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Robinson, Daniel Keith

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Contemporary Worship Singers:
Construct, Culture, Environment and Voice

Daniel Keith Robinson

BMus, AssDipMin
MMusSt, GC MusSt

Queensland Conservatorium
Arts, Education and Law
Griffith University

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Doctor of Musical Arts

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KEYWORDS

blended worship, charismatic, Christian, contemporary voice, contemporary worship singer, construct, context, culture, emerging worship, ethnography, environment, liturgical, Pentecostal, traditional, vocal pedagogy, worship culture, worship setting

ABSTRACT

Contemporary Worship Singers:
Construct, Culture, Environment and Voice

Daniel K. Robinson

Singing is an integral part of Christian worship. Recent developments in the practice of western Christian worship over the last half-century have led to a surge in prominence of the role and of those individuals who lead the singing; yet their characteristics, and that of their role, have been relatively under-researched. This study reviews the multiplicity of current Australian Christian worship settings and studies the collective voice of those who participate in the role in order to understand the construct, culture, environment and vocal task of the Contemporary Worship Singer.

The research is designed around an in-depth review of the literature followed by the ethnography techniques; survey and interviews. The first phase (survey) harvested 85 responses from across Australia via an online questionnaire. The data was analysed and emerging questions were developed for phase two (interviews). Subsequently, nine participants from five churches responded to a semi-structured interview and follow-up. The research design purposefully engaged the average voice of the Contemporary Worship Singer by randomly selecting the participants for both survey and interview. The voice of the data cohort is triangulated against the literature review and the voice of the researcher in order to cultivate qualitative analysis and subsequent conclusions.

The overall research project reveals that the role and the vocal task of the Contemporary Worship Singer lacks general understanding by key stakeholders: church music directors, professional singing teachers and the Contemporary Worship Singers themselves. Consequently, individual singers are confronted by a confused state of parameters as they attempt to engage in the role and the vocal task. Cultural considerations such as performance orientation and theological concerns including the 'anointing' require greater levels of instruction. Accompanying these requirements is the need for Contemporary Worship Singers to receive vocal instruction in accordance with their worship setting. Commonly, conservative worship settings will require a

classically informed vocal discipline and progressive worship settings necessitate contemporary voice instruction.

The study draws conclusions from the four structural pillars of enquiry (construct, culture, environment and voice) and delivers nineteen distinctive features that distinguish the Contemporary Worship Singer as a unique vocalist in the wider community of singers. The implications of the study find their climax in the 'Contemporary Worship Singer Assessment Tool'. The practical implications of the Contemporary Worship Singer Assessment Tool empower key stakeholders (especially singing teachers) to correctly identify the individual singer's worship setting and correctly nominate the most appropriate vocal discipline. The study highlights the Contemporary Worship Singer as an active, vibrant and highly populated demographic in the wider community of singers.

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

The work contained in this dissertation is that of Daniel K. Robinson and has not previously been submitted for an award at any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, no material previously published or written by another person has been included except where due reference is made in the dissertation. Selected material drawn from this dissertation has been previously published throughout the course of this work.

_____ (Signature)

Daniel K. Robinson, 26 September 2011

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

The following is a list of publications and presentations arising from the study:

Robinson, D. K. (2008). Teaching the contemporary worship singer. Paper presented at the National Conference: Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing: Perth, Western Australia. September, 2008.

Robinson, D. K. (2009). Singing for contemporary christian worship (Poster Presentation). International Congress for Voice Teachers. Paris, France. July 2009.

Robinson, D. K. (2010). Teaching the contemporary worship singer. In S. D. Harrison (Ed.), Perspectives on teaching singing: Australian vocal pedagogues sing their stories (pp. 276–292). Brisbane, QLD: Australian Academic Press.

Robinson, D. K. (2010). Singing on a sunday: Elective excursion to contemporary christian worship service, National Conference: Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing. Brisbane, Queensland Australia.

Harrison, S. D., & Robinson, D. K. (2011). Singing in church: The role of men in contemporary worship singing. In S. D. Harrison, G. Welch & A. Adler (Eds.), Perspectives on men and singing (in press). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer Publications.

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Part I

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology

The first segment of the paper, Part I, positions the area of focus over three key chapters: Introduction, Literature Review and Methodology.

The **Introduction** outlines the topic to be addressed: Contemporary Worship Singers. A rationale for the necessity of the research is offered as well as a brief review of the researcher.

Chapter 2: Literature Review develops a foundation from which the study can commence. As will be highlighted in both the Introduction and Methodology, there is a scarcity of text which specifically considers the Contemporary Worship Singer and their role. Therefore the Literature Review caters to a broad range of topics; each of which significantly influences the activity of the Contemporary Worship Singer. Also developed further in the Methodology chapter is the manner by which the Literature Review forms a third stream of data alongside the traditional modes of data collection utilised for the enquiry; survey and interview.

The final chapter of Part I, **Chapter 3: Methodology**, presents the structural design of the document and the qualitative nature of the study.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Every weekend Christians gather to practice the time honoured ritual of Church. The corporate gathering of Christians has been adhered to since New Testament times, with one commentator predicting that by the close of 2010 nearly 1.9 billion people would be practicing Christianity globally (Brierley, 1997, p. 13). In Australia, 8.8% of the population (NCLS, 2004) regularly attend church to join other Christians for instruction in the faith, observe the rite of the Eucharist and participate in congregational singing.

Singing in the Christian church has enjoyed relatively uninterrupted use across the historical evolution of the cultus[1]. The majority of the Christian population gives voice to tunes designed to carry theology and emotionally expressive worship. In the modern Australian Protestant context the voice of the congregant is often led by a song leader or group of singers. These leaders of song are known as *Contemporary Worship Singers* and are often lay personnel chosen from within the local church community, who willingly give their vocal talents to support the communal activity of congregational singing.

Singing within the church service has taken on new found prominence. The heightened status of the volunteer singer has been magnified by recent developments and variations of the worship service along with the modern church's use of technological advancements such as sound amplification and projected video display. The past forty years have also seen a sharp increase in recorded worship material being made available to Christian worship participants. This has drawn focus to the persons used to perform the soundtracks. The result of this focus on individual singers has brought a form of celebrity into the cultus; a development that invites considerable debate.

As the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer receives increased interest the expectation placed upon these volunteer vocalists, intentionally and otherwise, is raised. The desire for refined performance is held by three interested parties: the clergy (including pastors/ministers and church music directors), the congregant and the modern church singer.

[1] The term 'cultus' has been drawn from the work of Soanes & Stevenson (2008) who describe it as "a system or variety of religious worship" (p. 349).

(i) Rationale and Significance

The rationale for conducting this study is found, in part, in the number of people engaged in the voluntary role of the Contemporary Worship Singer. As mentioned, 8.8% of Australia's population regularly attend a Christian church service. It is difficult to accurately measure how many congregations are active in Australia today, but a recent study reviewing church attendance surveyed "around 435,000 church attenders from over 7000 parishes and congregations in some 19 denominations" (Bellamy & Castle, 2004, p. 1). Most of these 7000 parishes and congregations are likely to have a group of volunteers dedicated to the worship expressions of the local church; and some of these individuals would be singers. Despite the volunteer status of the role, it is conceivable that the Contemporary Worship Singer is one of the most widely practiced vocal performance tasks in the wider Australian community today.

A second area of significance is revealed in the anecdotal observation that the environment of the modern church is a unique sub-culture in Australian society. Little is known about the Contemporary Worship Singer and their distinctive role in the unique context.

An increased understanding of the Contemporary Worship Singer will serve to support the individuals who undertake the role as well as those who choose to service the role: church music directors and singing teachers. The significance of this study is in the potentially thousands of Australian singers, music directors and singing teachers who stand to benefit from the study's findings.

(ii) Researcher Perspectives

My role as researcher will play an integral part in the study as I develop the research methodology and resulting line of enquiry. It is therefore prudent to reveal my association with the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer and with other individuals who undertake the role.

I have been involved with Christian worship teams for over two decades. Whether as a guitarist, sound engineer, vocalist or worship pastor, my musical development has been enriched by my experiences as a worship team member. These experiences have been played out in a variety of denominational settings. From the structured

liturgical environment of the Anglican Church to the more charismatic expressions of the Assemblies of God and Christian Outreach Centre, each point of involvement has helped shaped the way in which I conducted the study.

My years of service to individual churches are complemented by regular interaction with local churches through itinerant ministry opportunities. I am regularly invited to visit Christian churches to offer ministry in song and instruction in matters pertaining to worship teams; including workshops for singers. Additionally, I interact with Christian worship singers through my private voice teaching studio. This breadth of interaction through personal involvement, itinerant ministry and private instruction has afforded me the rare opportunity to observe the Contemporary Worship Singer conducting their craft in a variety of modes across a diverse spectrum of denominations. These observations have led to reflections querying the place of the Contemporary Worship Singer within today's Christian worship and how the individuals engaged in the activity might be better supported in their role.

My reflection on practice began during the late 1990s as a young worship director for the Christian Outreach Centre, Beenleigh. Responsibilities for this role included structuring and rostering worship services, including the singers. In the first couple of years as worship director, singers were rostered into their roles based on my previous experience as a volunteer worship team member: that is individuals were rostered according to availability and need. For example, if a special service (visiting speaker or conference event) was being prepared the better voices were used for the service to ensure stronger vocal performance outcomes. On reflection this seemed discriminatory. I became concerned that I had inadvertently created a cultural hierarchy based on vocal ability which in turn subjugated individuals due to the absence of role specific training: singers were not always provided with the practical means to improve and thus be included in the full range of services.

Further consideration revealed that my observations required investigation beyond the confines of my own church worship team. The opportunity to enquire into the experiences of other worship teams came in 2001 when I enrolled in a Master's degree. I chose to centre my thesis topic on Contemporary Worship Leaders (Robinson, 2002). The study revealed much about the environment of the singers who lead Christian worship, with some understanding developed about certain practices such as singing lessons, repertoire and technical equipment used. However,

the level of research undertaken failed to acquire any insights into the cultural existence of the Contemporary Worship Singer. I had discovered what the church singer did, but I still did not know who the Contemporary Worship Singer was.

Since the completion of the Master's degree[2] I have continued to develop my understandings of the Contemporary Worship Singer through my private singing teaching practice. The questions arising from my broad considerations of worship team structures included individual participant's insecurities. These anxieties seemed to originate from low levels of training accompanied by cultural pressures (such as the perceived responsibility of developing a tangible worship experience). These observations had also been voiced by private singing students who are actively engaged in modern worship settings.

(iii) Purpose

Given these experiences, the purpose of this enquiry is to view the Contemporary Worship Singer through a more extensive research process. By surveying the variety of worship settings in which the Contemporary Worship Singer exists and examining the multifaceted characteristics that contribute to the formation of the Contemporary Worship Singer's identity, I will seek to highlight the uniqueness of this type of singer.

I will seek to ascertain an understanding of how the Contemporary Worship Singer views themselves. Appreciation for the subject through the eyes of the group being studied will contribute greatly to the conclusions drawn by the researcher. This study is undergirded by the multiplicity of worship settings in which Contemporary Worship Singers practice their role asking questions such as: Are there definable differences in the experiences of the Contemporary Worship Singers under investigation according to their specific worship settings? Are there observable similarities?

[2] Robinson, D. K. (2002). *Contemporary worship leaders and their environments.* Unpublished Masters Dissertation, Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University Brisbane, QLD.

(iv) Problem

To date the level of academic enquiry into the role of the modern worship singer has been minimal. Those who choose to interact with these singers (church music directors and singing teachers) seem to have few role specific tools with which to develop these singers and enhance their vocal capacity.

Explicitly, church music directors are generally volunteers chosen from within the local church community. Their role can include team administration (rostering, licencing), repertoire development and musical leadership (directing musical practices and mentoring individual team members). Understandably, beyond their limited time, these gifted and generous parishioners rarely have specific knowledge, experience and training which might be focused on the Contemporary Worship Singer. The training of the Contemporary Worship Singer is often a case of 'the blind leading the blind'. Sometimes the time-poor church music director applies his or her low levels of understanding about the Contemporary Worship Singer in a haphazard manner, drawing on broad contemporary vocal pedagogical standards in keeping with the 'pop' idiom of the modern church chorus[3].

At other times church music directors, acknowledging the limits of their own capacity to train the Contemporary Worship Singer, encourage the church vocalists to seek vocal instruction from professional singing teachers. It is my observation that, albeit unwittingly, this trend has led to further confusion for the Contemporary Worship Singer who may be exposed to a range of pedagogical persuasions. This is most evident in the discipline of vocal instruction (classical or contemporary) employed by the professional singing teacher. Given that the Contemporary Worship Singer can be practicing their role in a range of worship settings and singing a variety of musical genres, a professional singing teacher (who may or may not have experience in the Christian worship cultus) might be drawn into delivering broad pedagogical instruction which does not adequately service the role-specific task.

Secondly, is the identity and development of the Contemporary Worship Singer only a matter of vocal task? My preliminary observations would suggest that the Contemporary Worship Singer is influenced by a range of concerns including

[3] Further discussion and explanation of the 'modern church chorus' will be conducted in Chapter 2 (p.28).

theological positions held by denominations and the sub-cultures that form within individual worship teams. Are these observations valid? If so, academic scrutiny is required to explore both the positive and negative effects of this matter.

Finally, is there an observable interplay between the culture and context and the more tangible matters such as the technical development of the voice? Is the Contemporary Worship Singer desirous of balance between these two seemingly independent domains or are these spheres to be maintained with tension: self-evident but never intersecting? The study will seek further understanding of this problem.

(v) Research Approach

In undertaking the task of a professional doctorate I have chosen to survey the Contemporary Worship Singer as a cultural group. Creswell (2007) has stated "An *ethnography* focuses on an entire cultural group" (p. 68). This study will seek to investigate the entire cultural group of the Australian Contemporary Worship Singer. The use of such a wide-angled lens when surveying the Contemporary Worship Singer is made necessary by the scarcity of text focused on the subject. Broad matters such as Christian worship history, worship theology and vocal pedagogy are recognised as areas of influence for the role of a Contemporary Worship Singer.

Further explanation of the chosen methodology is presented in Chapter 3 (p. 88), with a detailed outline of the ethnographic tools used during the research, including surveys and interviews. Accounting for the issues outlined earlier I have developed the following research question which will be used to govern the enquiry:

> In what ways do the multiplicity of worship settings and the diversity of environmental factors influence the role and identity formation of the Contemporary Worship Singer; and how might pedagogy be designed for this type of singer?

While the specific design of method and research approach is outlined in detail during Chapter 3, the following graphic (Figure 1; p. 8) provides a brief overview of the dissertation's structure.

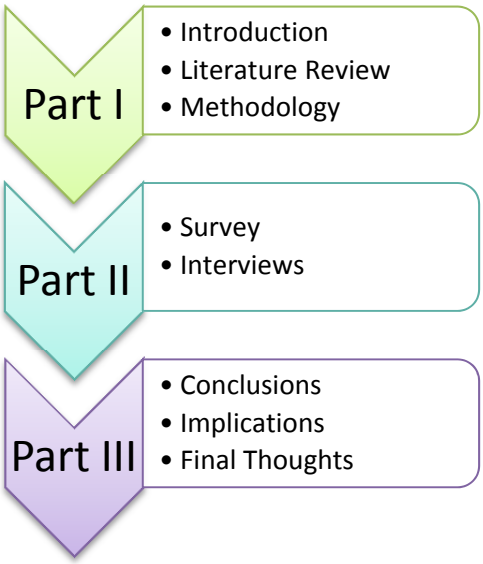

Figure 1: *The dissertation's structure*

A definition of terminology to differentiate between the many layers of church worship context should also assist in navigating through the document. The following graphic (Figure 2) illustrates the language used throughout the study to convey the layers of cultural context:

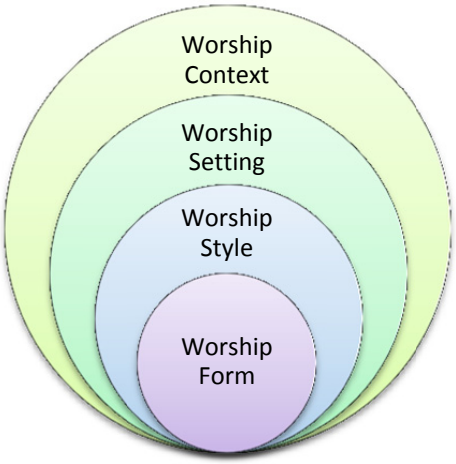

Figure 2: *Layers of contextual terminology*

The broadest level, 'Worship Context' refers to the common adhearance of Christian theology as practiced since New Testament times and adds further definition to the the term 'cultus' (which has been defined earlier). 'Worship Setting' provides for the many denominational persuasions. The third layer, 'Worship Style' identifies the

variety of ways in which these settings can express the corporate worship. Finally, 'Worship Form' allows for the structural components of the worship style[4].

At this point it is necessary to also address the use of the term 'Contemporary' to name today's worship singer (Contemporary Worship Singer). I have chosen to employ the label 'Contemporary' due to its capacity to evolve with the times. Interchangeable terms such as 'Today's Worship Singer' or 'Modern Worship Singer' could also be used, but I have preferred the label 'Contemporary Worship Singer' for the sake of continuity throughout this work[5].

Finally, I draw the reader's attention to the intentional placement and substantial size of the literature review which will immediately follow the introduction. The literature review investigates four main topics: context, culture, environment and vocal pedagogy. The breadth of the literature review alongside the already noted scarcity of subject-specific writings positions Chapter 2 (literature review) as part of the overall data collection. The four main topics (as listed above) in turn form a conceptual framework which will guide the traditional modes of data collection (survey and interviews) following the review of literature.

(vi) Anticipated Outcomes

Based on my previous academic work, as well as historical and current interactions with church singers, I submit to the reader a number of anticipated outcomes.

Firstly, understanding the variety of denominations in which the Contemporary Worship Singer performs their task, I anticipate a diversity of opinions when considering theological positions as they pertain to worship practice. For example, the theological matter of God's presence[6] is likely to draw positions which range from essential integration to unnecessary consideration. What is not known, and therefore worthy of cross-examination, is how these positions of theological dogma might affect the role and identity of the Contemporary Worship Singer.

---

[4] These terms receive further analysis in Chapter 2: Defining the Worship Construct (p. 12).

[5] Chapter 4: Survey (4a. Identity Classification; p. 130) addresses this point directly by asking participants what label they prefer to be known by.

[6] Packer (1995) defines God's presences stating "God is present in all places; we should not think of him, however, as filling spaces, for he has no physical dimensions…It is true to say that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are today omnipresent together, though the personal presence of the glorified Son is spiritual (through the Holy Spirit), not physical (in the body)."

I have noted that Contemporary Worship Singers who seek vocal tuition often do so because they feel ill-equipped for the task. The second assumption with which the study commences is that church singers are mostly untrained and inexperienced beyond the role: most have never participated in performance vocals outside their church commitments. This inexperience leads to a third assumption: most church singers lack a practical understanding of their vocal task. With little or no singing experience outside the church context, the mostly untrained and consequently unskilled Contemporary Worship Singer is forced to develop skills for the task by copying other more experienced, but nonetheless untrained and unskilled fellow team members. This cycle of 'monkey see, monkey do' has trapped the Contemporary Worship Singer into an unhealthy and unproductive state where mediocrity has become the norm. These assumptions require review and interrogation as a part of this project. Accordingly, the study's enquiry will commence with a review of the literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

(i) Purpose

The purpose of this literature review is to better understand the context of the Contemporary Worship Singer's role. Inherent assumptions were built on anecdotal perception by the researcher and prior research in a Masters degree undertaken by the researcher (Robinson, 2002).

Given the overarching ethnographic nature of the design for this research[7] the literature review commenced "before data [was] collected, serving as a background for the research question" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 48). This literature review was ongoing throughout the collection of data, as advocated by Silverman (2010).

(ii) Rationale for Topics

What follows is a critical review of the literature, covering the major topics of interest to the research question over four areas: (1) Worship – Christian worship including its history, liturgical development and current stylistic classifications; (2) Culture – both secular and Christian, with a focused interest on the interplay between both as sub-cultures, and inherent idiosyncrasies of modern western Christian culture; (3) Environment – matters encompassing Personal Amplification (PA) and Audio Visual (AV) systems along with worship space architecture; (4) Vocal Pedagogy – including instructional methodologies, vocal health and issues pertaining to the peculiarities of the Contemporary Worship Singer's role.

In order to conduct the literature review I draw upon multiple sources including books (both scholarly and culturally-biased), professional journals, internet sources, visual and audio media, and dissertations. In an attempt to position the research question and the subsequent study, critical review of the literature has been undertaken with a view to revealing "gaps and omissions" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 60) in existing literature, thus exposing opportunities for new understandings.

[7] See Chapter 3: Research Methodology (p. 88)

The review of literature will begin by positioning the research of the Contemporary Worship Singer in the broader topic of Christian worship, commencing with the historical landscape. Secondly, the dialectical discussions of *worship wars* will be discussed, followed by a review of the established style guides as expressed in the western Christian church.

In commenting on the identity of the Christian community as a 'historic people' Timothy Kellar (2002) writes, "An unwillingness to consult tradition is not in keeping with either Christian humility or Christian community" (p. 194). It is therefore acknowledged that this brief review of Christian community is best augmented by texts dedicated to the subject of Christian history (Breward, 2001; Noll, 2000; Shelley, 2008; Tenney, 1985; White, 1993). Furthermore, sources such as Andrew Wilson-Dickson's *The Story of Christian Music* (1992), Robert Webber's *Worship: Old and New* (1994), Segler & Bradley's *Christian Worship: It's theology and practice* (2006), Constance M. Cherry's *The Worship Architect* (2010) and Mark Evans' seminal work, *Open up the Doors* (2006) help to position music in Christian history. When the historical texts are tied to works of theological understanding the review of Christian worship history is expanded. Many authors have contributed to this aspect of the research including Peterson (1992), Carson (2002b) and Dawn (1995).

1) Defining the Worship Construct

The topic of Christian worship is broad in its chronology: it starts approximately 4000 years before the birth of Christ in the pre-Christian era and extends to current times. Some theologians advance the theme of worship beyond the present. Reggie Kidd (2011), in a recent article titled *Jesus Christ Our Worship Leader*, develops the significance of singing in worship as being held outside of time. He writes "the glory of song in worship is that we get to join our voices to his. His is the voice that counts not ours" (p. 31). Embedded in the extensive studies of Christian history and theology, Christian worship is wedded to the doctrinal pillars of the faith construct. Therefore the review of Christian worship will observe many key historical

moments, significant theological developments while observing the Church's orientation towards music and in particular, singing[8].

Defining Christian worship is complicated by the variety of views on the subject:

> When we consider all the words used for worship in both the Old and New Testaments, and when we put their meanings together, we find that worship involves both attitudes (awe, reverence, respect) and actions (bowing, praising, serving). It is both a subjective experience and an objective activity. (Wiersbe, 2000, p. 20)

This tension between the subjective experience and the objective activity is a key element of western Christian worship. Johan Cilliers (2009) outlines this tension as, "basic to all worship services: the awe in God's presence is inexpressible, but somehow it must and should be expressed. 'As a matter of fact, liturgy could be called the oscillation between awe and expression'" (p. 3). Beyond this tension, many authors have sought to establish a definition for Christian worship. C. S. Lewis (1958) describes worship simply as "inner health made audible" (p. 94), but D. A. Carson (2002a), in his attempt to define worship, is not so brief:

> *Worship* is the proper response of all moral, sentient beings to God, ascribing all honor and worth to their Creator-God precisely because he is worthy, delightfully so. This side of the Fall, *human worship* of God properly responds to the redemptive provisions that God has graciously made. While all true worship is God-centered, *Christian worship* is no less Christ-centered…worship therefore manifests itself both in adoration and in action, both in the individual believer and in *corporate worship*, which is offered up in the context of the body of believers, who strive to align all the forms of their devout ascription of all worth to God with the panoply of new covenant mandates and examples that bring to fulfillment the glories of antecedent revelation and anticipate the consummation. (p. 26)

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[8] It is important at this early stage of the enquiry to distinguish the study's focus, the Contemporary Worship Singer, as different to the more formal and historical position of the 'cantor'. The Grove Concise Dictionary of Music (1994) defines the cantor stating:

> In Jewish and early Christian worship, the [cantor was the] principal or solo singer. In Roman Catholic use, the cantor sang the solo portions of chant; in medieval cathedrals he was director of the choir. The leading singer in most Anglican cathedrals became known as the 'precentor'. (p. 138)

The context of this research is not specifically directed at the lead musician or singer. What constitutes the role and place of the Contemporary Worship Singer will be thoroughly investigated in the pages following. This being stated, a guiding characterisation of the Contemporary Worship Singer is that both clergy and laypersons can participate in the role being surveyed; most often in groups of two or more. That is the role is not a formalised one nor is it a soloist position.

