican Identity
II	K	Evangelical	16	8	5
		Catholic	4	2	
		Liberal	4	2	
		Charismatic	10	5	
		Emergent	6	3	

Class	Church ID.	Sub-Traditions	Aggregate Score	Average	Anglican Identity
I	C	Evangelical	18	6	4.6
		Catholic	11	3.6	
		Liberal	14	4.6	
		Charismatic	16	5.3	
		Emergent	22	7.3	

Class	Church ID.	Sub-Traditions	Aggregate Score	Average	Anglican Identity
I	N	Evangelical	26	8.6	4.3
		Catholic	5	1.6	
		Liberal	4	1.3	
		Charismatic	7	2.3	
		Emergent	3	1	

Class	Church ID.	Sub-Traditions	Aggregate Score	Average	Anglican Identity
II	W	Evangelical	18	9	4
		Catholic	1	0.5	
		Liberal	1	0.5	
		Charismatic	8	4	
		Emergent	10	5	

Class	Church ID.	Sub-Traditions	Aggregate Score	Average	Anglican Identity
II	H	Evangelical	18	9	2.5
		Catholic	2	1	
		Liberal	4	2	
		Charismatic	5	2.5	
		Emergent	3	1.5[389]	

[389] One participant left the emergent line unfilled.

Class	Church ID.	Sub-Traditions	Aggregate Score	Average	Anglican Identity
I	D	Evangelical	17	5.6	2
		Catholic	5	1.6	
		Liberal	8	2.5	
		Charismatic	10	3.3	
		Emergent	17	5.6	

Class	Church ID.	Sub-Traditions	Aggregate Score	Average	Anglican Identity
I	E	Evangelical	21	7	2
		Catholic	3	1	
		Liberal	3	1	
		Charismatic	23	7.6	
		Emergent	9	3	

Class	Church ID.	Subtraditions	Score	Anglican Identity
III	B	Evangelical	9	8
		Catholic	1	
		Liberal	1	
		Charismatic	8	
		Emergent	4	

Class	Church ID.	Subtraditions	Score	Anglican Identity
III	Q	Evangelical Catholic Liberal Charismatic Emergent	9 4 1 5 1	8

Class	Church ID.	Subtraditions	Score	Anglican Identity
III	R	Evangelical Catholic Liberal Charismatic Emergent	9 1 8 10 8	1

Class	Church ID.	Subtraditions	Score	Anglican Identity
III	U	Evangelical Catholic Liberal Charismatic Emergent	8 2 5 6 4	2

Appendix 3 – The importance of 'being Emergent'

Rank	Class	ID	Agg Total	Average (of 10)
1	I	J	26	8.6
2	II	M	15	7.5
3	I	C	22	7.3
3	I	E	20	6.6
4	I	D	17	5.6
5	II	W	10	5
6	II	A	8	4
7	II	K	6	3
8	II	H	3	1.5
9	I	N	3	1
9	I	IC-X	3	1
	III	B	4	4
	III	Q	1	1
	III	R	8	8
	III	U	4	4

Appendix 4 – The importance of using the Bible

Rank	Class	ID	Score	Total Average (of 70)
1	I	N	198	66
2	I	IC-X	178	59.3
3	II	K	113	56.5
4	II	A	105	52.5
5	II	M	105	52.5
6	I	E	154	51.3
7	II	H	99	49.5
8	I	J	148	49.333
9	I	D	130	43.333
10	I	C	113	37.6
11	II	W [390]	0	0
	III	B	51	51
	III	Q	64	64
	III	R	45	45
	III	U	56	56

[390] Church W is not functioning as a church at this time – it is a small core group of people who are still actively meeting and serving their community but have no 'church meeting' as yet. The data presented in this table represents their espoused importance of reading different parts of the Bible and is not indicative of actual practice.