This lengthy quote highlights the complexity in obtaining a concise definition. It also stresses the challenge facing the Contemporary Worship Singer as they seek to establish a philosophy of worship. When commenting on Carson's definition of worship and its potential 'real world' application, Mark Evans (2006) writes, "that such a study remains outside the purview of the general church worship director, music leader or ministry student" (p. 47). A definitive statement lies somewhere between Carson's lengthy précis and C. S. Lewis's deconstructed one-liner. For the purpose of this dissertation Robert Schaper's (1984) definition for worship as quoted in Constance M. Cherry's recent work, *The Worship Architect* (2010, p. 17) will be employed. Schaper suggests that "Worship is the expression of a relationship in which God the Father reveals himself and his love in Christ, and by his Holy Spirit administers grace, to which we respond in faith, gratitude, and obedience".

The lack of consensus in the formulation of an all-encompassing definition in turn allows for the development of a range of worship applications. This led James White (2000) to state, "Quite clearly there is no one 'right' order of worship" (p. 170). This study articulates the various approaches, acknowledging the subjective experiences of individuals, the objective activities of corporate bodies and the resulting tension between the two which is often exacerbated by the lack of clear parameters that might be found in a concise definition. An overview of worship, music and singing as outlined in the Old Testament follows.

a) Brief History of Singing in the Church

As previously stated the origins of Christian worship can be found approximately four thousand years prior to the birth of Christ: Jewish history and culture played a significant part in the history and subsequent conditioning of Christian worship (Webber, 1994). The Christian faith readily claims Old Testament history as its own and in doing so recognises the history of the Hebrew people outlined in the Old Testament as their own spiritual lineage and worship heritage.

i) Worship in the Old Testament

The first act of worship outlined in the Old Testament is recorded in Genesis:

> In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. (Genesis 4:3–5a, ESV)

This example encapsulates three key aspects of worship; *sacrifice*, *orientation* and *heart*. These themes permeate Christian worship through to present day.

A second moment in the development of Old Testament worship is evident in the depiction of the Hebrew people after they had been pursued by the Egyptian army across the Red Sea (Exodus 15:1-21). This spontaneous expression of worship is the first recorded song in the Bible. Of note is the manner in which the prophetess Miriam, sister of Aaron, extends the corporate expression into a vocal declaration accompanied by instrumentation (tambourines) and dancing.

Spontaneous worship quickly gives way to an ordered worship rite with the establishment of the Tabernacle (Ex 26–30). The level of detail outlined in the ordering of worship is not found in any other part of the Bible and includes instructions for the design of architecture (tent, tabernacle court), furniture (Ark of the Covenant, Table for the Bread of the Presence, Golden Lampstand, Bronze Altar), and detailed role descriptions for the priests (garments, consecration). Of interest to this inquiry is the absence of the mention of music and singing at this stage. This is particularly curious given its relatively close chronological proximity to the spontaneous outburst of song on the shores of the Red Sea.

A third developmental stage of worship order is the Temple Cultus as instituted by David and his son, Solomon. Approximately 450 years (Archer, 1998, p. 239) after the commencement of the tabernacle rites, David brings the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem:

> And it was told King David, "The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. And when those who bore the ark of the LORD had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal. And David danced before the LORD with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn. (2 Sam 6:12–15, ESV)

The reintroduction of voice (shouting) and instrument (horn) into the process is noted; as is the spontaneous manner of their application. It appears that from this time music and singing became an established activity of the temple rite, perhaps as a direct influence of David's own predilection towards music according to these sources. David was a recognised instrumentalist (1 Samuel 16:16–23) and acclaimed song writer (2 Samuel 1:17–27; 22:1–23:7) with many of the Psalms being attributed to his authorship. At the height of Davidic temple rite 288 vocalists were in service to the cultus. Each of these singers were "trained in singing to the LORD" (1 Chronicles 25:7) suggesting a highly organised and intentional orientation far removed from any observable spontaneity. Also, according to Webber (1994) "The worship in David's tabernacle differed substantially from the worship in Moses' tabernacle. In David's tent there were no animal sacrifices. Levites led the people day and night in praising the Lord through song, musical instruments, and dance" (p. 35).

Music and singing became an instituted part of the worship process for the Jewish people through to the birth of Christ and beyond, utilising those songs written in the book of Psalms. As is well documented, during the period of approximately 400 years leading up to Christ's birth, the Hebrews experienced captivity and exile and through necessity the temple rites are adapted into a satellite model known as the *Synagogue*, as Tenney (1985) notes. "The synagogue played a large part in the growth and persistence of Judaism…The synagogue was the social centre where the Jewish inhabitants of a city gathered weekly to meet each other" (p. 90). The synagogue service included the recital of the *Shema* – the Jewish Creed, reading of the Scriptures, an exploration of the scripture reading (sermon), with prayer weaved throughout (Bryant, 1982; Segler & Bradley, 2006; Tenney, 1985). Andrew Wilson-Dickson (1992) describes how singing was employed in the synagogue,

> The Psalms, prayers and readings would be cantillated, that is recited in a heightened speech resembling simple song. Its basis was the chanting of the text on a single note, but with simple melodic alterations to indicate the grammatical structure. (p. 22)

From here it can be observed that the service construction of the Jewish synagogue helped to shape the early gathering of Christians. "The synagogue service effectively functioned as a bridge from Hebrew worship to Christian worship" (Basden, 1999, p. 23).

ii) New Testament

It is evident from New Testament writings that the birth of Jesus did not bring about a new construct of worship outside the established systems of the synagogue. However "passages such as Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 suggest that singing was part of normal Christian activity" (Woodhouse, 1999, p. 6). The rites and practices of the Jewish structure were maintained (Lk 2:41–52, 4:14–30) with the notion of a Christian's worship orientation made apparent in this key text from John 4:23–24:

> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

This passage of scripture has caused much discussion amongst scholars, preachers and ministers of Christian worship, and has recently contributed to the debates about the nature of worship. Importantly, while Jesus did not institute a new 'physical' construct of worship for his followers outside the synagogue, he was intent on establishing a new model for how worship to God might be orientated (Lawrence & Dever, 2009; D. Peterson, 1992). In reviewing Jesus discussion with the woman from Samaria (John 4:1–45) Evans (2006) further explains,

> (Jesus) moves the woman away from believing that worship only takes place at the temple, boldly claiming to be the temple himself. In this he is moving worship from an explicitly outward cultic experience (in Jewish understanding), to a more inward, spiritual relationship. (p. 50)

A second statement of note found twice in the New Testament has also generated much confabulation. Both Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19 have brought speculation regarding what Paul defined as the singing of *psalms, hymns and spiritual songs*.

> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Col 3:16)

> …addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, (Eph 5:19)

Scholars agree that 'psalms' refers to the collection of Old Testament Psalter (Kauflin, 2008; Segler & Bradley, 2006). This assertion is supported by the notion that many people of 'the way' (Acts 19:23), as early Christians were known, were still engaged in their local synagogue and thus a natural expression might have been the continued use of the Psalter. Typical of the various contemplations given to the next two labels, hymns and spiritual songs, is Warren Wiersbe's (2000) comment that,

> 'Hymns' are songs extolling the character and works of God. 'Spiritual songs' would be songs about the Christian life, songs of witness to other believers and to the lost, declaring what Christ has done for us and what He can do for others. These are broad categories, but they seem to fit. Today's 'praise choruses' would be classified as 'spiritual songs' unless the chorus is scripture set to music. (p. 182)

Whilst Wiersbe's attempt to define what Paul meant by the use of these terms is well directed and supported by others (Gentile, 1994; Liesch, 1996; Prince, 1993; Sorge, 1987), Kauflin (2008) and Evans (2006) independently contend that no clear classification can be drawn from Paul's words to the Colossians or Ephesians. "What is certain is Paul's desire that those filled with the Spirit should sing (the word 'psalm' implies musical accompaniment) to each other, exhorting one another on in the Christian faith" (Evans, 2006, p. 44). Managing Editor of *Worship Leader* Jeremy Armstrong (2010) supports Kauflin's and Evans' view by introducing a recent article about American hymnody stating, "we are not making any attempts at creating genres with an article on psalms hymns and spiritual songs. Nor do we believe that to be the intention of Paul in his Epistle" (p. 25).

iii) Early Church

The first four centuries following the New Testament writings provide the foundation for the establishment of Christian liturgy as a stand-alone religious entity, as White (2000) comments: "If we understand the experiences of the church's first four centuries, we have gained the heart of the matter" (p. 67), and while music plays a small part in this process, the other aspects of Christian liturgy (reading of scripture, prayer, baptism and communion) are worth noting during this historical stage as pillars of the Christian faith.

One cannot however draw a clear line of chronological demarcation between the Hebrew and Christian faiths. "In spite of the antagonism between Jews and

Christians at the end of the first century, there is considerable evidence that the relationship that existed between them before their break was of sufficient duration to influence Christian worship significantly" (Webber, 1994, p. 56). Codified descriptions of Christian liturgy date back to Justin Martyr's Apology written c. AD 140 (Bettenson & Maunder, 1999). Including reading of scripture, public address, prayer, celebration of the Eucharist, and tithing; the Apology does not give any explicit indication to the use of music. However as Webber (1994) points out, "It is generally recognised that while certain parts of the service were fixed (for example, the use of the Scripture, prayers, salutation, *Sursum corda* and *Sanctus*), there was nevertheless a great deal of freedom" (p. 98). Given the Apology's relative chronological proximity to Paul's admonition to both the Ephesians and Colossians churches (c. AD 62) to edify one another by *singing* psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, it is reasonable to expect that the 'freedoms' as identified by Webber might extend to the inclusion of vocal music. It is important to note that today when discussing Christian worship it is unusual for the pillars of the Christian liturgy (reading of scripture, public address, prayer, celebration of the Eucharist, and tithing) to be considered. Gary Parrett (2005) laments "Almost every time I hear the word *worship* used by believers today, it is clear that they are referring to singing praises" (p. 40), and while further detailed study of the foundational pillars of reading scripture, prayer, baptism and communion falls outside the scope of this work it is vital to maintain their importance in the overall consideration of worship[9].

With the conversion of Constantine during the early fourth century and through his subsequent 'Edict of Milan' (AD 313), Christianity was granted geographical and political freedoms. These new freedoms do not hinder the use of music within the liturgical construct. However the inclusion of music in liturgical expression (both in the *Latin* way, as expressed by the Western church and the *Greek* manner (Noll, 2000, p. 135) as articulated by the Eastern church) "reverted to the priestly system of the Old Testament with certain customs of the mystery and pagan religions added" (Segler & Bradley, 2006, p. 28). Given the focus of this study on the modern

[9] For further detailed consideration of reading scripture, prayer, baptism and communion in the Early Church please refer to: Webber's, *Worship: Old & New* (1994), White's *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (1993) and Shelley's *Church History in Plain Language* (2008).

'western' worshipper, the review will now focus on the western stream of Christian worship development.

iv) Middle Ages

The western Christian church entered the Middle Ages (500-1500) with two distinct lines of worship expression; the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church and the devotional mode of the Monastic tradition. Bryan Chapel (2009) writes "The Roman Catholic liturgy is foundational for most subsequent liturgies in Western culture" (p. 26). When considering the elements and forms of Christian liturgy, the Church provided a necessary structure, but it was in the Monastic tradition that we see the development of Christian time and, important to the focus of this study, singing. Mark Noll (2000) highlights the Monastic contribution to singing by stating, "If we sing together the praises of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we follow where the hymn-writing monks Gregory (ca. 540–604) and Bernard of Clairvaux led the way" (p. 85).

During the closing stages of the medieval period, Oxford scholar John Wycliffe (AD c. 1320s–1384) highlighted the tensions between the Roman Catholic Church and the Monastic traditions by positioning some of his argument against the abuses of the Church squarely at its use of music in the liturgy. Wycliffe argued that the intricacy of the music detracted from the worshipper's ability to engage in the corporate worship experience. Here "Wycliffe strikes at the heart of the musical dilemma, a problem he saw as part of the wider issue of the travesty of the Christian gospel. For the first time the questions of relevance to the present day are firmly raised: Can art-music have a place in Christian music?" (Wilson-Dickson, 1992, p. 92). Today this question has developed to encompass not only the product of the artist, but the attitude of the artist in presenting the art, a matter considered later in the study.

Another key discussion point which commenced in the middle ages and is of interest today is that of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, "a Latin expression meaning 'the rule of what is prayed is the rule of what is believed,' in other words, as one worships, so one believes" (Provance, 2009, pp. 76–77). Paul Zahl (2004), in his apologetic for modern Liturgical worship, focuses the definition by suggesting that the expression was originally stated *lex credendi, lex orandi*, "That means: What we believe determines how we pray" (p. 25). The debate of 'chicken and egg' is a serious one in today's worship culture made so by the prominence of music carrying theology or theology carrying music; as Saliers (2006) comments:

> What we learn to sing in public worship and devotion is at once experiential and theological. The poetry of the text and the musical setting of the tune, once brought together, carry the meaning and import of theological belief at a deeper level than does homiletical discourse, much less doctrinal teaching, by themselves. (p. 335)

Marva Dawn (1995) discerns "how we worship both reveals and forms our identity as persons and communities" (Dawn, 1995, p. 4). Don Carson (2002a) identifies the resulting tension of views from the questions of *how* and *why* as challenging:

> The construction of a responsible theology of worship is made difficult by strongly held divergent views on the subject, by a variety of linguistic pressures, and by the sharp tendencies to produce quite different works, depending in part on whether the theologian is working out of the matrix of systematic theology or of biblical theology. (p. 18)

And so it was that 'divergent views' provoked the next chapter in the evolution of Christian thought, and its worship practice, with the advent of 'reformation'.

v) Reformation

Expressions of worship emerged from the middle ages characterised by rite and formality. This position paved the way "for two movements which were to have their influence down into our own day: the humanistic elements of the Renaissance and the scriptural Christianity of the Reformation" (Schaeffer, 1976, p. 56). As a way of illustrating the state of the church by the 16th century, the following chart shows the major schisms of the first sixteen centuries within the Christian church (Figure 3[10]; p. 22) including the division created by the reformation:

[10] Taken from *Charts of Reformation and Enlightenment Church History* by John D. Hannah. Copyright(c) 2004 by John D. Hannah. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com.

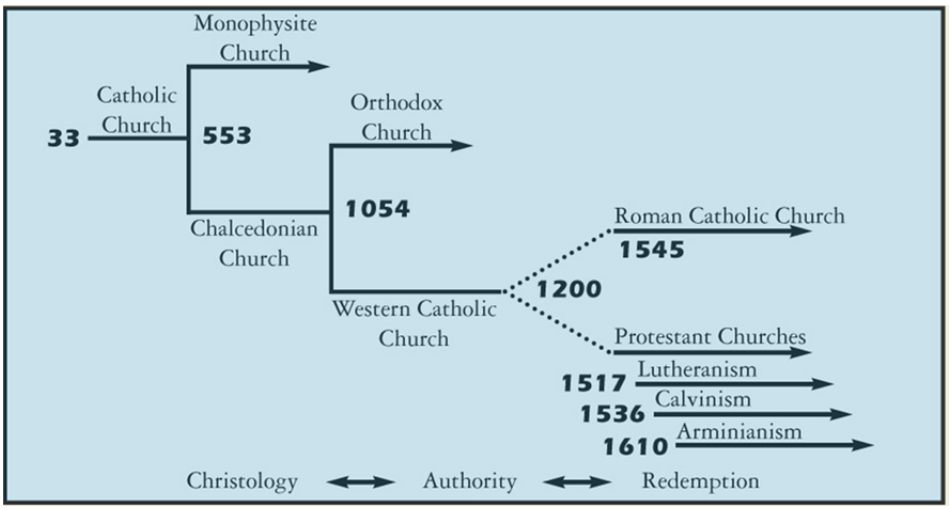


Figure 3: *Major schisms of the first sixteen centuries (Hannah, 2004b)*

(Used by Permission)

Figure 4[11] extrapolates the definition of the created divisions further by indicating seven denominational families (top to bottom: Lutheran, Methodist, Anglican, Baptist, Reformed, Presbyterian and Anabaptist) resulting from the initial line of reformation.

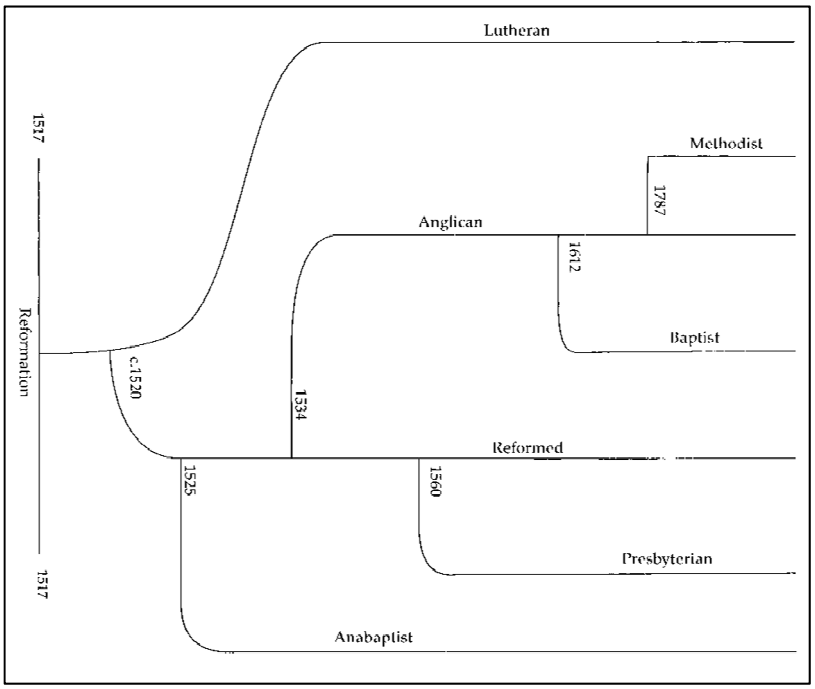


Figure 4: *A family tree of protestant denominational groups (Walton, 2005)*

(Used by Permission)

[11] Taken from *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History* by Robert C. Walton. Copyright(c) 2005 by Robert C. Walton. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com.

At a time when historically significant personalities such as Leonardo da Vinci (AD 1452–1519) were driving the ideological revolution of the Renaissance, Martin Luther (AD 1483–1546) nailed a document outlining ninety-five theses to the church door in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. Luther's main concern was with renewal through parishioner connection to the liturgy. Luther's fundamental means by which the reconnection took place was the employment of liturgy in the native tongue of parishioners, as opposed to the time-honoured Latin; along with hymns sung to well-known folk tunes, also in the parishioner's native tongue. Schaeffer (1976) suggests that "the whole emphasis in worship changed from the celebration of the sacrificial Mass to the preaching and teaching of God's Word" (p. 80).

A second figure of the reformation, Huldrych Zwingli (AD 1484–1531) also played an influential role in the development of worship. Where Luther maintained much of the formality of the Roman liturgy, Zwingli ventured a 'rational' approach seeking, "more simplicity and more moral reality in worship" (Segler & Bradley, 2006, p. 33). Like Luther, Zwingli was a highly developed musician, but unlike Luther this did not "lead to any kind of emphasis on music in worship. On the contrary, his musical experience concerned the sophisticated art-world of polyphony and he had little interest in the simpler fare of congregational singing" (Wilson-Dickson, 1992, p. 64).

Significant theological reformation also came in the form of John Calvin (AD 1509–1564) when he published his *Institutes* (1536) nearly twenty years after Luther's Ninety-five Theses. As Segler and Bradley (2006) note: "Calvin wanted to move further from the Roman liturgy than Luther, but with a less drastic approach as proposed by Zwingli. Calvin declared that whatever is not taught in the Scriptures is not allowable in worship, whereas Luther said that whatever is not forbidden in the Scriptures is acceptable" (p. 35). Again, these alternative stances continue to confront the modern worshipper with a philosophical dilemma:

> John Calvin and others developed what has come to be known as the regulative principle of worship. This is the conviction that anything we do in a public meeting of the church must be clearly commanded or implied in Scripture...Another approach is called the normative principle…Broadly stated, the normative principle holds that whatever Scripture doesn't forbid is allowed. (Kauflin, 2008, p. 154)

In keeping with his regulative approach, Calvin is recorded as stating,

> …simple and pure singing of the divine praises, forasmuch as where there is no meaning there is no edification. Let them come from the heart and mouth, and in the vulgar tongue. Instrumental music was only tolerated in the time of the Law (the Old Testament) because of the people's infancy. (Wilson-Dickson, 1992, p. 65)

Either position, regulative or normative, requires an understanding of scriptural comment on any given subject. As previously observed, music received very little commentary throughout the New Testament and much of what is said falls short of objective instruction. The modern worshipper must then apply either principal: regulative or normative, to their worship style[12].

vi) Post Reformation

The crystallising of these three reformational strands forged by Luther, Zwingli and Calvin continued, and subsequently developed through to the 1900's. The post Reformation period was an important phase as the western church grappled with its new form internally (Roman Catholic alongside Protestantism) as well as the external challenges of secular thought:

> The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also witnessed a great intellectual awakening…This period is also known as the Age of Reason because it was widely believed that reason and nature had displaced revelation as the final source of authority in the church as well as the state. (Dockery et al., 1992, p. 873)

Before continuing the review of the post reformation era of the protestant line, it is important to also acknowledge the internal reforms of the Roman Catholic Church during this time. While defining the important developments within the Roman Catholic Church Noll (2000) writes "that the sum total of counter-reform, reform, papal initiatives, and the Council of Trent left the Catholic Church at the end of the sixteenth century a systematically different body than it had been a century before" (p. 202).[13]

This era was also a rich time of musical development. Perhaps most significantly, the compositions of J. S. Bach (1685–1750) delivered "an extensive musical contribution

[12] It is acknowledged that worship participants may in fact develop a stance which is a hybrid of the regulative and normative positions; thus positioning them somewhere along the continuum of thought.

[13] The reform of the Roman Catholic Church continues through today and will receive further note during the review of the 20th century developments.

to worship" (Wilson-Dickson, 1992, p. 93). In observing the developments of music used in the church for corporate worship Wilson-Dickson comments on Bach's Cantatas as a

> Significant departure from earlier Lutheran music…A move away from God's word might be seen as a move for the worse, but the use Bach makes of his cantata-texts is so compelling that they remain unsurpassed as musical expression of Christian truth. (p. 95)

As significant as Bach's contribution was, not every section of the protestant church was enamoured by the use of music in corporate worship; in fact one strand rejected the use of music and singing almost exclusively. To understand this position further a review of the three post reformation divisions is required.

Webber's (1994) commentary on the development of the three reformational strands articulates under three post-reformational headings; *Antiliturgical*, *Pedagogical*, and *Evangelical* in his book *Worship: Old and New* (pp. 114–119).

These movements led the protestant church towards believer-focused worship as opposed to the Roman Catholic principle of priestly-focused worship.

> The shift toward experience devalued not only baptism but other sign-acts as the Eucharist and the liturgical calendar. Faith in Jesus Christ and the worship of God were to happen in the mind or in the heart. Consequently, signs, symbols, bodily postures and gestures, and the forms and ceremonies that accompanied traditional worship rituals were feared as idols and images that turned the heart away from God. (Webber, 1994, p. 114)

The Antiliturgical movement derives its name from the desire to lessen or completely remove structural (liturgical) influences from the church such as written prayers in favour of spontaneous prayer (Baptists), removal of ordained ministry in favour of layperson directed worship (Quakers) and the rejection of the prayer book (Congregationalists). The Congregationalists also display the Pedagogical approach with their interest in biblical instruction. The Puritan influence of word-centred worship finds itself manifest in the Presbyterian liturgy and though Presbyterians are founded in the moderate Calvinist approach to the Eucharist (monthly observance), they observe the Puritan (Zwingli) practice of celebrating communion on a quarterly basis. The Presbyterians exemplify the Pedagogical movement in their application of scriptural teaching almost to the exclusion of experiential worship as might be experienced by emotion. In contrast, the Evangelical movement emphasises

experiential worship. In commenting on the nature of Evangelical worship, Webber (1994) writes,

> In effect, those who were truly converted needed less structure and were less dependent on others for worship. In this way the corporate worship of the congregation and systematic order of congregational action were gradually replaced by the stress on individual experience in worship and a personal walk with the Lord. (p. 117)

The oscillation between the experiential and the logical has dogged the Christian Church since its conception. The following diagram (Figure 5[14]) displays the chronological pendulum swing between worship that is experienced intuitively (emotions) and worship that is derived cognitively (intellect):

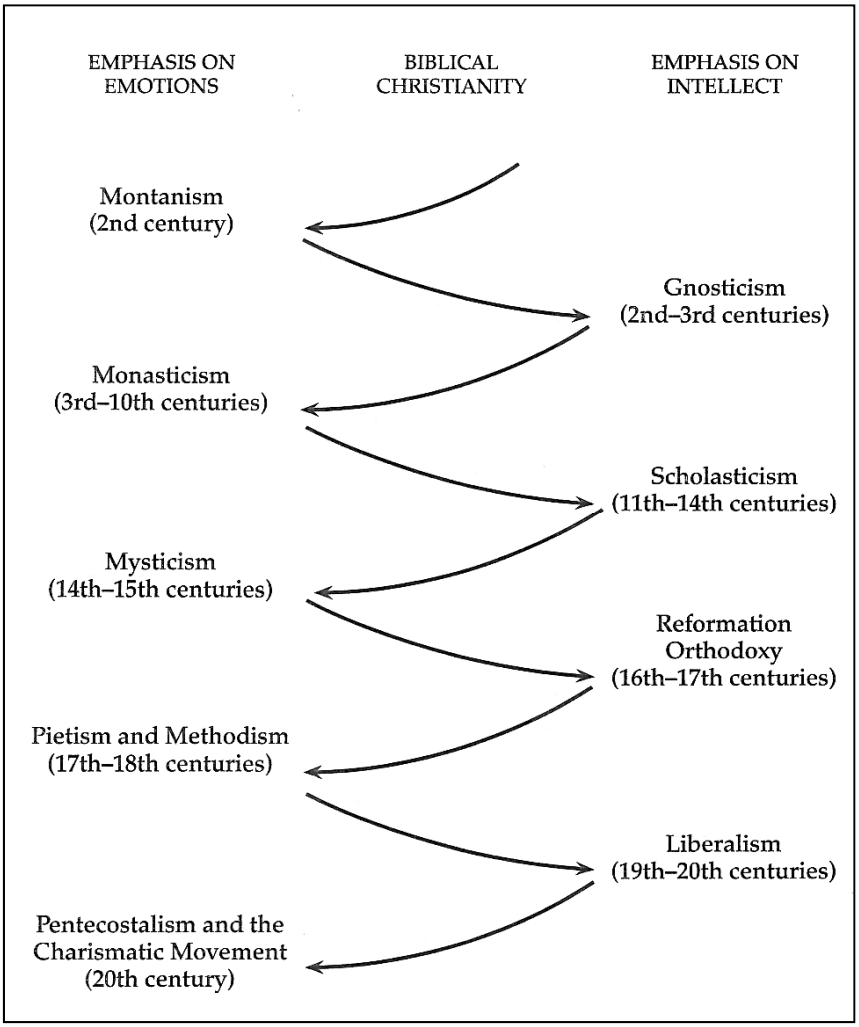


Figure 5: *The pendulum effect in church history (Walton, 2005)*

(Used by Permission)

[14] Taken from *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History* by Robert C. Walton. Copyright(c) 2005 by Robert C. Walton. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com.

Walton's somewhat simplistic chart does not show the through-line of each persuasion. That is, while each era has experienced a time of theological and philosophical reaction, ideologists and theologians of the established patterns have continued with their conviction to maintain the conventional dogma. For example, while the swing from Reformation Orthodoxy to Pietism and Methodism took place under the influence of the Wesley brothers, denominations such as the Presbyterians consolidated their pedagogical stand through the formation of the Presbyterian General Assembly (1788).

One of the most significant figures to emerge from the Evangelistic movement was John Wesley (AD 1703–1791). Wesley's attraction to 'converting the lost' drove the *Evangelical Awakening* of the 18th Century.

> The movement was interlaced by personal ties of the leaders but three regions were significantly changed: Germany by the rise of Pietism, the British Isles by the preaching of the Methodists, and the American colonies by the impact of the Great Awakening. (Shelley, 1982, pp. 350–351)

Wesley, unlike his Antiliturgical and Pedagogical brothers, held to the Anglican *Common Book of Prayer* stating, "I know of no liturgy in the world, ancient or modern, which breathes more of solid, scriptural piety than the Common Prayer of the Church of England" (Ashton & Davis, 2002, p. 65). Wesley also enjoyed the Moravian practice of singing Hymns. "The special feature of Moravian hymns is the concern to create subjective experience of the Saviour's suffering. These hymns are "emotional, imaginative, sensuous, with a minimum of intellectual structure" (Webber, 1994, p. 117).

Unlike the Pedagogical approach (which sought, in part, to quell any sense of emotion) or the Antiliturgical idealism (which in some cases removed music altogether), the singing of hymns became a pillar of the Evangelical persuasion. Composers of evangelical hymnody, such as Charles Wesley and his brother John, also moved beyond the confines of scripturally derived text to create lyrics that more fully expressed the breadth of human emotion and experience as perceived by a child of the 'age of reason'. Here the influence of secular culture on the design of church music and consequently the design of worship is apparent. In order to connect with

non-believers and further entrench those already converted, the Wesley brothers constructed their hymns so as to have a high level of emotive impact. “Given the ecstasis *intrinsic* to sacred *singing* , the performance of hymns could and did produce spiritual states analogous to those of one’s original conversion experience – the sacred time of one’s spiritual origin” (Marini, 2006, p. 147).

Again, Dawn (1995) provides a key qualification, albeit not devoid of her own bias, as to the difficulties arising from the tension created by the polemic of emotions and intellect in worship.

> Overwhelmingly subjectivism focuses only on the individual’s feelings and needs and not on God’s attributes or character. Some subjectivity, of course, is necessary; worship cannot be vital without feelings. The problem arises when emotions predominate in mindless subjectivism and God is lost in the process. (p. 50)

The consolidation of secularised thought during the Age of Reason, as well as the discordant setting of the Christian church, sees the Christian worship construct enter the 20th century as a divided entity.

vii) 20th Century

According to Webber (1994), the 20th Century began with two firmly established camps of approach and enactment in Christian Worship: Catholic and Protestant. “Worship changes of the twentieth century began with the rise of the holiness-Pentecostal movement, which, in its rediscovery of the supernatural, is regarded by many as the first post-Enlightenment approach to worship” (Webber, 1994, p. 121).

While continuing with the review of protestant worship (this paper’s central concern) during the 20th century it is important to note that the traditions and rites of the Roman Catholic Church have also continued to evolve since the reformation with the most recent council (Vatican II) focused on updating the church (*Aggiornamento*):

> Since Trent, two subsequent councils have helped to define the contours of the Catholic faith: Vatican I (1871), which affirmed the dogma of papal infallibility, and Vatican II (1962–65), which issued innovative decrees on ecumenism, worship, and the role of bishops in the governance of the church. (Dockery, et al., 1992, p. 872)

Despite the limiting scope of this paper, the effect of Vatican II on the Roman Catholic Church and their protestant brethren should not be undervalued. While

commenting on the recent developments within the Roman Catholic Church Webber (1994) remarked "the impact of worship renewal soon affected the mainline Protestant church. Mainliners have drawn from the Catholic worship renewal and have expressed a hope for a unified worship among all Christians" (pp. 121–122). While the Roman Catholic's doctrines evolved with constructed thought and debate, many of the major expansions within protestant worship have developed in a more arbitrary manner.

Originating in the 1906 Azusa Street Mission revival (Los Angeles, USA), the Pentecostal movement gained much of its momentum during the 1960s. Recognized for their *speaking in tongues* and similar spiritual practices (prophecy; words of knowledge etc.), Pentecostals, along with the charismatic movement, have been responsible for developing the modern *Chorus*. Segler and Bradley (2006) recognise this influence when they write,

> In the last decades of the twentieth century, charismatic worship has exerted a great influence on worship of all (denominations). The charismatic model of free-flowing praise, Old Testament worship pattern, accommodation of contemporary culture, use of popular sounding music, embrace of technology, and emotional appeal has altered worship practice in many congregations around the globe. Particular to this phenomenon is the music usually referred to as 'praise and worship' music. (p. 47)

The ideology central to the composition of the Chorus (Praise and Worship Music) was not dissimilar to Wesley's approach to the evangelical hymn. The ultimate aim is to heighten accessibility and therefore participation through the emotional engagement of congregational members. Best practice in constructing lyrical content of the Chorus remained scripturally sound whilst being expressed with poetic licence; again not dissimilar to the lyrical construction of the revivalist hymns (Marini, 2006). The Chorus is also written as to elicit an emotional response from the worshipper. Barry Liesch (1996) in *The New Worship* comments on choruses stating, "Choruses communicate a freshness to our faith. They powerfully relate Christianity to contemporary culture. And they effectively express intimacy – our personal relationship with God. Their contribution is enormous" (p. 19). Perhaps the heightened sense of emotion intuited in the singing of the modern chorus is explained by its direct roots to African-American gospel songs. J. Nathan Corbitt (1998) writes

> Metered music, improvised hymns, modern and contemporary gospel all owe their heritage to a suffering people…The greatest contribution of Africa to kingdom music around the globe may be its distinct syncopated rhythm and the spirit of praise and joy it embodies. (pp. 270–270)

Cherry (2010) seems to concur with Corbitt's appraisal of 'Black Gospel's' importance and historical influence upon modern worship repertoire stating that

> It has the ability to express a full range of themes and emotions for worshippers, from high praise to lament, while liberating the spirit of even timid worshippers to join in the emotive experience of singing from the heart to God. (p. 171)

Furthermore, Bernice Johnson Reagon (1992) in her writings about the *Pioneering Gospel Music Composers* also notes the significance of a musical genre seated in slavery. Reagon writes "the sacred music of the slaves gives us a rich opportunity to look not only at the creation of this repertoire but also at its use and evolution" (p. 11); an evolution that continues to this day and frames a portion of this enquiry – the use of modern worship chorus by Contemporary Worship Singers.

The adaptation of 'Gospel' for the evangelistic meetings of Dwight L. Moody by his lead musician (Ira D. Sankey) cemented the use of the gospel music idiom as acceptable worship repertoire during the late 19th century. In commenting on Sankey's use of this material Wilson-Dickson (1992) writes,

> The 'gospel songs' of these meetings conveyed the simplest of Christian messages through music of emotional directness to huge numbers of people. The style of the music was a familiar one, closely related to the music halls and the sheet music of Tin Pan Alley. (p. 200)

The use of Gospel was standard amongst the revival evangelists and Pentecostals until the mid-20th century. In his text, *The Golden Age of Gospel*, Horace Clarence Boyer (2000) writes "By the 1930s Pentecostalism had become entrenched in the African American community…Pentecostal denominations separated themselves from the Baptists and Methodists and created a service style, music, language, behaviour, dress, and an attitude about their place among Christians" (pp. 18–19). Boyer furthers his review noting that the

> Gospel music was selected as the illuminating force behind this theology and developed over all other types of sacred music. When hymns were sung by these congregations they

> were 'gospelized.' Services were nothing less than ecstatic with forceful and jubilant singing, dramatic testimonies, hand clapping, foot stamping, and beating of drums tambourines, and triangles…It was not uncommon for a shouting session to last for thirty or forty-five minutes. (p. 19)

Boyer's observations point to the genesis of a musical genre (today's worship Chorus) and the sub-cultural setting in which the musical genre was employed. The subsequent advent of the modern chorus and its influence on the modern worship settings should not be underrated. When commenting on the musical genre's impact, Dan Wilt (2009) states,

> Modern worship songs have emerged as a primary discipleship vehicle, guiding contemporary churches on their courses over the past fifty years. These songs, and the churches that enlist them, have grown in influence and number, radically impacting the grass roots of Christian faith in our generation. (p. 144)

Wilt's assessment of the Chorus' impact on modern Christian worship, cross denominationally, ties in with Paul Zahl's (2004) earlier noted contention that "how we pray (that is worship) determines what we believe" (p. 25). Bob Kauflin (2008) backs up Zahl's stance by asserting, "We are what we sing" (p. 92) and Mark Evans (2006) while citing Hamilton, goes even further suggesting that "Church goers no longer sort themselves out by denomination so much as by musical preference…Indeed 'the kind of music a church offers increasingly defines the kind of person who will attend" (p. 59).

If the contribution of the Chorus has been enormous, the influence of the Praise and Worship movement has been equally so. Praise and Worship has brought about radical changes to the manner in which music is expressed within many Christian liturgies (Evans, 2006). Webber (1994) explains the significance of the Praise and Worship movement writing,

> While the exact origins of the praise and worship tradition are ambiguous the movement itself is not difficult to describe. It seeks to recapture the lost element of praise found in both Old and New Testament worship. It stands in the tradition of the Talmud, saying, 'Man should always utter praises, and then pray.' Praise God first and foremost, *then* move on to the other elements of worship, say the proponents of praise and worship. (p. 129)

The 'contemporary'[15] ideal of presenting the congregational praise (singing) at the forefront of the liturgical design has had a profound impact on the worshipper's orientation towards their conceptual practice of corporate devotion. That is, by placing the singing at the commencement of a church service its perceived value is heightened simply because it comes first, before the sermon and communion. The Praise and Worship movement also advocated for a more scripturally based structure to worship; taking their staged progression through the worship service from before the commencement of Christianity, finding their scriptural model in Hebrew history, as Webber explains: "Patterned after the movement in the Old Testament tabernacle and temple from the outer court to the inner court and then into the Holy of Holies. All of these steps are accomplished through song" (p. 130).

One group having been influenced by the Praise and Worship movement and who advocate the strong use of modern Chorus is Australia's Hillsong Church. Strongly affiliated with the Pentecostal denomination Assemblies of God, Hillsong is recognised as one of the world's leading disseminators of praise and worship material (Evans, 2002; Hanna, 2005; Hawn, 2006). Moreover the dominance of groups such as Hillsong has led one commentator to suggest that the modern Chorus should be recognised as a completely new genre of music (Crabtree, 2008).

viii) 21st Century

The "rise and rise of Pentecostal music" (Evans, 2006) during the 20th Century has, when deconstructed, bred a hybrid of music genre which is not dissimilar to pop and rock music idioms (Horness, 2004; Webber, 1994). As stated earlier, this new paradigm of church music has infiltrated the Pentecostal and Charismatic persuasions and beyond. The attraction of the new music form has led Ian Breward (2001) to survey, "After initial rejection and some painful splits, Baptists, Brethren, and Churches of Christ learned from Pentecostals about more open styles of worship, new music, and the value of developing large congregations which can offer a variety of activities and ministries" (p. 396). Evans (2002) goes a step further in his assessment of the music's cross denominational infiltration by stating, "It is common for Pentecostal styles of worship to exist within mainstream Protestant churches even though Pentecostal doctrines are not observed, or even approved" (p. 111). In order

[15] A detailed review of the 'Contemporary' worship setting is provided under 'Style and Form' (p. 37)

to stress the enormity of this phenomenon Figure 6 shows fifty main denominational lines from twenty streams of influence in America[16]. Figure 6[17] illustrates the Pentecostal Movement with three arms, including the Assemblies of God. The researcher acknowledges the existence of other Australian Pentecostal denominations such as Christian Outreach Centre and Christian City Church. However this does not diminish the significance of a singular derivative (Pentecostalism) causing such wide influence across many of the other denominational streams.

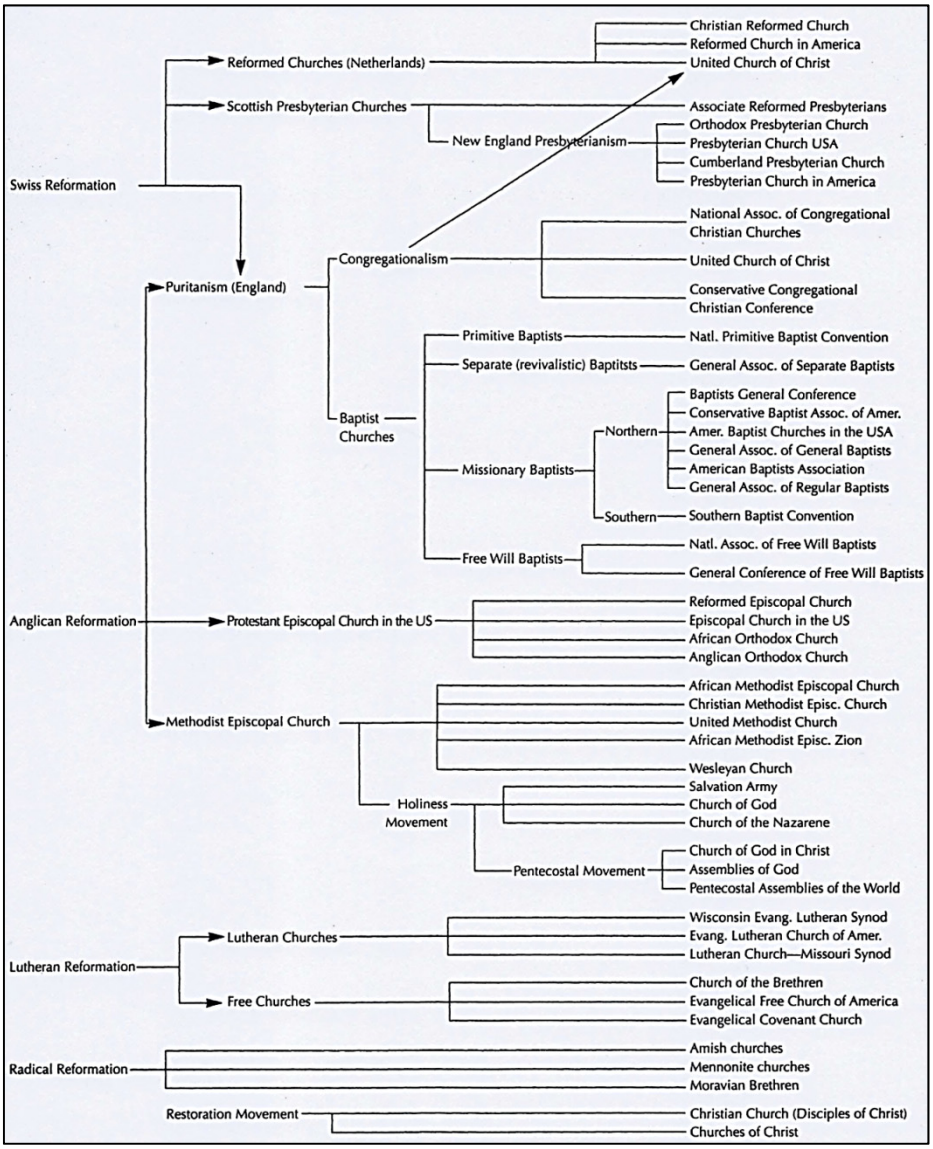


Figure 6: *Reformation churches (S. L. Peterson, 1999, p. 244)*

(Used by Permission)

[16] It is noted that Peterson's graphic presents American denominational history; to which Australian denominational history can be generically aligned.

[17] Taken from *Timeline Charts of the Western Church* by Susan Lynn Peterson. Copyright(c) 1999 by Susan Lynn Peterson. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com.

The 21st Century has commenced with a narrowing of musical genres in use by those who design the contemporary liturgies (Evans, 2006). Described by Kim Chandler (personal communication, September 30, 2010) as "Cold Play lite" the distinct production quality of the prominent musical genre is a pop idiom.

Consequently two camps have assembled, each championing traditional or contemporary musical styles as expressed in hymns and choruses respectively. These hostilities have been labeled the *Worship Wars* (Dawn, 1995; Duncan, 2009; Kauflin, 2008; Morgenthaler, 2004; Parrett, 2005).

b) Worship Wars

The modern worship wars that beset the western Church owe their origin in part to the lack of scriptural direction of form and the philosophical disagreements surrounding those instructions that might be gleaned from scripture. Carson (2002a) observed, "At the empirical level, the sad fact of the contemporary church life is that there are few subjects calculated to kindle more heated debate than the subject of worship" (p. 11). The practice of worship and, as observed earlier in the review of Figure 5, "The Pendulum Effect in Church History" (Walton, 2005), has historically swung from *intellect* to *emotion* and back again. The 21st Century has witnessed the cessation of the pendulum with the extremes of the pendulum's arc deriving much of their distinctions from music. Today, according to Evans (2006), the opposing camps congregate under the labels of *Contemporary* and *Traditional*.

Some voices of reason seek to create productive discourse between these perspectives. Robert Greer (2003) in his book *Mapping Postmodernism: A Survey of Christian Options* cites William Placher's comments regarding interdenominational discourse noting,

> Christians would perhaps progress further in their own traditions if they listened more attentively and thoughtfully to voices from other ecclesial traditions and not be so quick to resolve differences. Rather it is to learn to appreciate the rich diversity within the Christian faith – at times making changes in one's own religious tradition, at other times maintaining specific distinctives that set one's tradition apart from the others. (p. 196)

Placher's comments, whilst not conceptually new, are a timely reminder that the issues which have led to the current and constant skirmishes surrounding worship liturgy and style date back to the medieval period. Furthermore, Pharisee or

Sadducee (New Testament), Church State or Monastic (Medieval), Antiliturgical or Evangelistic (Reformation) history provides evidence that Christians will congregate around idealistic themes which might, to all appearances, seem completely at odds with one another. Today's conflict, centred on Contemporary worship (Choruses) versus Traditional liturgy (Hymnody), is no different (Dawn, 1995). Observable in this dichotomy is what Dawn (1995) calls *The Idolatry of Power*.

> The idolatry of power is often at the root of many congregations' divisions over the style and format of worship services. The war between 'traditionalist' and those who advocate 'contemporary' styles often becomes a subtle battle for power instead of a communitarian conversation that could result in a blending of the old and new treasures to be found in the Word and in music. (pp. 52–53)

Worship style is not the only topic that registers substantial debate. Another subject that polarises opinion is the theology of God's presence.

i) Transcendence and Immanence

Musical genre or styles are not the only factors that determine the orientation of a particular church's position on worship. Doctrinal notions such as the Anointing and humility both receive focus within the context of the worship wars. These two topics will receive consideration in the review of literature as pertaining to Church Culture, but a third doctrinal area, God's transcendence and immanence, will receive attention here, in direct connection to the polemic of traditional versus contemporary. In their apologetic Lawrence and Dever (2009) argue,

> For far too many evangelicals, worship has been reduced from *service to* God to an *experience of* God. As a result, we have become obsessed with questions of aesthetics and style…Some are searching for that spiritually 'orgasmic' wave of emotion that carries them along for the rest of the week. Others are seeking a profound experience of transcendence and awe. Others are looking for a feeling of warmth and acceptance. Attached to each of these experiences that we have defined as 'worship' is a style, often musical but sometimes more that produces the emotional state we are seeking. (p. 251)

Lawrence and Dever's summation of the discussion surrounding worship that recognises God's transcendence as opposed to God's immanence positions the debate squarely in the experiential aspects of worshipper perception: that is worship with a heightened awareness of God's presence (immanence) has become the key goal of many modern worshippers. There is a distinction here between the cultural

ideology of the ‘Anointing’ and God’s presence which can, at times be labelled synonymously (Evans, 2002). Thoennes (2008) concurs:

> The biblical balance between God's transcendence and his immanence is hard to maintain, but the best worship, prayer, and daily relating to God is that which has in it a deep recognition of both God's majestic holiness and personal engagement with the creatures he has made. (p. 2529)

One commentator, Wiersbe (2000), suggests that the imbalance of transcendence and immanence in the modern church is generational with the younger people drawn to worship styles that promote God’s nearness (immanence) through the music. In support of this notion, though independently, Paul Basden (1999) presents the notion that it has been a chronological development. This hypothesis again ties in with the pendulum swing between emotive and cognitive worship styles as seen in Figure 5 (p. 26). Timothy Keller (2002), in his writings *Reformed Worship in the Global City* states,

> The second way we get transcendence with simplicity is the demeanour or heart attitude of those leading in the gathered worship. If their tone is merely joyful and warm, the service will have an exclusively ‘horizontal’ reference. It may be very sweet and cozy, but it will not inspire transcendent awe. However, if their tone is only dignified and sober, this will simply create somberness or awkwardness. There will be no wonder, which is a constituent part of transcendent awe. (p. 213)

Keller’s comments start to broach the subject of leadership in worship and they also highlight the interplay between cognitive/transcendent worship, along with emotive/immanent worship. That is more often than not the worship of God as a transcendent being is worship derived of the intellect whereas worship of God as a close and immanent Father conjures emotional response from the worshiper. Again, the tension of head and heart is not a new observation. Stanley Grenz (2001) in his discussion of the future of evangelical theology in a postmodern world urges his readers to “reappropriate the older pietist discovery that a ‘right heart’ takes primacy over a ‘right head’” (p. 87). Erickson’s (1998) writings provide clarification to Grenz’s (1995) earlier writings on postdualistic view in reflecting, “Grenz does not mean simply giving greater place to these affective dimensions of life alongside the rational, but ‘integrating the emotional-affective, as well as the bodily-sensual, with the intellectual-rational within the one human person’” (pp. 96–97). In encouraging the postmodernist stance of integration, Grenz highlights the head/heart binary.