Appendix 5 – The importance of using the Bible compared with the number of readings and books covered

Rank	Class	ID	Importance of using all of the Bible	Average number of readings	Books read in the last year	Books to be read in the next year
1	I	N	94.2%	2	Deuteronomy Joshua 1 Samuel Psalms Proverbs Jeremiah Hosea Joel Matthew Mark John Acts Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians 1 Thessalonians	Joshua Judges Ezra Proverbs Mark John
2	I	IC-X	84.7%	3	Habakkuk Romans Psalms	Unknown at this time.
3	II	K	80.7%	2	Genesis 2 Chronicles Psalms Isaiah Matthew Mark Luke John Romans 1 Corinthians Philippians	John
4	II	A	75%	2.5	Isaiah Luke John Revelation	More gospels, Acts, OT prophet.
4	II	M	75%	1.5	None Talks based around themes and	None

					events	
5	I	E	73.3%	1.6	Genesis Exodus Numbers Joshua Judges 1&2 Kings Job Matthew Mark Luke John Acts Ephesians	Genesis Exodus 1 Samuel 1 Kings Psalms Daniel Jonah Matthew Mark Luke John Acts Romans 1 Corinthians
6	II	H	70.7%	1	Genesis Exodus 2 Samuel Psalms Jeremiah Daniel Jonah Matthew Mark Luke Acts 2 Corinthians Ephesians Philippians 1 Peter	Genesis Ecclesiastes Isaiah Mark John Romans 1 Corinthians Titus 1 John Revelation
7	I	J	70.4%	3	Lectionary	Lectionary
8	I	D	61.9%	1.6	Lectionary	Lectionary
9	I	C	53.7%	1	Genesis Luke Ephesians	To be decided
10	II	W [391]	0	1	Psalms Various parts of the Gospels & Epistles	To be decided

[391] Church W is not functioning as a church at this time – it is a small core group of people who are still actively meeting and serving their community but have no 'church meeting' as yet. The members do meet to pray though.

11	III	B	72.8%	1	Nehemiah Jonah Matthew Mark Luke John 1 Corinthians	John
	III	Q	91.4%	3	Nehemiah John 1 John Revelation	Matthew
	III	R	64.2%	3	None specifically named – but said they had read from all New Testament books and most Old Testament ones	None specifically named – made the same claim for what books to be read in the future
	III	U	80%	2	The Pentateuch Acts Tends to do thematic talks.	To be decided

Appendix 6 – The importance of the Bible in shaping liturgy

Rank	Class	ID	Aggregate Score	Average (of 10)
1	I	E	30	10
2	I	ICX	29	9.6
3	II	A	19	9.5
4	I	N	28	9.3
5	I	J	27	9
6	II	H	16	8
6	II	M	16	8
7	I	D	22	7.3
8	I	C	21	7
9	II	K	7	3.5
10	II	W[392]	0	0
	III	B	8	8
	III	Q	8	8
	III	R	10	10
	III	U	9	9

[392] As noted previously, W has no meetings and no liturgy at this time.

Appendix 7 – The importance of the involvement of the Bishop

Rank	Class	ID	Score	Average
1	II	W	18	9
2	II	K	15	7.5
3	II	M	12	6
4	I	N	16	5.3
5	I	IC-X	15	5
6	I	C	11	3.6
7	II	A	7	3.5
8	I	J	7	2.3
9	II	H	4	2
10	I	E	5	1.6
11	I	D	3	1
	III	B	9	9
	III	Q	8	8
	III	R	6	6
	III	U	7	7

Appendix 8 – The importance of the Bible beyond the liturgical service

Rank	Class	ID	Aggregate Score	Average From 40	%
1	I	E	119	39.6	99.1%
2	I	IC-X	112	37.1	92.7%
3	I	N	105	35	87.5%
4	II	A	67	33.5	83.7%
5	II	H	67	33.5	83.7%
6	II	M	54	27	67.5%
7	II	K	48	27	60%
8	II	W	47	23.5	58.7%
9	I	J	57	18.9	47.2%
9	I	C	57	18.9	47.2%
10	I	D	55	18.3	45.8%
	III	B	40	40	100%
	III	Q	36	36	90%
	III	R	37	37	92.5%
	III	U	29	29	72.5%

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