The flow of Christian Church history, along with the ideological battle fronts of the worship wars have given rise to broader categorisation which, whilst intricately caught up in the passionate debate, sit somewhat aloof and form more passive labels which serve the modern Christian church. These labels assist in identifying worship style and form.

c) Style and Form

Born of historical progression the practice of worship has been stylised, over time, into a range of resulting liturgies. The term *Liturgy*, "from the Greek *leitourgia* (literally renders) 'religious service'" (Provance, 2009, p. 79). Superficially the liturgy is simply the mode or *style* in which the worship is conducted (Kauflin, 2008; Schultze, 2004) with reformation of liturgy being bought about by "religious awakenings" (Segler & Bradley, 2006, p. 36). "In one sense, the Liturgy is an *adiaphora*. Holy Scripture does not command or prescribe the exact form and details (texts, music, and ceremonies). It does not follow however, that liturgical matters are unimportant or arbitrary" (Quill, 2009, pp. 19–20). Dawn (1995) warns,

> Losing God as the subject can turn liturgy into performance rather than sacrament. This results in a modern form of a medieval notion against which Martin Luther fought – the notion that liturgy's power and effectiveness depend upon the priest's worthiness. The modern version insists that liturgy must be performed well in order to be effective, and its potency is determined according to the criterion that every participant must have had some sort of emotionally satisfying experience. (p. 243)

Discussion of *performance orientation* will be addressed later[18], but it is important to note in Dawn's comment the continuing themes of the emotive versus the cognitive which again is directly tied to times of religious renewal.

Consideration of each developed liturgy throughout church history falls outside the scope of this review, and so only those modern styles which have firmly established themselves in today's range will be considered. The study will now review and discuss recent history covering how the current codifications of worship styles came into being.

[18] See 'Performance' (p. 50)

In the first sixty years of the twentieth century Webber (2004, p. 176) identifies eight protestant traditions as:

- Liturgical tradition – emphasis on beauty
- Reformed tradition – emphasis on the centrality of the Word
- Anabaptist tradition – concern for community and discipleship within worship
- Restorationist tradition – commitment to weekly Communion
- Revivalist tradition (Baptists, Methodists, evangelicals) – concern to move toward the invitation and call sinners to repentance
- Quaker tradition – call to silence and waiting for God to speak
- Holiness tradition – emphasis on the need to break through and achieve sanctification in worship
- African-American tradition – emphasis on soul worship

Webber goes onto highlight three main contributors to the later 20th Century developments in worship style as the Pentecostal Movement (p. 177), the Latter Rain Movement (Charismatic Renewal) "known for its spontaneous worship" (p. 177) and the Chorus Tradition, which he notes was representative of the music being used in the Pentecostal and Latter Rain movements (p. 178). In reflecting on the advent of the Chorus tradition, William Dyrness (2009) writes, "While music has always been central to Christian worship, the music issuing from this movement can safely be said to have impacted major segments of Christian worship in America" (p. 68).

Among the first to articulate the modern variants of worship style was Barry Liesch (1996). In his book, *The New Worship: Straight Talk on Music and the Church*, Liesch lays out three forms for worship: *Liturgical*, *Thematic* and *Flowing Praise* (Figure 7[19]; p. 39). Liesch also notes, "The three forms are *not mutually exclusive*; they can be *blended*" (p. 72). This blending of the styles is a crucial consideration in the continuing development towards codification of worship forms.

[19] Taken from *The New Worship: Straight Talk on Music and the Church* by Barry Liesch. Copyright(c) 1996 by Barry Leisch. Used by permission of Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group PO Box 6287 Grand Rapids, MI. www.bakerpublishing.com.

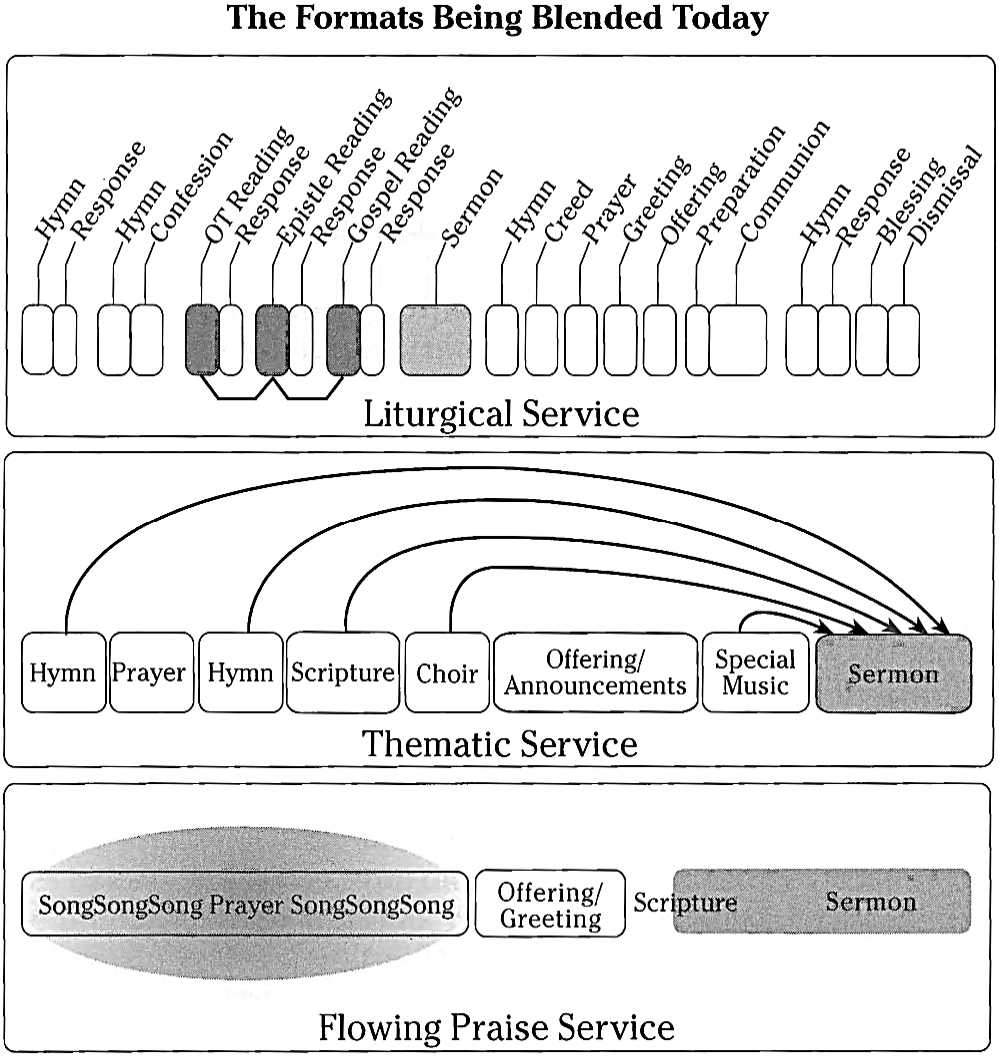


Figure 7: *Liesch's three formats of worship (1996, p. 81)*

(Used by Permission)

Paul Basden (1999) took up the cause of codification with his book *The Worship Maze: Finding a style to fit your Church*. Basden suggested that, at the time of his writing, presenting the various forms of worship are best shown as a line: "the worship spectrum" (p. 36), as presented in Figure 8[20].

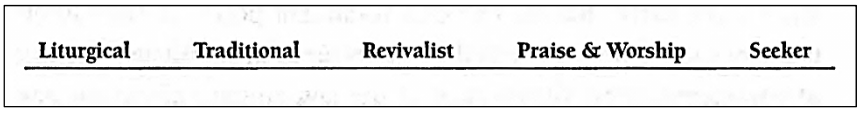


Figure 8: *Basden's worship spectrum (1999, p. 36)*

(Used by Permission)

[20] Taken from *The Worship Maze: Finding a Style to Fit Your Church* by Paul Basden. Copyright(c) 1999 by Paul Basden. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press PO Box 1400 Downers Grove, IL 60515. www.ivpress.com.

Moving left to right, Basden qualifies the worship spectrum as moving from most traditional to least traditional (p. 36). Basden utilises the rest of his book to classify each of the styles and arrives at a key observation, "The *why* of worship always determines the *what* and the *how*" (p. 180).

Five years later, Basden edited the text *Exploring the Worship Spectrum: 6 Views* (2004). Of interest is the text's labelling of six worship styles. These six styles are: *Formal-Liturgical*, *Traditional Hymn-Based*, *Contemporary Music-Driven*, *Charismatic*, *Blended*, and *Emerging*. The first two labels, Formal-Liturgical and Traditional Hymn-Based fall neatly in line with Basden's earlier writings, but the remaining four labels represent a definite shift in the less traditional styles.

To further exemplify the miscellany of classification in the current dialogue of codification, Dyrness' (2009) recent representation of *contemporary movements* (Figure 9) is of interest:

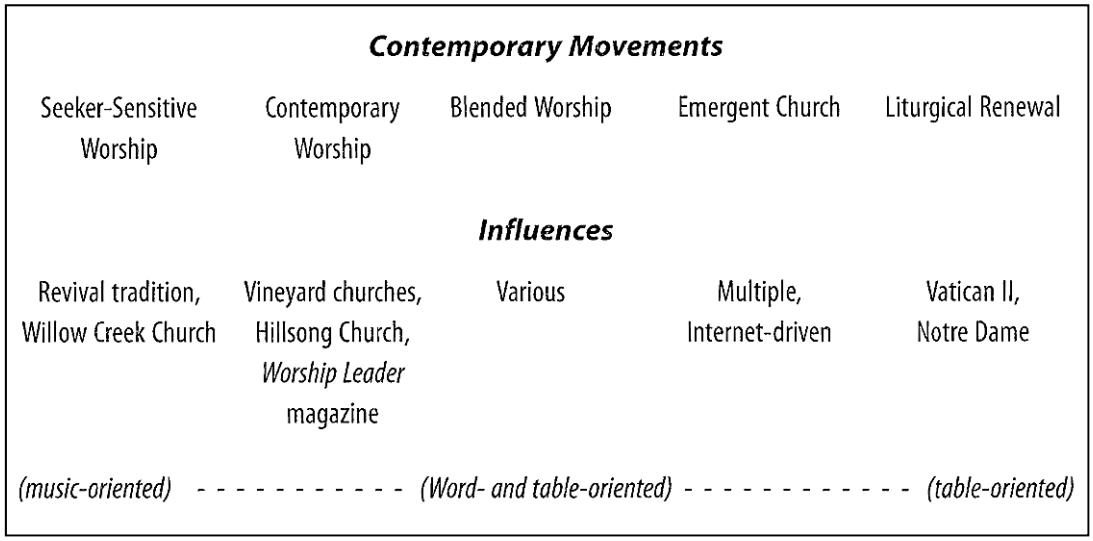


Figure 9: *The spectrum of worship renewal, 2000-2005 (Dyrness, 2009, p. 70)*
(Used by Permission)

Dyrness seemingly builds on Basden's (1999) worship spectrum, but in seeking to update the currency of terms, he does away with the labels 'Charismatic' (Basden, 2004) as well as 'Revivalist' and 'Praise and Worship' (Basden, 1999) and groups them under the label 'Contemporary Worship.' In qualifying his *Spectrum of Worship Renewal* (Figure 9; p. 40) Dyrness purports,

> On the left are those whose services are most distant from the medieval pattern, but who attempt to make the strongest connection with the culture around them. On the right, by

> contrast, are those who would hold more closely to the traditional patterns of worship and want to stand against any influence from the culture. (p. 69)

To declare that one group seeks to make a stronger connection with surrounding culture than another whilst the other group rejects outside cultural influences seems to be reductionist, especially when advocates of Emergent Church (Kimball, 2004; Morgenthaler, 2004) declare a desire to connect with their immediate cultures. Morgenthaler (2004) passionately promotes the notion that "At their core, emerging worship services are encounters with God born out of a dual passion for theological rootedness and a deeply transforming connection with a radically deconstructed culture" (p. 230). This obvious inconsistency in the literature further complicates the researcher's task in a project of this nature.

Robinson (2010b) puts forward five main Australian worship styles: *Liturgical, Traditional, Contemporary, Blended and Charismatic/Pentecostal*. Certainly, as considered previously in the review of Basden and Dyrness's work, Liturgical and Traditional are conventional uses of term, but the acknowledgement of Contemporary, Blended and Charismatic/Pentecostal remains arguable. Robinson clarifies the omission of Emerging Worship in his categories by stating,

> Other worship styles (such as the *Emerging Worship* style) have enjoyed wide use in the United States but the scope of this chapter is on the five styles that have wide acceptance throughout Australian churches. Of these, it is also important to recognise that American worship liturgy incorporated *Charismatic/Pentecostal* under the definition of *Contemporary*. While this trend is developing in Australia, there are still observable distinctions between the two styles. (p. 277)

Qualifiers of both geography and time are important. While Charismatic/Pentecostal styles are still readily observable on the Australian worship landscape they are becoming less so; even with the passing of only 12 to 24 months. Additionally, Emerging worship styles are becoming more prevalent.

The Australian worship scene can now be categorised under J. Matthew Pinson's (2009) editorial work in *Perspectives on Christian Worship: 5 Views* and Constance M. Cherry's (2010) *The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designing Culturally*

Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services[21]. Not dissimilar to Basden's (2004) *Exploring the Worship Spectrum: 6 Views*, Pinson's and Cherry's works independently gather the definitions under five headings: *Liturgical*, *Traditional Evangelical*, *Contemporary*, *Blended* and *Emerging*. Pinson's and Cherry's labels will be utilised from this point forward, acknowledging them as a recent work on the subject of worship setting codification. Pinson's (2009) introductory chapter concedes that "radical oversimplification of…complex historical expressions" (p. 13) would accompany the inclusion of groups such as Pentecostal and Charismatic movements thereby justifying their inclusion under the Contemporary heading.

Pinson and Cherry's labels are further explained below, acknowledging their immediate currency and predilection to future change.

a. Liturgical

The *Liturgical* worship style shares its name, but should not be mistaken with, the term *liturgy* as described earlier. This is, in part, due to its conception during the Reformation and the resulting original use of term. "The term *leitourgia*, composed of the Greek words *ergon* ('work') and *laos* ('people'), actually means 'the work of the people'" (Dawn, 1995, p. 242). Cherry (2010) furthers the distinction noting "Liturgical worship is a term typically used in reference to churches that use a *set* liturgy (emphasis added), most often a liturgy prescribed by the denomination to which they belong" (p. 39). This worship style is readily seen in the post Vatican II Roman Catholic Mass and the services of the Lutheran and Anglican Church and found its birth in the reformation of the 16th Century. Musically it employs, almost exclusively, hymnody.

b. Traditional Evangelical

Not dissimilar to the Liturgical style, the *Traditional Evangelical* worship style developed during the Pietist and Methodist renewal (ca. 18th Century). Those features that distinguish the Traditional Evangelical style from its older counterpart are the removal of dedicated liturgical guides such as the Anglican *Prayer Book for Australia*. Ligon Duncan (2009) in his apologetic for the Traditional Evangelical

[21] Certainly, both Pinson's and Cherry's work discusses the American scene with no observation of the Australian scene, but their use of the labels does offer a way forward for discussion of the Australian context.

worship style notes, "The preached word is the central feature of Reformed worship" (p. 106), but seems to over-represent the style by suggesting "The great concern of traditional evangelical worship is for the heart, form, and content of congregational worship to be biblical" (p. 104). While not incorrect, this statement is true of each worship style. Every Christian liturgist, from the most conservative to the most unconventional is concerned with remaining biblical. The Traditional Evangelical style utilises hymns, "in a less structured yet reasonably predictable fashion" (Robinson, 2010b, p. 278) than the Liturgical style. This worship style can be observed in many Presbyterian, Salvation Army and Wesleyan Methodist churches.

c. Contemporary

As reviewed earlier, the *Contemporary* worship style is a modern conglomerate of Pentecostal, Charismatic and other worship groups fashioned after emotively driven liturgies. As Ian Breward (2001) points out, "Pentecostals cannot be understood without understanding how local congregations are established and led" (p. 395). This is also true of the broader Contemporary worship style groupings. Dan Wilt (2009) describes Contemporary Worship as engaging "culture on the levels of language, music, intimacy, emotion, simplicity, and story…subvert(ing) worldviews in the process" (p. 159). Whether Contemporary worship subverts worldviews is arguable. Given that much of what defines the Contemporary worship style is derived from its use of music (generally the modern Chorus) and considering Don Saliers (2006) assertion that, "what and how congregations sing also encodes and reveals social and class identity, musical tastes, and deeper patterns of religious sensibility" (p. 335) it is hard to agree with Wilt's claim. Additionally Bob Rognlien (2005) contends that "Worship is always expressed in a particular cultural context" (p. 168). In light of Salier's and Rognlien's position perhaps Wilt's claim might be better tempered to acknowledge the subversion and subsequent influence of musical style as opposed to the grander claim of worldview. Recognising the Contemporary worship style's influence ties in with the previously noted cross-denominational effect when individual churches utilise the modern Chorus. Thus, the Contemporary style can be witnessed in a range of denominations including customarily traditional churches including Baptist, Church of Christ and Uniting through to Pentecostal churches such as Assemblies of God and the Australian established Christian City Church and Christian Outreach Centre. Horness (2004) describes the musical attributes valued by the contemporary style stating,

> Contemporary worship endeavors to use modern instrumentation (e.g., guitars, drums, synthesizers, percussion, horns), contemporary musical styles (e.g., rock, jazz, hip hop, rap, gospel), and freshly written or arranged songs (both new choruses and fresh treatments of traditional hymns), in the language of this generation to lead people into authentic expressions of worship and a genuine experience of the presence of God. (p. 102)

d. Blended

Like the Contemporary style, Blended worship style is a relatively recent development (Cherry, 2010, p. 235). Michael Lawrence and Mark Dever (2009) define Blended worship as "corporate worship that consists of its biblical elements (prayer, singing, reading and preaching God's Word, the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper) but in a variety of styles or forms" (p. 223). Essentially Blended worship style combines, or blends, the strengths of the Liturgical or Traditional style with the employment of the Contemporary style and more importantly, music (Cherry, 2010; Webber, 2004). This worship style is often observed as a specially designed service held by churches conventionally given to Liturgical or Traditional style services. "Some Anglican churches, for example may hold a Sunday night church service which will also employ the stylistic features of a Contemporary worship style while holding to the narration of (the) Anglican liturgy" (Robinson, 2010b, p. 278).

e. Emerging

The fifth and final definition of styles is that of *Emerging* worship. The newest of all the styles, Emerging worship seeks to move away from the linear employment of the worship service elements. Emerging worship advocate Dan Kimball (2004) suggests "there is no model of an emerging worship gathering because each one is unique to its local church context, community, people, and specific leaders of the church" (p. 73). This claim seems to echo Breward's (2001) earlier cited comment about the Pentecostal church which indicated that the movement cannot be understood as a whole outside the context of its parts. However Timothy Quill (2009), in his review of Kimball's (2009) apologetic for Emerging worship style recognises the historical tethers connected to the newest worship style suggesting that the "emerging worship order bears striking resemblance to that of the nineteenth-century American revival order of worship" (p. 338). Quill goes on to say,

> The typical revival *ordo* followed a three-part structure of (1) Song (or warm up), (2) Preaching, and (3) Conversion (or altar call). Revival; worship has undergone many modifications in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Yet the basic threefold structure remains, as does the underlying experiential epistemology. (p. 338)

In seeking to restructure the linear progression of the worship service the design of Emerging worship centres its reliance on enabling the worship participant to freely move between *worship stations* (Kimball, 2004)[22] at their own discretion. Emerging worship seeks to utilise music in much the same way as the Blended style, with both hymns and choruses employed. In describing his own Emerging church's use of music, Dan Kimball (2009) writes, "we generally start off with about ten minutes of musical worship…the band leads in pop-worship songs that are usually upbeat and mainly celebratory. The musical worship leader selects both modern pop-worship songs and hymns" (p. 312). These are similarities not only to Blended style but also to the Contemporary style. Importantly, as Kimball stresses, there are two key differences.

> We try not to be 'programmed.' The worship leader actually lists about thirty song titles in the bulletin, and almost every week there is a point in the worship gathering where people in the church can call out several songs from that list. Thus, the people take part in choosing the songs for the worship gathering. (p. 312)

This impulsive, participant orientated song list construction is supported by a second key element; the worship team is not positioned at the front of the worship space. Kimball believes that this reduces the performance orientation of the worship service minimising what he perceives as a "celebrity" focus (p. 309). Again, similar to the Blended worship style, Emerging worship is often found (though not exclusively so) as a specifically designed service, created as an adjunct to established churches of various denominational persuasions.

As indicated by the literature review, the following graphic summarises the overall construct influences of modern Christian worship as might be experienced by the Contemporary Worship Singer (Figure 10; p. 46):

[22] Kimball (2004) describes the variety of worship stations as including "water basins, clay tables, or other scripturally-based stations for people to worship God through creative expression" (p. 108)

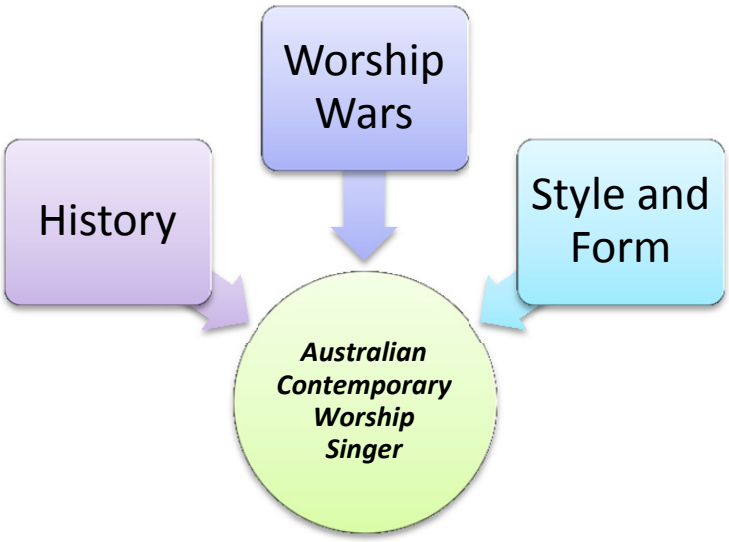


Figure 10: *Three key construct influences*

Having considered the historical journey of western Christian protestant liturgy and observed its dynamic tensions on the modern landscape, the literature review will consider the culture of the modern church, the complexities therein, and how this culture influences the singers that exist within it.

2) The Church and Culture

This focuses the appraisal of the literature on the recent developments of Worship as a prominent feature of contemporary church culture. The second issue to be addressed concerns the idea that the modern worship singer has obtained a celebrity status within the subculture. The review of a celebrity culture will be followed by a querying of the terms: 'performance', 'anointing' and 'excellence', all within the context of the worship singer's role. This discussion of church subculture will be positioned within the wider framework of current literature pertaining to postmodernism.

The interplay between the Church and culture has been observed since the Christian Church's inception. In reviewing the Church's intersection with extrinsic culture Colson (1999) claims "it is not enough to focus exclusively on the spiritual, on Bible studies and evangelistic campaigns, while turning a blind eye to the distinctive tensions of contemporary life" (p. xi). Moreover, when considering the development of worship liturgies, and in observing the people (namely singers who perform those same liturgies) it is important to acknowledge the impact of the surrounding culture

upon those singers and subsequently the liturgies in which they participate (Russell, 1997). In commenting on the writings of Bishop N. T. Wright in this regard, Wilt (2009) writes,

> First, Wright purports that the Enlightenment offered us the split of religion and real life. Second, he notes that the Romantic movement elevated feeling above form, the heart above the head and body. Third, Wright contends that the Existentialist and self actualization movements of the twentieth century have taken us back to Gnosticism…To summarize Wright's point, we as contemporary Western people have in many ways privatised faith, elevated feelings, and pursued self-actualization – no more so in the world than in the church. (p. 157)

The move towards a privatised faith has had a significant impact on the orientation of the individual worshipper. Parrett (2005) observes, "When I attend services that feature 'contemporary' worship today, it seems that 80 percent to 90 percent of all the songs sung by the congregation prominently feature that familiar trinity of I, Me, My" (p. 41). It is important to balance Parrett's comment against Kauflin's (2008) commentary on Psalm 86 which "uses the personal pronouns 'I,' 'me,' and 'my' thirty-one times in seventeen verses" (p. 101). Many commentators are conscious of the individualizing of faith and the subsequent degeneration of corporately held knowledge. The notion of privately held authority, that is the individual's discernment over value laden experiences, has primacy over historical adherences such as biblical interpretation at the corporate level. As Hannah (2004a) states, "Authority is no longer corporate in nature, it is private" (p. 126).

a) Prominence of Worship

Some key players imply that the Christian church has not always had a focus on worship as a prominent feature of its wider cultural identity. For example Darlene Zschech (2002) writes,

> I believe that God is restoring praise and worship to His church, *and* at the same time He is restoring His church, His bride. He is restoring us to be what we were created to be – the hands and feet of Jesus. (p. 203)

The claim by Zschech of restoration suggests that the time prior to this current age has been devoid of a focus on praise and worship. This seems to contradict the literature: worship throughout history displays a rich texture of both the thought and

practice of Christian worship. Webber (1994) suggests "One of the most significant problems of Protestantism, … is its lack of interest in history, which grows out of the relative youthfulness of the North American culture and its rugged individualism" (p. 93). The rugged individualism or privatised faith, as already noted, seems to lead to the disassociation of current worship practice from those practices rooted in earlier times. Dawn (1995) is critical of what she nominates as "narcissistic modernism" stating that many "want simply to throw out the 'old fashioned and outdated' without understanding the danger of destroying the Church's legacy. This failure to pay attention to the Church's history leaves us with inadequate tools to create the best new forms" (p. 144).

This line of thinking was prevalent earlier in the 20th century. Nearly fifty years ago McKinney (1962) observed, "More than at any time in our history, church leaders are concerned with establishing a philosophy of church music, with asking why music should be used in the church, how music should be used, what music should be used" (p. 65). Tim Hanna (2005) suggests that it has only been since 1980 that the importance of what he describes as *worship life of the church* (p. 25) has come to the fore. McKinney's 1962 article precedes Hanna's claim of 1980 by nearly 20 years, and it is another 20 years before Zschech's claim of post millennial restoration. Paul Basden (2004) refutes all three claimants by writing, "Throughout Christian history, public worship has attracted attention, stimulated discussion, and even provoked contention" (p. 11). Basden (1999) also writes in an earlier work, that "congregational worship today gives evidence of greater diversity than at any other time in Christian history" (p. 34), and in so doing has drawn renewed levels of rigorous debate and contemplation. What is certain, as was explored earlier under the *Worship Wars* (p. 34), "What cannot be contested is that the subject of worship is currently 'hot'" (Carson, 2002a, p. 13). Navigation of this hotly debated topic challenges both experienced and beginner Contemporary Worship Singers alike.

b) Celebrity Status of Singers

The Christian church has had historically prominent figures. Of importance to this study is the contribution many people have made to the development of Christianity; and in doing so, its culture. Many people of note have contributed to the theology of the gospel tenet to evangelise their communities (Matt 28:19–20). Each of these individuals has achieved this end mostly through practical means including

Missional work, service rendered to doctrinal renewal, reformation and, at times, martyrdom.

Having acknowledged the prominence of worship within the modern church culture, the discussion turns to celebrity focused culture within the church (Evans, 2006; Kimball, 2004; Lucarini, 2002). Mark Joseph (2003), in his work *Faith, God and Rock and Roll*, cites internationally prominent Christian singer Kirk Franklin:

> 'Success can be such a tool *for* ministry, but yet it can be a trap *from* ministry', he said. 'It can be painful. It can make you lose focus. It can become another god. It has so many challenges. At the same time, it can put you up in front of thousands of people to be a witness, but then you walk off the stage and there are some people in the audience that are trying to create another Baal. And you're the one'. (p. 194)

Franklin's view is supported by Dan Lucarini's (2002) reflection on his time as a contemporary worship leader. He writes, "The respect and adoration given to me was faintly reminiscent of the rock star power I experienced as an unsaved performer" (p. 32). Lucarini's need to place a distinction between his activities as an 'unsaved performer' and his time as a contemporary worship leader only serve to heighten the tension which is apparent for many singers in their role for Christian worship. Furthermore, as Zschech (2002) stresses, "It's a sobering fact that the only being to get thrown out of heaven was a worship leader!" (p. 151). Regardless of the theological assumptions made in Zschech's comment, it highlights her awareness of the fine cultural line that is being negotiated by those participating in the leadership of Christian worship, including Contemporary Worship Singers. Mark Evans (2006), having observed Zschech's personal rise to prominence, readily recognises her celebrity:

> Zschech's influence has led to a proliferation of 'copycat' artists within the Christian Church. Walk into most evangelical churches in Australia that utilise contemporary music and it is not hard to find a female worship leader using techniques and nuances common to Zschech. (p. 108)

Zschech's desire to distance herself from the label and responsibility of worship artist or the notion of celebrity is qualified in the context of wider cultural expectations. Rory Noland (1999) points out,

> Our society tends to put anybody who has talent on a pedestal. We turn the most successful artists into superstars. The superstars are indulged and pampered. They become rich and famous. So servanthood and being others-orientated doesn't come naturally for any of us. (p. 53)

Kauflin (2008) has been keen in his reflection on the celebrity of this administering of worship writing, "I've wondered if 'worship leaders' have become too significant" (p. 52). Evans (2002) concurs with Kauflin in his contention that "part of the attraction many see in the position is the Christian celebrity that accompanies it (worship leader) – often more pronounced than that afforded to the pastors and teachers they are there to support" (pp. 129–130). Evans' and Kauflin's remarks expose the celebrity culture as an observable and definable attribute of today's church culture. Worship leaders and singers are embroiled in a culture that promotes their position to the level of celebrity even beyond persons who might have typically received notoriety for more theologically respectable reasons, albeit at times restricted to their immediate locale with limited influence.

c) Performance

Perhaps a key contributor to the celebrity culture is that of performance orientation. The dichotomy of entertainment versus ministry is central to this discussion, and many have suggested that the manner in which the performance of worship is conducted dictates to which pole the presentation swings (Dawn, 1995; Gilley, 2005; Liesch, 1996; Lucarini, 2002). Wiersbe (2000) writes,

> Over the past half century, a subtle change has taken place in local churches: the sanctuary has become a theatre, ministry has become performance, worship has turned into entertainment ('a fun time'), and applause, not the glory of God, has become the measure of success. (p. 170)

For some discerning commentators the difference between entertainment and ministry defines the value and worth of the worship experience. Gary Gilley (2005) in *This Little Church Went to Market*, suggests "the problem is that the main business of entertainment is to please the crowd, but the main purpose of authentic Christianity is to please the Lord" (p. 31). Gilley further supports his critique of worship performance by writing,

> If I go to a so-called Christian event which for the most part is light-hearted, full of laughter and fun music, I have gone to be entertained. I am not in attendance to worship God or be instructed in his Word. If I understand the purpose of my attendance is to have a good time, and as long as the entertainment is not out of sync with Christian character and biblical truth nothing is harmed. This boat springs a leak, however, the moment I begin to believe that this activity is worship or that this is the way worship should be packaged…It is not wrong to be entertained as a Christian; it is wrong to confuse it with, or allow it to replace true worship and biblical instruction. 'The purpose of worship is clearly to express the greatness of God and not simply to find inward release or, still less, amusement.' (p. 79)

Gilley defines the key issue clearly: many Christians are no longer able to discern the difference between what defines entertainment and what defines worship. The ability to determine when an entertainment mode of performance should be employed as opposed to a ministry mode of performance becomes difficult (Schultze, 2004). In a culture which has thrust worship to a place of prominence (which is then reinforced by a celebrity culture), it is left to the individual's privatised faith to discriminate what mode of performance is being employed. To further clarify this point, it is important to define *performance*.

In defining *General Performance* for contemporary singers, Irene Bartlett (2010) writes "Persona often overlays a singer's entire output, and a song is delivered from the context of the persona" (p. 240). Herein lies the issue: the singer is the performance. Further support for this argument can be found in the work of David Roland (1997) who cites dancer Alexander Grant's description of a peak performance writing

> …the magical performances are when you reveal the truth, even if it's only twice in a night. That's a magic night, when suddenly the truth is revealed by the artist to the audience, not through talk, but through feeling, emotion, and coordination of movement and music. (p. 73)

The responsibility of the individual engaged in leading worship seems to align with Grant's description of a peak performance. The success of the worship event may rest on the Contemporary Worship Singers' ability to personify a peak performance. Roland illustrates four levels of attention (Figure 11, p. 52) observable in performance:

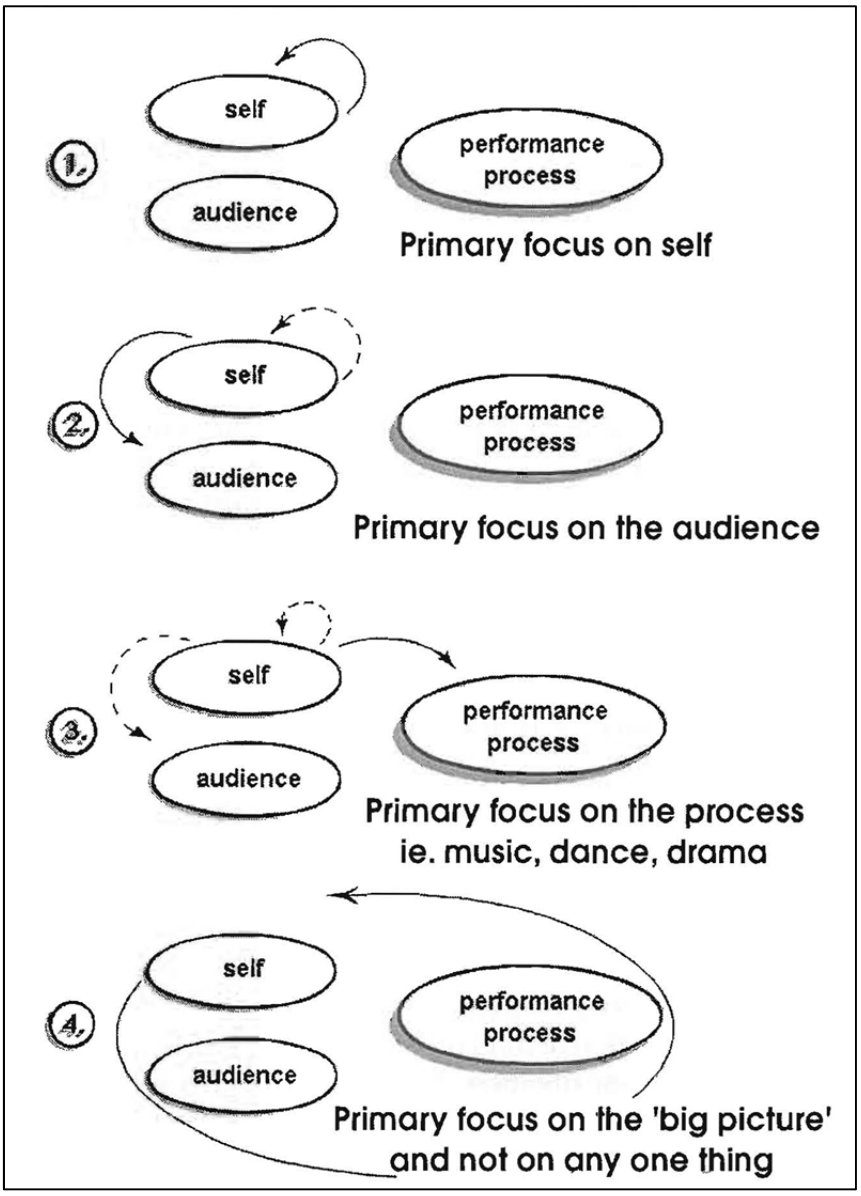


Figure 11: *Four levels of attention in performance (Roland, 1997, p. 78)*

(Used by Permission)

Roland proposes that point four of Figure 11 enables the performer to effortlessly and dynamically transfer attention between self, audience and the process (p. 77).

Barry Liesch (1996) devotes two chapters of his book *The New Worship: Straight Talk on Music and the Church* to the subject of performance, nominating the subject as a "pressing issue" (p. 6). Liesch calls for a *reloading* of the word performance (p. 122) stating that "when properly understood and applied…worship has a strong performance dimension" (p. 123). He furthers his argument by defining performance as something complicated (pp. 130–131) and requiring a level of skill (p. 135). Wallace (2008) suggests that the very nature of a complex task which requires skill increases the challenge facing the modern worship leader.

> In a time of perfectionism, with computer programs for retouching pictures and removing wrinkles, recordings that are edited to have every note perfectly balanced, and public media that stereotypes a certain kind of physical perfection, the church is challenged to be authentic while also rising to levels of excellence. (p. 21)

Carson (2002a) observes that "some who publically lead the corporate meetings of the people of God merely perform; others are engrossed in the worship of God. Some merely sing; some put on a great show of being involved, but others transparently worship God" (p. 59). Carson's observations of a worshipper's performance orientation seem to align with Roland's (1997) previously discussed 'four levels of attention'. The correlation can be presented as follows (Table 1):

Roland's four levels of Attention (1997)	Carson's four levels of Worship Performance (2002)
Primary focus on self	Some are engrossed in the worship of God
Primary focus the audience	Some merely perform
Primary focus on the process	Some merely sing
Primary focus on the 'big picture'	Some transparently worship God

Table 1: *Correlation of Roland and Carson*

Carson suggests that to "transparently worship God" is to have "transparent conduct" which can be observed by others (p. 59). In defining performance appropriate for worship, Carson does not shy away from the visible nature of the task. Carson centres his concerns around the genuineness of the worshippers' transparency stating "What is at stake is authenticity" (p. 59).

The term 'authentic' appears frequently in the literature in order to qualify worship which is deemed acceptable as opposed to worship which takes on an entertainment value. Examples include:

> The problem is that the main business of entertainment is to please the crowd, but the main purpose of authentic Christianity is to please the Lord. (Gilley, 2005, p. 31)

> We want to honor God in all we do, but some worship gatherings do feel so much like a performance that it comes across as being inauthentic, even if the hearts of those leading it are authentic. (Kimball, 2009, p. 312)

> By the way, this is one of the biggest differences between performing and ministry. I've seen many professional entertainers try to approach ministry the same way they've always approached performing. Performance is entertainment. You have to own the stage. You have to appear self-confident and enthusiastic. It doesn't matter if you're going through a deep personal crisis. The show must go on. You have to put it all behind you and step onstage and wow everybody one more time. Ministry, on the other hand, is not entertainment. Instead of pretence, there is authenticity – we need to be real onstage. Instead of working hard to whip up confidence, we need to be humble. Ministry demands that we allow the Holy Spirit to own the stage. (Noland, 1999, pp. 154–155)

The cultural drive towards authenticity is made more difficult by a countercultural expectation of skill-laden performance. Again Zschech's (2002) words are concerning in the context of the greater debate. She writes "If worship is ever more about our talent than about being an excellent worshiper of the living God, then we are in serious trouble" (p. 153). Zschech seems to be advocating a swing towards authenticity by creating a polemic in which excellent worship is contrasted against talent and development of skill. The question is raised: how does the individual worshipper know whether their worship is more about their talent than about an attitude of excellence towards God? She goes on to obscure the concept with the contradictory statement, "Your gifts and your talents are God given. And while gifts and talents are sought-after commodities by the world, they are low on God's list of 'must haves' to qualify you for living an effective, purpose-driven Christ-honoring life" (p. 156). This contradiction poses questions which challenge the philosophical function of the Contemporary Worship Singer[23].

Kauflin (2008) is opposed to this notion of skill and excellence being negative and ideologically opposed to authenticity. He states "rightly understood and pursued, skill can mark the difference between ineffectiveness and fruitfulness in our leading. It can contribute to, or hinder people, from engaging with God. That's why we should make it a priority" (p. 34).

[23]To ensure the literature has a clear voice (albeit a contradictory one) conclusive remarks regarding the tension between music performance and worship/music ministry will not be drawn here. Instead the author's commentary on this matter has been withheld until the Conclusions chapter (p. 211)

Evans (2006), whilst acknowledging the recent cultural prominence of worship asserts that the polemic was founded early in church history. He notes,

> Alongside the distinction between secular and sacred music came the classification between 'good' music and 'harmful' music during the fourth century. It is virtually impossible to ascertain what exactly was deemed harmful about or in the music, though what appears notable is that 'the distinction between bad/secular music and good/sacred music is one that goes back to a very early stage of Christianity.' (p. 26)

Perhaps Wiersbe (2000) best summaries the full debate in his call for balance: "No amount of spirituality can compensate for lack of ability, just as no amount of ability can compensate for lack of devotion to Christ" (p. 139).

d) Anointing

Good performance in contemporary worship is often aligned with the term *anointed*. Zschech (2002) refers to this as "…a remarkable difference between a gifted musician and an anointed one" (p. 157). At this juncture it is important to qualify the difference between what qualifies personal anointing, as indicated in Zschech's preceding statement and the anointing or presence of God that is said to be experienced by the collective in corporate gatherings. Bob Sorge (1987) in his work for Pentecostal praise and worship, *Exploring Worship: A practical guide to praise and worship*, provides a clear albeit culturally biased, definition of the corporate anointing.

> When we speak of entering into 'the presence of God,' we should remember that there are varying *manifestations* of the presence of God…First, God is omnipresent; his presence is everywhere, all the time…Second, Jesus told us that where two or three are gathered in his name, he is there in the midst of them (*see* Matthew 18:20)…And third, 2 Chronicles 5:13-14 gives an account of the cloud of glory filling Solomon's temple when the singers and musicians lifted their hearts in praise to God. This cloud of glory (the presence of God) so filled the room that the priests could not even stand to perform their service! Truly that was a very special manifestation of the presence of God, and it is that same type or nature of manifestation that we seek today! (p. 29)

Theologically, Sorge stands outside more conservative views on God's corporately experienced presence. Henry (1871, p. 262) states that God's presence is not invoked by any radical display of worship by the worshipper. Conservative theology holds that God's presence imbibes the gathering of the Church, outside the constraints of

time according to his promise and not according to any works or effort by the worshipers, corporately or individually.

Evans (2002) highlights the possible hazards when human effort is brought to bear on influencing God's tangible presence.

> Theology aside, one of the dangers of basing corporate worship around concepts of the anointing is the focus on subjective models of experience. That is, should the participant fail to experience God's anointing within the church service then they may feel failed. Likewise, the leadership team might consider the congregational meeting a failure due to the lack of the Spirit's anointing over the meeting. Ever so subtly, the time of corporate worship becomes works based. People are striving to attain, or provide, the anointing experience. (p. 127)

The worship material is key to the human effort of invocation. Zschech (2002) believes "every now and again God breathes His anointing on a song, and it finds its way into the mouths, minds, and hearts of congregations all over the world" (p. 190). Kauflin (2008) disagrees with this view. He writes, "Biblically speaking, no worship leader, pastor, band, or song will ever bring us close to God. We can't shout, dance, or prophesy our way into God's presence. Worship itself cannot lead us into God's presence" (pp. 73–74). The views of Sorge and Zschech are opposed to Evans and Kauflin and provide additional insight into the constant worship wars that persist in the discussion of worship within the Christian faith.

Noland (1999) takes a step further by noting the personal anointing when he writes, "An anointed song sung by a Spirit-filled vocalist results in a holy moment" (p. 21). Clearly Noland stands with Zschech and Sorge, allowing for the anointing of a song, but his comment adds to the concept of the anointing and qualifies a heightened experience when the song is performed by a *Spirit-filled* (anointed) vocalist.

The idea of personal anointing arises from the Old Testament practice of anointing leaders and rulers for office (Wiersbe, 1993). One example is seen in the anointing of David by Samuel. As Tsumura (2008) notes, "David represents himself as a prophet, whose songs and wise sayings come from God" (p. 581). Many modern worshippers, considering themselves anointed, also consider themselves God's oracle. In support of such a stance, some point to Paul's teaching in his second letter to the Corinthian

church[24]. In commenting on Paul's words to the Corinthian church Scott J. Hafemann (2008) of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary writes,

> To be anointed is to be set apart and gifted by God for his calling, symbolized in the OT by the pouring of olive oil as a sign of God's rich provision. It is also a play on the word 'Christ,' which means 'anointed one'; Christ's messengers (us) are also anointed. (p. 2224)

Hafemann's commentary alludes to a corporate sense of the anointing as opposed to the individualised nature often implied by contemporary worship settings. The importance of personal anointing theology, as it relates to this study, is the manner in which it reinforces the celebrity culture. Those who are declared to be anointed are given certain rights by virtue of their perceived status. Indeed the anointed ones in today's worship culture are often those deemed to be worshippers.

e) Excellence

Accompanying the debates surrounding God's presence, individual anointing and development of skill is the notion of excellence. Timothy Kellar (2002) described his church's approach to the employment of musicians for worship as "we use only professional and/or trained musicians for our corporate worship services, and we pay them all. The reason for this has to do with our commitment to excellence" (p. 239). Kellar's desire to see worship liturgies conducted with excellence is shared by Dawn (1995) who laments the lack of excellence in modern liturgies issuing a challenge: "think of the musical experiences that could happen in our churches if we spent more to pay good church musicians. Very few parishes have well-paid musicians, and yet music is a major part of the worship experience!" (p. 45).

Kellar and Dawn attach the sense of excellence (or the lack thereof) to the cultural nuance which typically sees musicians and singers plying their craft on a volunteer basis. For Zschech (2002), it is not a matter of remuneration for services rendered. Zschech calls for excellence in every area of worship practice. She writes, "Excellence means *discipline*. We need discipline to settle only for what is excellent in our thinking, in our rehearsals, in our personal planning, and in keeping our word to others" (p. 128). This requirement of excellence in the worshiper's life is

[24] See 2 Corinthians 1:21

acceptable to most Christians. Zschech's call for discipline is diluted by her earlier admission that she is "a singing teacher's worst nightmare" (p. 63) because she strains her voice continually before she starts singing. The literature review concerning vocal practice follows, but such regard for one's own vocal health falls short of best practice; and it is consequently less than excellent. In commenting generally on worship singers, Allan Dawson (2005) in *Voice Training and Church Singers* says, "many church singers perform outside their comfortable singing range, are flippant in their approach to vocal warm up and lack sufficient self-awareness to make judgements about their voice and vocal health" (p. ii).

Zschech is aware of the discipline required by singers to develop in their craft. She writes "I thought it took great discipline to become a singer – practice, warm-ups, etc., but renewing my mind has taken even *greater* discipline " (p. 149). Excellence therefore, according to Zschech, is objectively applied to situations as determined by the individual; in this case herself. Zschech is not suggesting that discipline is not at all necessary. She concedes "being a great singer or musician requires discipline, practice, and more practice" (p. 84), but according to her writings her approach creates a list of priorities in which vocal health is quite low. It infers an either/or mentality not dissimilar to the dichotomy that she seems to advocate when discussing skill and anointing.

The literature pertaining to voice will be reviewed later, but it is worth noting Dawson's (2005) comments on excellence and the church singer:

> Whether the pursuit of excellence is intrinsically driven by a sincere desire to give their best for God or extrinsically motivated by a 'Christian worship music industry', there is no question that the singers in today's charismatic evangelical churches require more specific vocal training than at any other time in the history of the modern church. (p. 6)

The challenge facing the Contemporary Worship Singer is balancing the dichotomies of excellence versus individual determinism and anointing versus skill; all framed in an environment that promotes the practice of worship and can idolise its singers to the point of celebrity.

As noted in the literature review, the following graphic summarises the cultural nuances influencing the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer (Figure 12; p. 59):

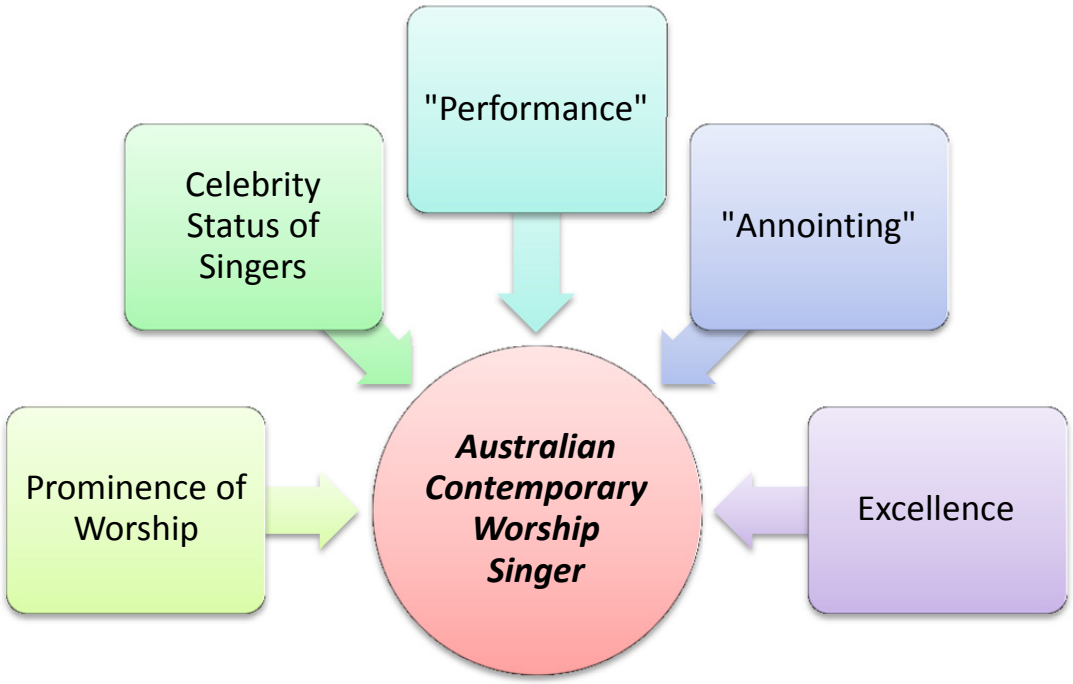


Figure 12: *Five key cultural influences*

3) Ancient Practice with Today's Equipment

The Contemporary Worship Singer exists in a unique cultural environment and a distinct physical setting. Wallace (2008) quotes Winston Churchill when she writes, "We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us" (p. 25). Wallace goes on to state "This is particularly true of the spaces in which we worship" (p. 25). Having already recognised, through the literature, that modern Christian culture shapes the activity of the modern worshiper, the architecture and the modern worship props of personal amplification (PA), data projection of lyrics and live video feed of worship services will now be examined in relation to the evolution of the Contemporary Worship Singer. Firstly we must define the space we inhabit in the activity of our worship.

a) Worship Space

To define worship space there must be a distinguishing between that which is ordinary and that which is deemed sacred. David Stancliffe (2008) expresses space as sacred when "we sense that our environment is either naturally or consciously created to hold us in relationship with the beyond, with something greater than ourselves that is gently shaping us, or even radically changing us" (p. 10). Frank

Viola and George Barna (2008) argue that the concept of modern Christian sacred space (Church) has developed from Greco-Roman paganism writing "In the minds of the early Christians, the people – not the architecture – constituted a sacred space" (p. 11). Viola and Barna supplement their argument by citing "nowhere in the New Testament do we find the terms *church* (*ekklesia*), *temple,* or *house of God* used to refer to a building" (p. 11). While Viola and Barna raise some important points for the modern Church to consider in their text *Pagan Christianity* (2008) this paper will stop short of seeking to dismiss (or validate) the use of designated space (Church) for Christian worship. Accordingly the review will now turn to a brief understanding of the historical development of Christian worship space.

The creation of the sacred in the midst of the ordinary may have been part of God's purpose when instructing Moses to build the first Hebrew sanctuary: Moses' Tabernacle. Having delivered the Hebrew people from Egyptian slavery into a harsh desert wasteland God instructs Moses to build a sacred space (Exodus 26:1–37). Figure 13[25] displays the Tabernacle and its architectural design:

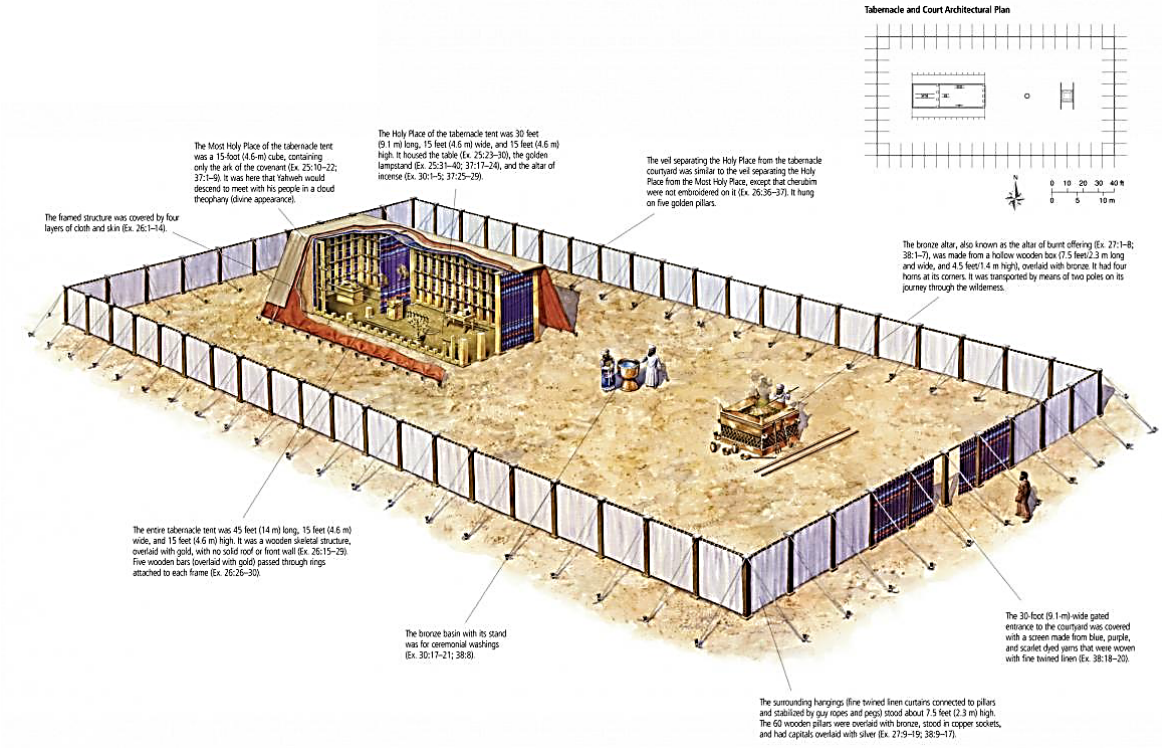


Figure 13: *The Tabernacle and Court (Bibles, 2008, pp. 190–191)*

(Used by Permission)

[25] Taken from the ESV Study Bible® (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright ©2008 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Moses' Tabernacle, and the grand permanent structure of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 6:1–38), both form an important model for an understanding of worship space which has resonated through historic design to today's worship experience. Earnest B. Gentile (1994) explains "the Mosaic system is a living parable from history symbolising New Testament truths and informing believers today of the basic necessities of worship" (p. 42).

The Christian era of worship space design began with believers meeting in the Jewish synagogue and each other's homes (Sell, 1998; Wiersbe, 1997). The design of worship space architecture has travelled through many periods including the Byzantine phase, the spacious Romanesque period and the grand design of the Gothic era. Many historically significant structures still stand including Pisa Cathedral in Italy (Romanesque) and Canterbury Cathedral in England (Gothic). The traditional design of churches has not ceased with the design of structures such as Liverpool's Metropolitan Cathedral (opened 1967) and Poland's grand Basilica of Our Lady of Licheń (built 1994–2004) still employing the classic configurations of nave, transept, façade and choir stall. The use of cavernous space in many of the traditional designs amplifies the human voice (for both speaking and singing) without the need of electronic amplification.

Given the nature of this study, with its focus on singers who generally use amplification (microphones), the survey of literature regarding church architecture purposefully focused on the mid-20th century through to current day; paying particular attention to modern auditoria design[26]. The variety of today's worship space designs can be overwhelming to the unqualified review, but as Chapel (2009) highlights, "Despite having great architectural variety, Christian churches still have common denominators: a place to proclaim the Word; a place to gather for prayer, praise and receiving the Word; a place to administer and receive the sacraments; and others" (pp. 18–19). Of specific concern to this study was the review of modern Church architecture's interior organisation and its implications for today's Contemporary Worship Singer.

[26] Figure 78, (p. 221) displays three modern worship space interiors. These are good examples of the typical worship space in which the Australian Contemporary Worship Singer is generally practicing their role.

In keeping with the five, previously stated, modern worship labels, today's churches house a variety of worship expressions. White (2000) in his *Introduction to Christian Worship* writes,

> All good church architecture is a compromise to provide for both types of divine activity. The whole history of church building is the history of compromises between arrangements best for speaking in God's name and those best for touching in God's name. (p. 84)

The compromise referred to by White is between the proclamation of God's Word and the distribution of the sacraments. White goes on to articulate six definable *liturgical spaces* in which three or four *liturgical centres* facilitate worship (p. 86). To summarise, the liturgical spaces are:

- **Gathering space:** a place of assembly
- **Movement space:** allowing for all aspects of church life
- **Congregational space:** where Christ indwells his people
- **Choir space:** accommodates singers and instrumentalists
- **Baptismal space:** facilitates the baptism of new believers and infants
- **Altar-table space:** enabling the regular dissemination of the Eucharist (pp. 86–87)

These six spaces are then furnished by three or four liturgical centres. White defines these as the Baptismal font, Pulpit and Altar-table; with a possible fourth liturgical centre being the Presider's chair (pp. 88–89). White (2003), in his more recent work *Protestant Worship and Church Architecture: Theological and Historical Considerations* writes about the principals of liturgical architecture qualifying "the function of things may be sacred even though they possess no sanctity of themselves. There is nothing sacred about a pulpit or a font…, but there is definitely something sacred in preaching or baptism" (p. 32).

While commenting on the visual orientation to liturgical actions (worship spaces and their liturgical centres) Stancliffe (2008) writes that recent interior design tends to collapse into one point of foci. He observes that the platform has become a focal point (of Baptismal font, Pulpit and Altar-table) "especially towards the end of the [20th] century, when chorus-singing from the charismatic tradition became the focus of much entertainment-style worship – the band and the 'worship-leader'" (p. 258). Viola and Barna (2008) seem to concur with Stancliffe's (2008) appraisal stating

> The concert-style church building was profoundly influenced by nineteenth-century revivalism. It is essentially an auditorium. The building is structured to emphasise the dramatic performance of the preacher and the choir. Its structure implicitly suggests that the choir (or worship team) performs for the congregation to stimulate their worship or entertain them. (p. 36)

Furthermore, of interest to this enquiry is the liturgical spaces of both Congregational and Choir as facilitated around the pulpit. Given the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer (leading congregational singing and the encouraging interaction between the auditorium (Congregational space) and the platform (Choir space)) the nature of the acoustic transference must be addressed first. "The building dictates the possibilities open to us in our forms and styles of worship. We may want good congregational song, but do the acoustics swallow up each sound so that all seem mute?" (White, 2000, p. 83). White continues, "Every church building forms a unique *acoustical environment*, and few things affect worship more profoundly than the way sound behaves in space " (p. 89).

b) Acoustic Space

Herring (2009) laments "as time continues, acoustically perfect environments become harder and harder to find" (p. xvii). The continual compromise is between the presentation of worship (songs and preaching) and the participation of the worshippers (movement and communion) (Rio & Buono, 2009). Bill Gibson (2007) is concerned that the balance of presentation and participation is often lost. Gibson writes, "too many people design facilities based on seats rather than on the quality of the experience for the people in the seats" (p. 324). The impact of this imbalance is seen in the level of perceived participation by congregants. Dawn (1995) is passionate in her comments on this issue:

> Since room acoustics directly affect the worship life, acoustics are a spiritual and not just a musical issue…For example, during hymns, members hear only themselves and the organ, because the sound of others singing is soaked up. Most people are embarrassed to sing alone, so they will sing with progressively less gusto until some might quit entirely. (p. 155)

The direct impact of reduced congregational participation for the Contemporary Worship Singer due to the acoustical space is almost impossible to measure, but Wallace (2008) seems certain that "if the style of worship is at odds with the worship

space, the space will always win" (p. 25). Whilst the relationship between congregational participation and the Contemporary Worship Singer remains immeasurable, the effect of reduced vocal involvement by the congregation on the Contemporary Worship Singer is observable. One of the roles of the Contemporary Worship Singer is to encourage the congregation to participate in the corporate activity of singing. If the congregation does not engage in the singing, the Contemporary Worship Singer may respond by exerting themselves vocally. This, as Lucarini (2002) points out, can lead to a negative cycle. In observing the degradation of congregational participation he writes that "some (worshippers) admitted they were intimidated into silence by the great singers in the worship team 'belting it out' on the platform" (p. 114). Lucarini's observation does not stand alone. Theologian Charles Swindoll not only highlights the reduction of congregational participation because of high audio levels but also connects the effect back to the matter of performance. Jethani (2011), in an interview with Swindoll, enquired "so the issue is not innovation or tradition, but why we're using a particular method or technology" (p. 2). Swindoll's response is direct with its rhetoric:

> Exactly. I have been to church services, and you have too, where the only people who knew the songs were the band. I'm not edified. I'm just watching a show. And they're not interested in teaching me the songs either. They just sing louder to make up for the fact that no one else is singing. Loud doesn't help. Why do they do that? (p. 2)

Swindoll's comments lead the review to survey the technologies that enable the amplification of the worship band; specifically the singers.

c) Modern Equipment

Reinforcing the voices on stage in many worship settings is the prevalence of sound systems, or personal amplification (PA). Holding a view conflicted to the thoughts expressed by Lucarini and Swindoll, Brad Herring (2009) in his manual *Sound, Lighting and Video: A Resource for Worship* argues that the difference between congregational participation and the reduction thereof is a good sound system and a well-mixed service. Herring writes "a well mixed service on a quality sound system instils confidence in the people. They can clearly hear the worship leader and more easily engage" (p. xvii). He then juxtaposes this observation with churches whose sound system is 'poor' claiming,

> I've worked with churches that are seeing steady decline in choir, orchestra, and praise team activity. On the surface, it appears to be a staffing problem – often blamed on the minister of music or the worship pastor. However many times, the problem is really poor technology. (p. xviii)

This is an interesting point when combined with Gibson's (2007) observation that "there's not usually enough funding available for such things as high-quality sound systems until it becomes apparent that there is a team capable of using such a sound system effectively" (p. 1). Given that the average size of Australian Churches is approximately 70 people (NCLS, 2002) it is reasonable to expect that many Australian Contemporary Worship Singers are singing in environments that have limited resources and, subsequently, by Herring's definition poor sound systems.

Fundamentally, the singer's main instrument is their voice. Secondary to the instrument is the singer's primary tool: the microphone. "*Microphone* is a generic term that is used to refer to any element that transforms acoustic energy (sound) into electrical energy (the audio signal)" (Eiche, 1990, p. 44). The pathway of sound is depicted in Figure 14[27] below:

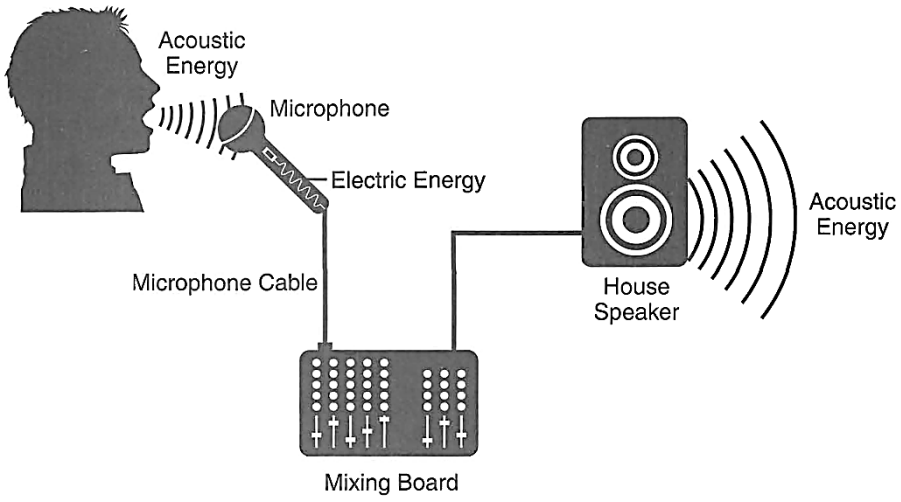


Figure 14: *Acoustical pathway (Rio & Buono, 2009, p. 16)*

(Used by Permission)

[27] From RIO. House of Worship Sound Reinforcement, 1E. © 2010 Delmar Learning, a part of Cengage Learning, Inc. Reproduced by permission. www.cengage.com/permissions.

Given the fundamental role the microphone plays as the primary tool used by singers one might be forgiven for expecting that the Contemporary Worship Singer would place an importance in developing the skills required to effectively use a microphone. The literature would suggest otherwise. Gibson (2007) notes the lack of technical prowess displayed by most church singers using microphones. In commenting on skilful use of the microphone he writes

> A seasoned and experienced singer knows how to work the microphone for the best possible communication of his or her performance – any inherent outrageous tendencies are in control and channelled to be released in just the right doses to help communicate a point or to create rapport with the audience. The seasoned singer knows what to say, how often to speak, and when to keep quiet – his or her maturity has produced an efficient and effective performer. A seasoned singer makes the sound operator's job much easier. Oh, if they could only all be seasoned singers… (p. 369)

The type of microphone is also important (Davis & Jones, 1990; Gibson, 2007; Herring, 2009; Rio & Buono, 2009). The scope of this paper's enquiry limits our discussion of microphone engineering and design, however Herring (2009) states,

> Vocal microphones almost always get gypped in Houses of Worship. Typically a Shure SM58, EV 267a, or other similar microphone is used – one microphone for all people. While this will get you by, when you want the vocal to truly excel, you should step up the microphone. Higher-quality microphones will increase the sound quality of the voice. (p. 48)

A second consideration for singers using modern equipment is foldback. Gibson's (2007) explanation is helpful.

> The monitor system, sometimes referred to as a *foldback system*, is designed to provide adequate musical mix for the musicians on stage . They need to hear what the rest of the singers and instrumentalists are doing so that they can accurately perform their portion of the whole performance. A good monitor mix for all musicians is not optional – it's a must. Musicians are inspired by the sound of their instrument, whether it is a voice or a bassoon. If they hear what they need, their performances will be more musical, better in tune, and much more together with the rest of the musicians. (p. 275)

Gibson highlights the necessity of a good monitor mix by identifying impact that it has on general performance. The importance to a singer's vocal stamina and resulting vocal health is absent from Gibson's discussion. Roma Waterman (2002) in her book

The Working Singer's Handbook stresses that the response to a poor monitor mix is "usually to sing louder. This results in a tired voice, and also produces a terrible sound out the front!" (pp. 95–95).

The artistic benefits of a foldback system should not be underestimated. Hughes (2010) writes "understanding sound reinforcement and its use aids vocal propriety and fosters vocal artistry in a performance context" (p. 254). Hughes also highlights the necessity of the soundcheck process suggesting that "a pre-performance soundcheck offers a level of control of resultant sound, but only if singers are familiar with how their voice sounds through their own auditory perception" (p. 254). Hughes goes on to suggest that singers using foldback systems, as a part of their regular performance environment, should be instructed in a manner that allows them to "become familiar with hearing the voice through sound reinforcement and monitors" (p. 254).

d) Placement of singers on stage

Beyond the quality of equipment used and the expertise of the sound engineer, the placement of the singers on the stage is often a determining factor in obtaining a good monitor mix. White (2000) argues, "It is best to have singers and instrumentalists adjacent to each other since it is difficult to sing to accompaniment from a distance" (p. 113). While this might be ideal, the singer is often thrust forward on the stage placing them with their backs to the instrumentalists, as Keller (2002) notes: "'Leaders' in corporate worship include all those who will be 'up front' – praying, reading the Scripture, singing, preaching, praising, and even giving 'notices' or 'announcements'" (p. 223). The upfront position reinforces the celebrity culture as previously reviewed, and also creates a complex challenge for the singers in their vocal task. Siewert (1998a) highlights the complexities by asking her readers,

> Do you see the song as you listen carefully to the words? Do you see anything distracting or unnecessary in your gestures or expressions? How does the team look together? Is too much happening, too little or is it a good balance? (p. 75)

The singer's heightened exposure, by virtue of forward placement, seems to complicate matters as previously highlighted in the consideration of the celebrity culture (p. 48). Schultze (2004) acknowledges the reinforcement of the celebrity culture inherent in the placement of singers by asking, "Does the room treat worship

leaders and soloists as directors and leaders, or does it position them as equal members of the congregation?" (p. 69)

e) Data Projection

Consideration of Shultze's previous question is timely when the review considers the use of technologies such as data projection. The prevalence of the video playback systems in churches is identified by Herring (2009). He writes, "Video playback systems are taking Houses of Worship by storm. If you don't have an integrated video screen in your worship service, you most likely want one" (p. 183). Herring goes on to qualify that "a video playback system consists of at least a few items. The absolute minimum would be a video projector (or a flat panel display) and a computer" (p. 185). Herring's representation of the typical video system is shown below in Figure 15[28]:

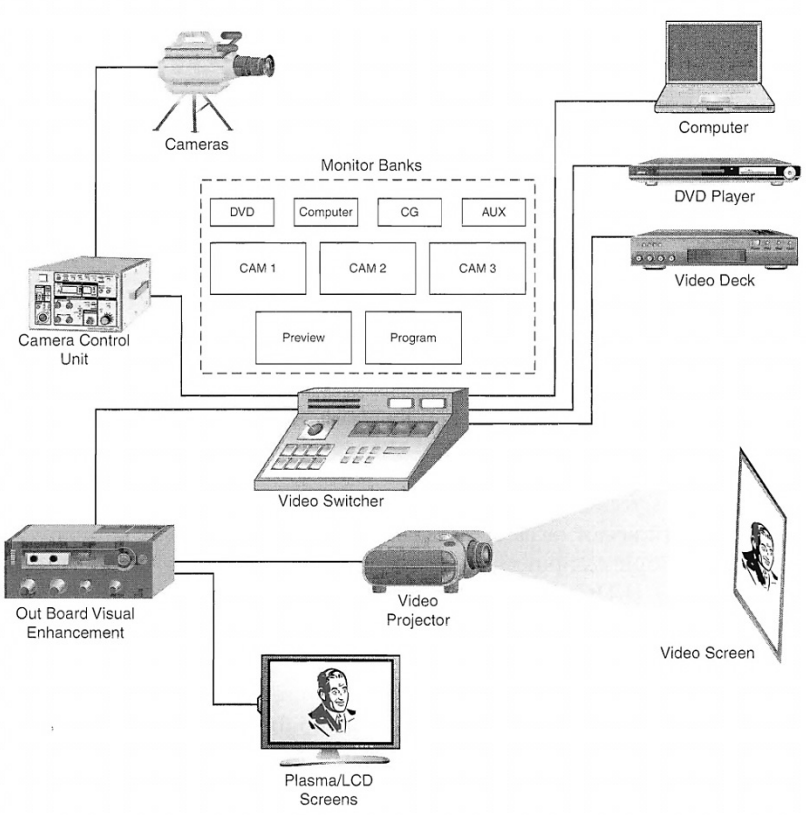


Figure 15: *Typical video system block (Herring, 2009, p. 184)*

(Used by Permission)

[28] This figure was published in *Sound, Lighting and Video: A Resource for Worship* by Brad Herring, (Typical video system block) p. 184. Copyright Elsevier, 2009.

Beyond the apparent complexity of this typical system, is the use of a human head on the 'Plasma/LCD Screens' (bottom) and 'Video Screen' (bottom right) in Herring's representation. The presentation of the worship band and more particularly, the Contemporary Worship Singer onto visually prominent screens is indirectly heightening the prominence of the singer in the culture. This in turn allows for the scrutiny of visually pleasing singers as well as audibly skilled singers, as Hanna (2005) notes:

> Nowhere is this specifically written, but I have heard from the people affected and from others, that persons lacking a certain image were unable to be involved in this ministry. The image eliminated those with a larger than average body shape or who were above a certain age and had little to do with musical ability, dedication to Christ, or a passion for worship ministry. (p. 27)

In commenting on the apparent concerns when using technologies such as data projection within the church, Schultze (2004) acknowledges "the major concerns that many congregations have is that presentational technologies automatically will transform worship into entertainment" (p. 44). Schultze goes on to suggest that this generalised statement cannot be stated as true for all churches using modern technologies, but he does present the argument that states "as we adopt and institutionalize them, technologies generally modify how we think, feel, and communicate" (p. 45). This idea of technologies influencing Christian thought and expression seems to align with the previously discussed notion of lyrics determining Christian doctrine and subsequent theology.

Not all churches employ video projection of their singers onto screens at the front of the church worship space. The projection of lyrics onto screens for worship participants to follow and join in the congregational singing is more common. Traditionally lyrics and melodic transcription were displayed in books or hymnals.

> Although some congregations still use hymnals, more are printing the words to the songs in the bulletin or displaying the lyrics on the wall by means of overhead projector. This allows worshipers to look up rather than down while they are singing. (Basden, 1999, p. 81)

Basden's pre-millennial observation has been superseded by the replacement of overhead projectors with data projectors. New modes of presenting lyrics have led to a major change in the physical posture of the worshipper, observed firstly in the

congregation and subsequently in the Contemporary Worship Singer. Worship participants no longer have their heads positioned to look down into a hymnal. The congregation is orientated towards the screens at the front of the church auditorium. Scheer (2006) writes, "Many people argue that the projection screen causes people to lift their heads in a better singing posture, with their hands free to be more expressive in their worship" (p. 31). Worshippers have a greater range of physical expression, but the suggestion of a better singing posture is arguable. In considering the vocal proficiency of such a posture Dawson (2005) suggests "Many of the singers strain the front of the external laryngeal muscles by 'goose-necking'. This can be attributed to the 'worship posture'" (p. 7).

The worship posture is not only observed in the congregation, but also in the Contemporary Worship Singer. Zschech is depicted on many Hillsong products with her head upturned (Hillsong Music, 1997, 1998, 2003, 2004). The impact of the worship posture will be discussed further under the title of 'Voice in Worship' later in the literature review.

As noted earlier the interplay between the environment and the culture is significant. The unique acoustical characteristics of each worship space requires the employment of various modes of modern equipment including PA systems. Every church situates their singers differently, and a growing number of churches are employing video projection for both visual displays of worship team members and lyrics in order to encourage congregational singing. The following graphic (Figure 16) summarises the environmental factors impacting the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer:

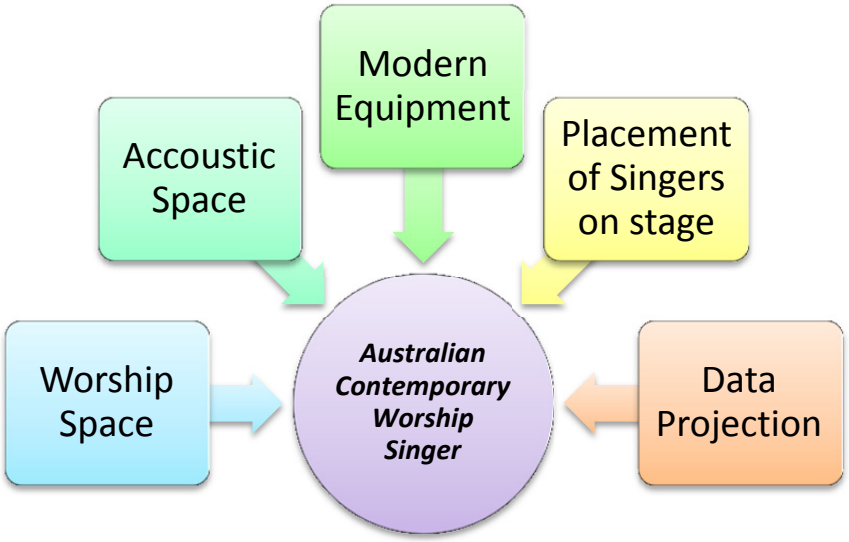


Figure 16: *Five key environmental impacts*

4) Voice in Worship

The fourth area of review within the literature pertains to the Contemporary Worship Singer's task: *singing*. Kidd (2011) galvanises the place of singing in the Christian worship context by positioning Christ as the model. He writes "As our worship leader, Jesus prays and he declares. He also sings. 'In the midst of the congregation I will sing a hymn to you,' concludes Hebrews 2:12" (p. 30). Having already surveyed the evolution of singing within Church history, this section will consider the broader concerns of the general vocal demands placed on the Contemporary Worship Singer both technically and stylistically. The review of the current literature will encompass vocal demands, classification of style (classical and contemporary) highlighting their differences and specific requirements for each. The use of harmony will be broached along with the implications of voice classification alongside the discussion of *tessitura*. Finally the literature review will focus on the activities known as *warm-ups* and *cool-downs*.

a) Vocal Demands

Nearly thirty years ago Robert Edwin (1983), while commenting on the melodic structures of the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, wrote "Our worship music isn't all that demanding" (p. 15). Wallace (2008), commenting on singing in church, recently stated that "average singing voices with sufficient courage and thoughtful preparation can lead singing" (p. 13). A necessary qualification when considering both Edwin's and Wallace's comments are the conservative nature of their congregational settings. Edwin discloses his Lutheran affiliation and a reading of Wallace's *Worshipping in the Small Membership Church (2008)* suggests a traditional approach. Both writers, when considering the vocal demands of their fellow congregants are likely to be commenting on the singing of hymns.

The alternate is true for the singing of contemporary styled music with the demands placed on the Contemporary Worship Singer's voice deemed as high. Dan Wilt (2009) explains

> The 'worship' component of any given service in a contemporarily worshipping community can vary widely, from fifteen minutes to more than an hour. That segment of worship typically is set aside for singing song after song, punctuated occasionally with prayers and readings. (p. 173)

Wilt notes that many Contemporary Worship Singers are using their voices non-stop for more than an hour. Contemplation of the resulting vocal loads carried under such duress will be considered later in the data generation (Chapter 4). The passionate engagement of the worshippers and thus the Contemporary Worship Singers may be troublesome. In his manual for contemporary singers Mark Baxter (1990) comments on singers 'losing' their voices stating "any kind of music that's emotionally charged will be vulnerable" (p. 126). Noland (1999) recognises that "Worship is an intensely emotional experience" (p. 210). Contemporary Worship Singers are therefore at risk of vocal damage by virtue of their vocal demands. Thomas Cleveland (2001) in *When Hoarseness is the Goal* observes "it is hard to believe that the measure of a successful concert or sermon might depend on the degree of hoarseness derived from the presentation" (p. 47). While research into the overall vocal health of the Contemporary Worship Singer is scant (Dawson, 2005; Neto, 2010; Robinson, 2002) the example being provided by prominent vocal leaders is concerning. Zschech (2002) writes "I am a singing teacher's worst nightmare because I strain my voice continually before I start singing. I get excited in the prayer meeting as we lay hold of God and shout His praises" (p. 63).

Dawson (2005) warns "leaders who place performance demands on singers without considering the short and long term effects of the singers' vocal health, leave themselves open to the probability of future litigation" (p. 57). In his review of contemporary church singers Dawson (2005) also writes "In order for church singers to reach their full potential, it is vital that they become more aware of the vocal demands placed on them by their participation in both church worship and service to the church generally" (p. 4).

One of the main challenges facing Contemporary Worship Singers is the style of repertoire being employed by their church and the manner in which that same repertoire is presented to the congregation. The previously reviewed labelling of church environments as either Traditional or Contemporary neatly align with the vocal disciplines of Classical and Contemporary respectively (Robinson, 2010b).

b) Classical or Contemporary Pedagogy

The study and subsequent teaching of voice has been employed since the 15th century. "The Italianate School developed in the 18th century, and a subsequently diverse school of pedagogy emerged. A variety of influences have determined the

progress of singing pedagogy and the techniques of singing and teaching utilised most widely today" (R. Miller, 2006, p. 213).

With the development of vocal methodologies came scientific enquiry. Most prominent of the 19th century vocal pedagogues was Manuel García (1805–1906). A failed Opera singer (Radomski, 2005), one of García's lasting contributions was his use of a dental mirror to directly view the vocal folds (Sataloff, 2006b). This technique is still used by otolaryngologists today. García was also known as a leading singing teacher writing on subjects including timbres, vocal registers and, artistry (Radomski, 2005).

Voice science and vocal methodologies continued to develop throughout the 20th century. Voice scientists such as Hirano, Vennard, Titze and Sundberg along with vocal methodologists like Miller, Dayme and Estil have all contributed to the "great deal of scientific material (that) has been published on various aspects of vocal physiology and acoustics" (Callaghan, 2010, p. 15).

The consequence of 400–500 hundred years of exploring vocal artistry, and the teaching of singing, has established classical voice instruction as an accepted mode of pedagogy in the profession and the community at large. The prevalence of classical pedagogy as the 'proper' method of learning has led many singers to assert its virtues. Waterman (2002) in the introduction of her book *The Working Singer's Handbook* suggests that it was the "studying [of] AMEB[29] classical exams" (p. 6) under the tutorage of her classical singing teacher that remediated her voice; developing technique for future vocal loads. Built on the unstated premise that those wishing to sing should learn classical technique, Waterman's book is an excellent example of classical pedagogy repackaged for contemporary singers.

Bartlett, Winkworth and Callaghan (2002) write, "There appears to be a prevailing view among voice professionals (classically trained voice teachers, speech pathologists and otolaryngologists) that contemporary singing styles are probably inherently damaging for the voice" (p. 68). The discussion of what discipline is best, classical or contemporary is one that continues to be aired frequently in journals, books and conferences. Until the 1970s the learning of voice was generally directed

[29] Australian Music Examinations Board

at those students engaged in repertoire deemed to be classical. The challenge seems to be that in the face of classical pedagogy's extended history the relatively new modes of contemporary discipline have yet to receive the critical mass of scholarly research as the more established classical methodologies. Notwithstanding, recent attention afforded by vocal pedagogues towards the contemporary discipline has led to the acknowledgement that "it is neither helpful nor scientifically justified to dismiss any particular genre (including hard rock) as medically unacceptable. With sufficient understanding, patience, voice team skill and patient compliance, a vocally 'right way' can be found to do almost anything" (Sataloff, Baroody, Emerich, & Carroll, 2006, p. 285).

Folk material (that is repertoire of the people or common folk) or 'contemporary music' was not seen as requiring heightened skill and for the most part, until recently, remained widely unattended by vocal pedagogues (Bartlett, 2010; Bartlett, et al., 2002; Hughes, 2010). For example Robert Edwin (2007a), when commenting on the modern/contemporary technique of *belting*, writes: "Belt on the other hand, was looked on as 'low brow,' commercial, and somewhat the bastard child of authentic singing" (p. 207).

Edwin attributes the rescue of contemporary vocal forms to Jeannette LoVetri stating that "by creating the term 'Contemporary Commercial Music' (CCM), she gave nonclassical singing a 'legit' name; no longer would it have to be called, 'that music other than classical'" (p. 207). Some commentators believe the use of the term 'contemporary' is problematic. Diane Hughes (2010), in suggesting an alternative to LoVetri's CCM label, suggests the use of "popular culture musics (PCM)" (p. 244) as being more appropriate when discussing music of the current time. Hughes states "Encompassing both mainstream and alternative styles, popular culture musics (PCM) is a term that is inclusive of all musical styles in popular culture" (p. 245). Whilst LoVetri's 'CCM' is starting to receive wide use (Bartlett, 2010; Bartlett, et al., 2002; Bourne, Garnier, & Kenny, 2010; Edwin, 2007a; D. Miller, 2008), it remains to be seen whether Hughes' PCM may gain traction in an arena of discussion which typically dislikes the use of 'contemporary'.

The singing of contemporary styles with learnt technique (including the pop idioms used in many modern worship settings) is understood to have importance in the development of the modern church singer. Dawson (2005) states, "Contemporary

style has its own unique problems and challenges for the voice" (p. 58). Edwin (1998b) concurs. In his article *Belting 101: Part Two* he writes "Our naïve colleagues who say, 'Singing is singing. If you have a solid classical technique, you can sing anything' are inviting vocal disaster if they impose classical vocal technique and sounds on the style of singing called belting" (p. 61). In a later article Edwin (2004) furthers his comment on the subject by writing "teachers not intimately familiar with contemporary styles of singing will be, at best, mediocre pedagogues, and at worse potentially damaging influences in the vocal lives of their non classical students" (p. 285).

What is apparent from the literature is that Contemporary Worship Singers may require voice training in the discipline of contemporary voice (Dawson, 2005; Neto, 2010; Robinson, 2002, 2010b). This area will receive further scrutiny during the collection of data.

i. Singing Lessons

Learning to sing is recognised as a highly vulnerable experience. Janice Chapman (2006) in her book *Singing and Teaching Singing* writes "When singers commit to learning, they offer themselves with the expectation that the teacher will enter into a relationship with them to develop and unfold their potential" (p. 156). Pat Wilson (2001) agrees and suggests "the best way to learn to sing is with the encouragement, support and instant feedback of another person as instructor" (p. 1).

The question for the Contemporary Worship Singer is, in part, classical or contemporary? The review of literature pertaining to modern worship settings noted that some churches employ hymns which are predominantly classical in style while other churches engage the modern worship chorus which employs pop idioms of contemporary music. Others utilise both forms: hymns and choruses. Typically the singers in traditional church environments require classical singing lessons while the singers in more 'contemporary' settings need vocal instruction in the contemporary disciplines. Dawson (2005), when commenting on appropriate methodologies for learning contemporary voice, writes "At best the church singer has been exposed to classical pedagogy, which does not equip them for 'crossover' demands of the contemporary commercial styles most commonly practiced in their church environments" (p. 3).

The following table (Table 2) displays the results from Dawson's (2005) inquiry into the variety of vocal training undertaken by church singers.

Type of vocal training	n	%
Have you received training from any of the following? *(Positive responses)*		
Classical Singing Teacher	35	32.4%
Classical Piano Teacher (who teaches singing)	7	6.5%
Contemporary Voice Teacher	41	37.9%
Contemporary Artist/Performer	7	6.5%
School Music Class	31	28.7%
School Choir	54	50%
Community Choir	12	11.1%
Church Choir	50	46.3%
Bible College (with a Music/Arts Course)	6	5.6%
TAFE Music Course	1	0.9%
Tertiary Music Course	9	8.3%

Table 2: *Type of vocal training (Dawson, 2005, p. 43)*

(Used by Permission)

Of interest to this review is the low proportion of respondents (37.9%) who nominated that they had received vocal instruction from a contemporary voice teacher. Also of note is the low representation of classical singing lessons. It is impossible to determine from Dawson's work the quality of the lessons undertaken by those questioned. Only 53.7% of respondents declared that their singing teacher had formal qualification (p. 43), while just less than two thirds (65.7%) of respondents considered their singing lessons to be relevant to the styles they sing in church (p. 44).

ii. Requirements of Technique

A clear distinction lies between the classical and contemporary disciplines. The teachers and the manner in which those lessons are administered remains open to further research. It is now necessary to distinguish, albeit not comprehensively, the technical requirements of the vocal task as they pertain to the Contemporary Worship Singer.

Postural alignment is essential to the efficient and healthy use of voice (Borch, 2005; Chapman, 2006; Malde, Allen, & Zeller, 2009; Peckham, 2000). The matter of body

alignment for the Contemporary Worship Singer has already been noted with many singers tilting their heads upwards into a less than ideal position for singing. The 'goose neck' (Dawson, 2005) position also leads to poor body alignment through the rest of the vocal apparatus. This worship posture can lead to a balancing back onto the heels. Daniel Zangger Borsch (2005) highlights that "putting too much weight on your heels can increase the strain on your larynx" and thus a negative cycle of tension is formed – simply by lifting the chin to high! Chapman and Morris (2006a) also indicate that "the first step in breathing easily and freely is attaining proper alignment of the body" (p. 42).

The development of breath management is seen by some writers as not requiring instruction (Kayes, 2004; Riggs, 1994). In her work *Singing and the Actor*, Gillyanne Kayes (2004) writes,

> Work your muscles, and do not make the task of breathing too complicated. If your body is in balance, if you are free from laryngeal constriction and if your vocal folds are working efficiently, your breath use will sort itself out. (p. 39)

Many other vocal pedagogues (Chapman & Morris, 2006a; McKinney, 1994; Sundberg, 1987; Thurman, Theimer, Welch, Grefsheim, & Feit, 2000) stand opposed to this approach proposed by Kayes. Chapman and Morris (2006a) argue,

> A gradual process of assimilation, combining constant affirmation to practice good postural alignment, use of physiologically correct inhalation and exhalation, and encouragement to find and maintain the emotionally connected primal sound base can take between one and two years of normal weekly lessons. (p. 57)

It is important at this point to qualify that whilst both Riggs and Kayes might be recognised as contemporary pedagogues, their argument within the debate is not representative of all their contemporary colleagues. For example, contemporary singing teacher Edwin (1998a) provides a key qualifier in stating "efficient breath management is…essential in all styles of singing" (p. 54). In addition, as Heur, et al. (2006) proposes, "When evaluating respiration, the volume of air is important, but more important is the manner in which the patient takes in the air (inhalation), and how the air is used to produce the voice (exhalation)" (p. 230). Developed coordination seems to be a key concept. Chapman and Morris (2006a) refer to alignment and breath management by stating "there is always an ongoing monitoring of breathing, support, and postural alignment thereafter" (p. 55)

Further to the earlier review of vocal demands are the technical skills of twang and belt. The term twang was first coined by voice scientist Jo Estill (1981). Meribeth Bunch Dayme (2009) qualifies the anatomical attributes of twang:

> The opening of the larynx, some times called the collar of the larynx, is formed by the epiglottis and aryepiglottic folds, and is thought to contribute the area of resonance which gives the voice a ringing quality, often referred to as the 'ring' in the literature. (p. 121)

Kayes (2004) furthers the definition by stating

> Twang quality is characterised by a tightened aryepiglottic sphincter with high larynx and tongue. The thyroid can be titled or neutral, allowing for a thinner or thicker vocal fold mass. The tightening of the aryepiglottis tends to increase resistance in the vocal folds, so it is important not to drive breath in this voice quality. Twang can also be nasal or oral. (p. 158)

Twang has been shown to be invaluable in music styles such as music theatre, rock, pop, and country (Chapman & Morris, 2006b; Kayes, 2004; Thurman, Welch, Theimer, Feit, & Grefsheim, 2000). Building on Estill's work, Kayes (2004) writes that "adding twang to your sound will enable your voice to carry in large or outdoor spaces: it also gives a good clear signal from your voice to the sound desk" (p. 111).

A second key contributor to developing a clear signal from your voice to the sound desk is the technique of 'belt'.

> *Belting* or *belt quality* is a term that was popularised in the American music theatre, particularly by the singing of Ethel Merman in the 1940s and 1950s. That style of singing is a staple of musical theatre in Western civilization. But for thousands of years, children, adolescents and adults of nearly all the world's cultures have sung their folk and popular musics in a strong belted way. Current popular and religious musical styles that have roots in the African-American experience preponderantly use belted singing (spiritual, blues, jazz, gospel, rock, and so forth). (Thurman, Welch, et al., 2000, p. 520)

Currently there does not seem to be a consensus within the international community of singing teachers on the absolutes of belt or the teaching thereof (Bourne, et al., 2010; McCoy, 2004; Wilson, 2010). Scott McCoy (2004) wrote "controversies surrounding belt may actually exceed those of all other registration issues" (p. 75) and Bourne, et al. (2010), having interviewed 12 expert Music Theatre teachers, concluded "there is very little evidence-based information on how singers can

produce music theatre qualities efficiently and safely" (p. 179). Thus a restricted review of the body mechanics is prudent. Much of the debate over the belt technique centres on vocal health. In defence of belt, Edwin (2007b) distinguishes between good and bad belt. He writes,

> Good ('true') belting is shared vocal fold activity between the thyroarytenoid (TA) and cricothyroid (CT) muscles. Bad belting is the overly thick vocal fold posture that most classical as well as most good CCM voice pedagogues try to change through systematic technical exercises. (p. 326)

Bourne, Garnier and Kenny (2010) take the application and subsequent teaching of belt further by suggesting that "Classical vocal training is not likely to be useful for students learning to produce the belt sound" (p. 179). If, as Robinson (2010b) has written, "Twang and belt are both technical skills that should be developed by the Contemporary Worship Singer" (p. 288), then according to Bourne, Garnier and Kenny (2010), the Contemporary Worship Singer is in need of contemporary singing instruction; including belt. In an earlier article, Edwin (2007a) proposes that some vocal health concerns may be arising from poor instruction in the development of belt. Edwin advises,

> It's important to note that voice pedagogues trying to teach 'healthy belting' with a CT-dominant (head voice) vocal fold source as opposed to the TA dominant (chest voice) vocal fold source may not be preparing their students for the real world of CCM singing. The industry term for CT-dominant belt is 'faux belt' (fake belt), in as much as the sound does not have the power or presence of TA-dominant belt. (p. 208)

Contrasted against the widely used technique of belt is the tendency of untrained contemporary singers to over-engage their laryngeal musculature; which in turn producers a yell-like quality. Kenneth W. Bozeman (2010), in a recent article for the *Journal of Singing*, defines the characteristics of yelling as including an "association with more stressful emotions such as fear, anger, or aggressive celebration" along with "higher breath pressure and glottal resistance levels (pressed phonation, more blatant or strident timbre)" (p. 292). Darlene Zschech's (2002) previously noted statement attesting to her getting "excited in the prayer meeting as (she lays) hold of God and shout(s) His praises" (p. 63) certainly aligns with Bozeman's aggressive celebration allocating a predisposition to a yell-like function.

Research is ongoing into the technique of 'belt'. A specialised understanding of coordinated voice function (including body alignment, breath management and laryngeal techniques such as twang and belt) when delivered with a clear understanding of the unique challenges facing the contemporary singer (moreover the Contemporary Worship Singer) is deemed necessary (Bourne, et al., 2010; Chandler, 2001; Dawson, 2005; Neto, 2010; Robinson, 2002, 2010b).

c) Harmonies

Beyond the technical (vocal) challenges facing Contemporary Worship Singers is the need to sing harmonies. Jennifer Garza (2007) argues that "Churches are good training grounds because budding singers can learn how to read music (and) how to sing harmony" (pp. 1–2). Some commentators consider the singing of harmonies to represent the attainment of "musical expertise" (Russell, 1997, p. 96), but Garza's suggestion that the church is a good environment in which to learn to sing harmonies (musical expertise) remains questionable. The review of literature provided little direct instruction for church singers on the learning of harmonies. Siewert (1998a) recommends that harmonies be used sparingly. She writes "*Don't sing harmony at the expense of the melody*" (p. 74). Another manual, the *Church Musicians' Handbook,* when addressing vocalist's presentation and techniques (McCall & Milne, 1999, pp. 83–85) fails to mention harmonies. It addresses appearance (dress, energy and movement) (pp. 83–84) and ability (vocal ability, conducting and vocal technique) (pp. 84–85).

One text referred to the teaching of harmonies to church singers. The self-published *Towards Excellence* by Rod Best (1998) outlines a number of practical exercises for the singers (pp. 106–109). Best encourages worship teams learning harmonies to "practice intervals regularly" (p. 109); noting that "it is usually good to go with three part harmony i.e. Soprano and baritone on the melody, tenor on the part above the melody and alto on the part below the melody" (p. 105). Best warns that when transcribed harmonies are not supplied "singers will try and make up their own part and if they are not strong on harmony, you find that they constantly cross between melody and other people's parts" (p. 109).

What is also apparent is the need for singers to use harmony as a means of ensuring vocal health and sustained vocal use. Pat Wilson (2001) recommends that singers "always…sing in the key that best suits (their) voice" (p. 40). This is not always

possible in the corporate, all-inclusive activity of congregational singing and so the singing of harmonies allows the singers to choose melodic lines which are more in keeping with their own vocal capacities.

d) Tessitura

It is important to note that the consideration of sing-ability, when assessing the melodic line should not only address the highest and lowest notes of the melody. Perhaps more pertinent to the discussion is the matter of tessitura.
William Vennard's (1968) definition explains that the singer's tessitura is "that part of the range in which the voice performs best, both as to sound and as to ease" (p. 79). McKinney (1994) furthers Vennard's simplified definition by writing

> Two songs may have the same general range but different tessituras, as shown in this example [Figure 17[30]]. There are some singers who can sing both of these tunes comfortably; there are others who can handle the range without any problem, but who find the tessitura of the second tune very demanding because it lies so high within the octave. (p. 111)

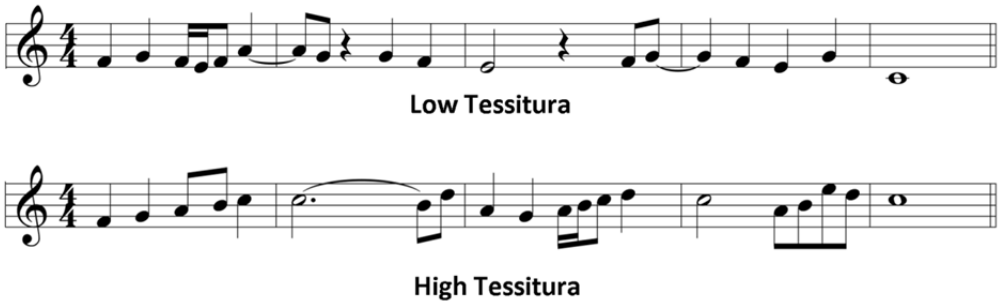


Figure 17: *Low and high tessitura*

It seems that the sustaining of a melodic line whose tessitura remains high for an extended period might predispose the singer to vocal wear and tear. Judith Wingate (2008) certainly thinks so. She writes, "If the singer experiences chronic vocal fatigue from singing in an extreme tessitura for long periods of time, vocal injury may result" (pp. 58–59). Borch (2005) complements Wingate's concerns when he writes "Obviously if someone is forced time and time again to sing numerous choruses at the top of their range their voice will give out" (p. 93).

[30] Due to copyright restrictions the reader should note that Figure 17 is a different illustration to that provided by McKinney in the text *The Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults* (1994).

Dawson's (2005) random selection of survey participants for his enquiry into the vocal health of church singers notes that the predominant age of respondents was "18 – 25yrs and 26 – 35yrs, representing 65% of all singers" (p. 25). Robinson's (2002) enquiry into those who vocally lead worship showed a similar demographic with 60% of enquired respondents being between the ages of 18 – 35yrs (p. 28). The young age of church singers is noteworthy in light of the contention by Thurman et al. (2000) that,

> 'Pushing' voices of this age (college undergraduate years) beyond their anatomic and physiological limits, to the point of significant vocal fatigue and vocal fold swelling – especially on a regular basis – can have potentially harmful consequences to a young person's vocal future. (p. 780)

Dawson (2005) observes that "a real threat to the vocal health of church singers is consistent subjection to vocal strain in order to sing songs outside their comfortable range" (p. 59). The complex task facing any singer needing to navigate these challenges is outlined further by Chapman and Morris (2006b). They indicate:

> There are, in each voice type, areas where there is a choice of which registration to use, often dictated by the shape of the phrase, whether the pitch within the musical phrase is rising or falling, the dramatic or vocal intensity of the music, and the general tessitura of the section being sung. (p. 72)

Often the Contemporary Worship Singer is powerless to direct the choice of material, transcription of harmonies or the manner in which the repertoire will be sung. One area in which the Contemporary Worship Singer can find personal empowerment is their own vocal care through the practice of warm-ups and cool-downs.

e) Warm-ups and Cool Downs

The literature is overwhelming in its support of the disciplined practice of vocal warm-ups (Chapman, 2006; Dawson, 2005; Robinson, 2002; Sataloff, 2006a, 2006b; Sundberg, 1987; Thurman & Welch, 2000; Wilson, 2001; Wingate, 2008). Schneider, Saxon and Dennehy (2006) note that

> The exercise workout of athletic performance or vocal performance should consist of a *warm-up*, a *conditioning phase*, and a *cool down* . The function of the warm-up is to increase blood flow to the working muscles and increase the muscle temperature…The length of the warm-up should be 10 to 15 minutes…The conditioning phase should

> include activity at a predetermined exercise prescription, varying the frequency, duration, and intensity of the work…The cool-down incorporates the same activity used in the conditioning phase but at a much lower intensity. (p. 305)

The work of Robinson (2002) and Dawson (2005) independently reveals that warm-ups receive poor practice amongst church singers. Wingate (2008) suggests that while observing best practice, "most choral directors will provide a period of warm-up at the beginning of rehearsal" (p. 64) but Robinson (2002) found that 71% of survey respondent's worship teams did not have an "allocated warm-up period before the worship service" (p. 35). In addition, Dawson's (2005) research found "many (church) singers considered that warming their voice prior to a service was more necessary than warming their voice for rehearsal periods" (p. 32). Statistically "more than 60% did not warm up prior to a rehearsal while less than 47% did not warm up prior to a service" (Dawson, 2005, p. 32). Dawson later concludes that "such flippant approach to warm-up is insufficient to prepare the muscle system required for singing. A much more disciplined approach to vocal warm-ups is needed to ensure the voice is adequately prepared for athletic voice use" (p. 60). Johan Sundberg (1987) highlights the impact of warm-ups on the voice by stating, "Warming up in a hurry or in a wrong way also tends to result in poorer voice function than normal. It seems that the poorly warmed-up voice is less durable than the appropriately warmed-up voice" (p. 193).

The area of vocal warm-ups deserves further enquiry as it pertains to the nuances of the Contemporary Worship Singer's general cultural environment. For instance, Wilson (2001) recommends that singers "get out of bed three hours before (they) need to use (their) voice" (p. 51). Given that many church singers are performing as early as 8.20am on a Sunday morning (Robinson, 2002, p. 36) the requirement, according to Wilson's recommendation, to be out of bed by 5.20am on a Sunday morning could be problematic.

f) Summary of Voice in Worship

The activity of singing in church, with the added responsibility of leading others in the corporate activity of congregational singing, has many distinct implications for the singer and their voice. The vocal demands placed upon the Contemporary Worship Singer may require, by definition, voice instruction with established contemporary disciplines of twang and belt. Equally the benefits of universally applied disciplines such as of body alignment and breath management should be addressed. Further consideration should be given to matters such as the development of harmonies and inherent melodic structures which determine the tessitura. Additional enquiry is needed into the practice of warm-ups and cool-downs within the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer. The following graphic (Figure 18) summarises the key considerations concerning the singing aspect of the Contemporary Worship Singer's role:

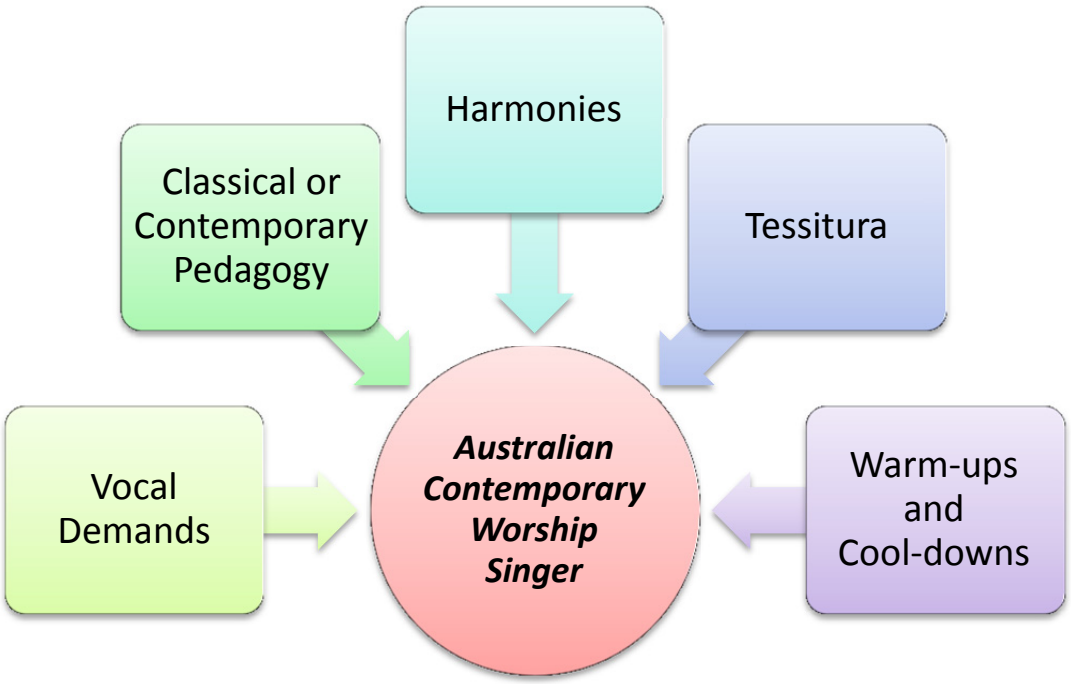


Figure 18: *Five key considerations for voice*

(iii) Chapter Summary

The assessment of the literature has included "literature on the undergirding theoretical basis" (Vyhmeister, 2008, p. 212). The review of literature has explored four main areas: Christian worship, modern church culture, the technical environment of the Contemporary Worship Singer and finally, vocal pedagogy. This survey of writings has framed the opportunity for further research into the unique role of the Australian Contemporary Worship Singer at the commencement of the 21st century. The literature has provided a general insight into the wide ranging themes, and provides the following research into the Contemporary Worship Singer with a framework.

The following graphic (Figure 19) illustrates the four structural pillars of the Contemporary Worship Singer as observed by the literature review – construct, culture, environment and voice:

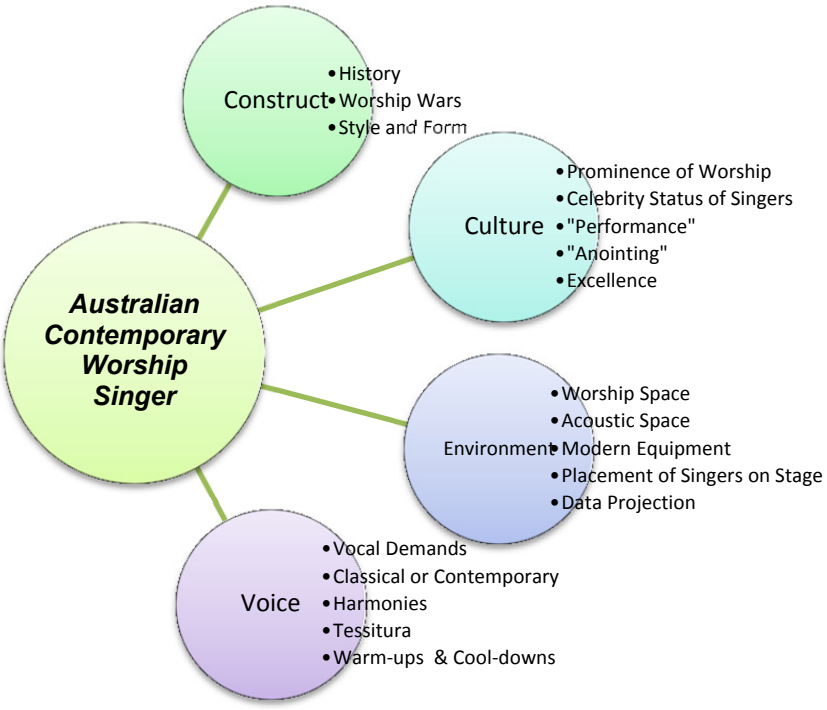


Figure 19: *The four structural pillars of the Contemporary Worship Singer*

(iv) Conceptual Framework

From the review of literature the following conceptual framework has been developed and thus provides a "scaffolding (for) the study" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 58). The conceptual framework is organised into written description first, followed by a graphic depiction of the structure. This consideration of the literature review as a concise and cohesive framework will in turn order *Part II: Survey and Interviews*, enabling the development of categories and their descriptors (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Robson, 2002).

The conceptual framework articulates five main headings; each represented as a sub-question to the main research question, "In what ways do the multiplicity of worship settings and the diversity of environmental factors influence the role and identity formation of the Contemporary Worship Singer; and how might pedagogy be designed for this type of singer?"

Thus, the five sub-questions are:

1. What are the defining features of the various cultural contexts?
2. What are the identifiable attributes of the various environmental factors?
3. How is the Contemporary Worship Singer's identity formed?
4. What gives distinction to the Contemporary Worship Singer as a unique identity within the wider community of singers?
5. What modes of instruction might best serve to train the Contemporary Worship Singer?

The following graphic (Figure 20; p. 87) presents the conceptual framework illustratively, showing the connections between the five sub-questions and the structural pillars of the literature review:

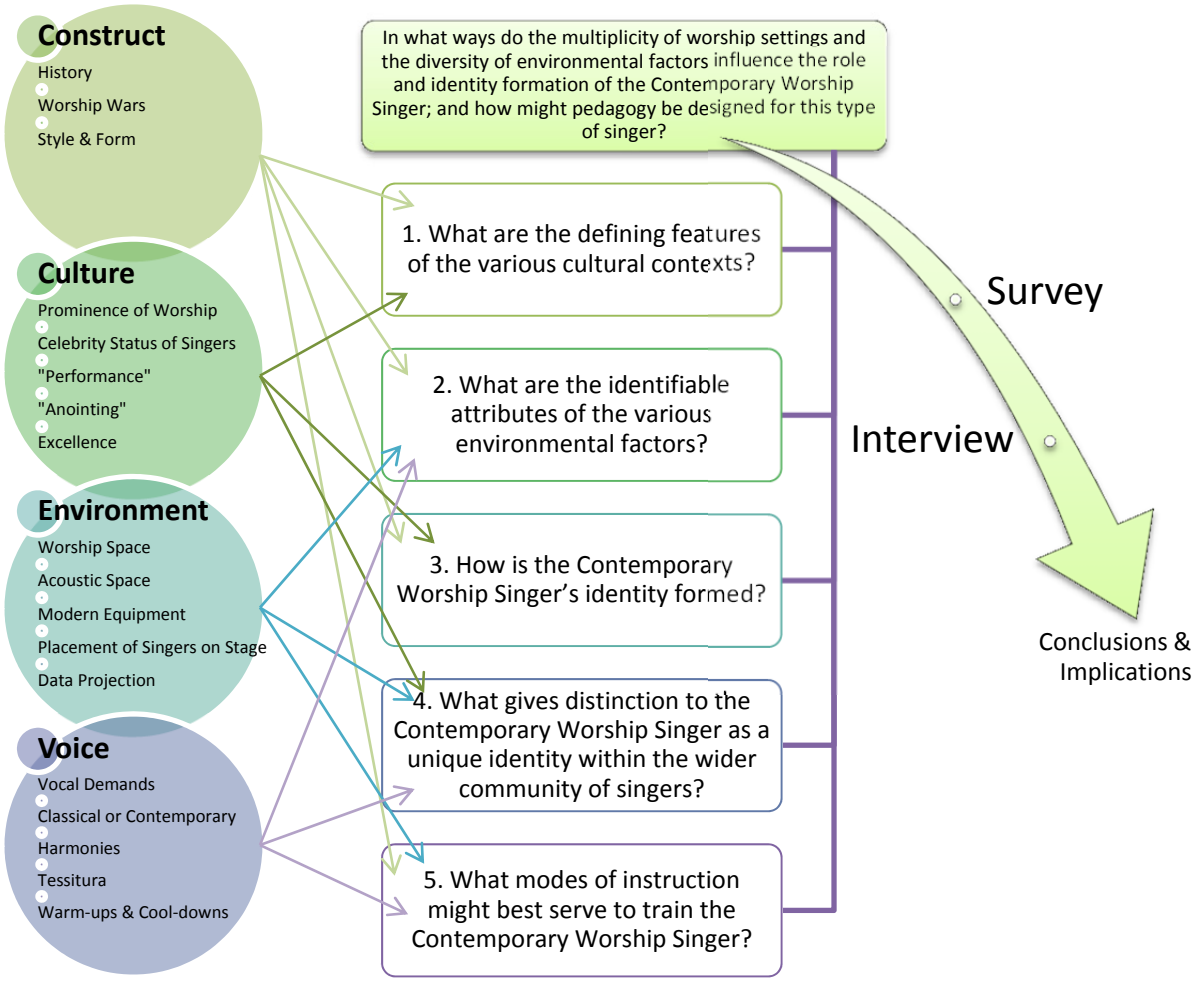


Figure 20: *Conceptual framework*

Chapter 3: Methodology

(i) Purpose

The purpose of this study is to interrogate the profile and activities of the Australian Contemporary Worship Singer. This group of singers has lacked academic enquiry and the researcher believes that investigation into the cultural features and particular environmental factors will better facilitate the development of instruction for the task. A framework of enquiry has been developed in order to make the process of investigation possible. This framework addresses five key research sub-questions: (1) What are the defining features of the various cultural contexts? (2) What are the identifiable attributes of the various environmental factors? (3) How is the Contemporary Worship Singer's identity formed? (4) What gives distinction to the Contemporary Worship Singer as a unique identity within the wider community of singers? (5) What modes of instruction might best serve to train the Contemporary Worship Singer?

This chapter will systematically position the research methodology covering the following areas: (a) rationale for the chosen research methodology, (b) outline of research design, (e) modes of data collection, (f) analysis and synthesis of data, (g) ethical considerations, and (h) limitations of the study.

(ii) Introduction

1) Qualitative Research

In order to develop a clear picture of the Australian Contemporary Worship Singer the researcher has situated the enquiry within the context of a qualitative methodology. The research is based within a constructivist paradigm. Principally concerned with the 'what' and 'how' (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008), "constructivists value transactional knowledge" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 184). With a qualitative design "the traditional positivist criteria of internal and external validity are replaced by such terms as *trustworthiness* and *authenticity*" (p. 184). Distinct from its counterpart quantitative research (traditional positivist), which seeks to test hypotheses in order to establish facts (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008), qualitative research is "open ended and exploratory in nature" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 34). Creswell (2007) writes "Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems

inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 37).

The potentially subjective nature of qualitative research (Bartleet, 2005) can bring about challenges, however subjectivity will be important in drawing conclusions from the environment and experience of the Contemporary Worship Singer. When considering the subjective nature of the study, Creswell (2007) positions the qualitative approach as a desire to

> Understand the contexts of settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue. We cannot separate what people say from the context in which they say it – whether this context is their home, family, or work. (p. 40)

In recognising the subtleties required in the research approach, the researcher has chosen a flexible design strategy. Flexibility in design allows for a responsive approach to the data which in turn should heighten the qualitative engagement of the research. Robson (2002) supports this approach when he writes "A flexible design evolves during data collection" (p. 87). While "there is no agreed upon structure for how to design a qualitative study" (Creswell, 2007, p. 41), the researcher considers ethnography to provide the best means by which the Contemporary Worship Singer might be viewed. The researcher is aiming to form a "cultural portrait" (p. 72) and the research discipline of ethnography supports this enquiry.

2) Ethnography

Silverman (2010) defines ethnography by stating that the term "puts together two different words: 'ethno' mean(ing) 'folk', while 'graph' derives from writing. Ethnography refers, then, to social scientific writing about particular folks" (p. 434). Based on anthropology (Silverman, 2010; Tedlock, 2000), ethnographers "study particular milieu or subcultures in their own society" (Silverman, 2010, p. 49). As previously stated Creswell (2007) claims that the aim of the ethnographer is to form

> a holistic *cultural portrait* of the group that incorporates the views of the participants (*emic*) as well as the views of the researcher (*etic*). It might also advocate for the needs of the group or suggest changes in society to address needs of the group. As a result, the reader learns about the culture-sharing group from both the participants and the interpretation of the researcher. (p. 72)

Whilst researcher bias will be addressed later in the chapter, it is important at this point to highlight my status as a "complete member" (Lee, 1995; Tedlock, 2000). This fully immersed position might be seen to enrich the generation and interpretation of data throughout the research journey. Goodall (2000) notes that "it is the 'personality' of the author that gives credibility and power to a particular ethnographer's tale. The ethnographer's personality 'transforms the research situation's ambiguities and diversities of meaning into an integrated portrait'" (p. 68). It is my challenge as the researcher to temper personality with active reflection to provide a semi-balanced representation of their involvement as a complete member (Wu, 1997). As stated by Creswell (2007) "Ethnographers study the meaning of the behaviour, the language, and the interaction among members of the culture-sharing group" (pp. 68–69), and so the positioning of the researcher as complete member should also assist in an appropriate and accurate description of the sub-culture (Tedlock, 2000). Furthermore, Angrosino (2005) notes, "ethnographic truth has come to be seen as a thing of many parts, and no one perspective can claim exclusive privilege in the representation thereof" (p. 731). Thus, the complete story is formed from many perspectives, including that of mine as researcher.

3) Data Collection

In order to acquire the information needed for the study a "deliberate strategy of selecting individuals varying widely on the characteristic(s) of interest" (Robson, 2002, p. 266) was employed. Information was collected in two stages; each with a different form of sampling procedure.

The following graphic (Figure 21; p. 91) illustrates the research design. Commenced with the ongoing literature review, the survey has been developed and data analysed prior to the collection of data via the interview process. Key to the research design is the manner in which all three data generation methods: (1) Literature Review, (2) Survey Data, (3) Interviews, feed into the development of findings.

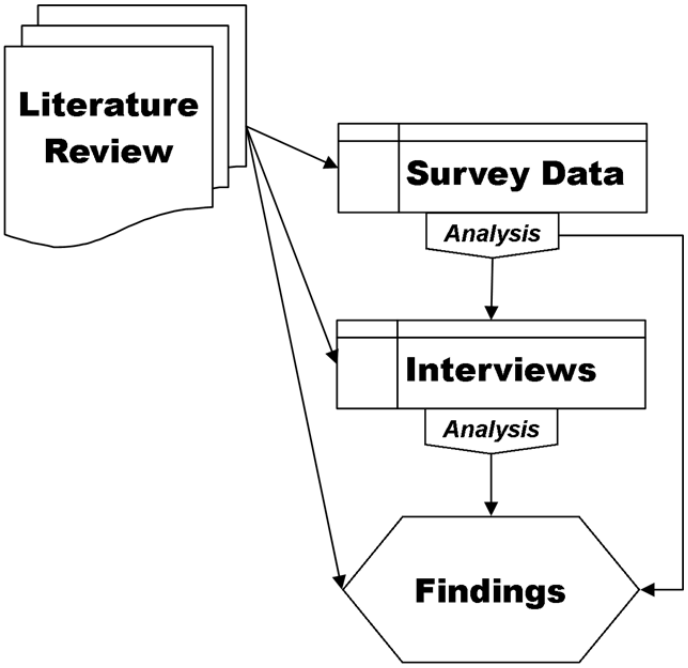


Figure 21: *Research design flowchart*

Surveys are completed by participants online. The interview data comes from 5 different churches of varying worship styles, each within the greater metropolitan Brisbane, Queensland Australia.

While the online survey data is Australia wide, it was decided that the geographical coverage of the interviews would be constrained to Brisbane because analysis of the national online survey data did not reveal significant geographical tendencies. In addition budgetary and time constraints meant that the interviews were conducted in close proximity to the researcher's base. Interviews were conducted in February and March of 2010.

Each interview was conducted on the church platform/stage of the interviewee's church. It was thought that this might help the interviewee to contextualise their role more easily, bringing to mind circumstance and situation more readily in their "natural, nonmanipulated settings" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 12). Fontana and Frey (2000) acknowledge the importance of the interviewer/participant relationship writing,

> The goal…is understanding, it is paramount that the researcher establish rapport with respondents; that is, the researcher must be able to take the role of the respondents and attempt to see the situation from their viewpoint, rather than superimpose his or her world of academia and preconceptions upon them. (p. 655)

(iii) Research Design

A systematic process of design has been undertaken to form the mode of enquiry. In recognising the subtleties required in the research approach a flexible design strategy has been employed. The following steps were taken to generate the data.

1. Ethical clearance was sought prior to confirmation of candidature. Ethical clearance was granted by the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GUHREC) in April 2007 (See Appendix 1)

2. A pilot 'online survey' was conducted using *Survey Monkey* (www.surveymonkey.com).

3. Following revision from the pilot, 85 participants completed the online survey; again using Survey Monkey. The non-experimental fixed design (Robson, 2002, p. 155) survey used both closed and open questions in order to acquire both demographic and perceptual content.

4. An analysis of the survey data was undertaken which in turn informed the design of semi-structured in-depth interview questions.

5. Nine interviews were conducted in five churches of differing denominations. All interviews were conducted in Brisbane, Queensland.

6. Interview responses were transcribed and analysed.

7. Correlation and contrast (analysis) was drawn between survey and interview data. The findings were then triangulated against existing literature.

a) Phase I: Online Survey

I was aware of the limitations in the use of surveys and the chosen method of electronic delivery (online). Fontana and Frey (2005) highlight that "face-to-face interaction is eliminated, as is the possibility of both the interviewer and the respondent reading nonverbal behaviour or of cueing from gender, race, age, class, or other personal characteristics" (p. 721). Robson's (2002) work seems to concur with

that of Fontana and Frey when he writes about the problem of "internal validity, where we are not obtaining valid information about the respondents and what they are thinking, feeling, doing, etc." (p. 231). While consenting to virtual interviewing as a widely used device by qualitative researchers Fontana and Frey (2005) also highlight that "researchers conducting such interviewing can never be sure that they are receiving answers from desired or eligible respondents" (p. 721). In countering these same disadvantages, Robson goes on to acknowledge many of the advantages to surveys writing that "they can be extremely efficient at providing large amounts of data, at relatively low cost…allow(ing) anonymity, which can encourage frankness when sensitive areas are involved" (p. 234).

I chose to limit the design of the questionnaire to predominantly ask closed questions. As Silverman (2010) writes, "such qualitative interviewers depend upon a *positivist* model of research shared by quantitative interviewers, such as survey researchers. By contrast, where the emphasis veers more towards the elicitation of 'feelings', an *emotionalist* model is being applied" (p. 190). The survey was therefore designed according to the positivist model, while the interviews were designed to delve deeper by using the emotionalist model.

b) Phase II: Interview

In order to further focus the research beyond the data obtained through the online survey, a deeper level of inquiry was conducted via interview. The interviews were designed and delivered in a one-on-one, semi-structured format (Brenner, 1985; Fontana & Frey, 1994) "whereby the questions were asked in an order and in ways that fitted with the manner in which the interview was progressing" (Mullins & Kiley, 2002, p. 373); with "considerable freedom in the sequencing of questions,…their exact wording, and in the amount of time and attention given to different topics" (Robson, 2002, p. 278).

Access to interview participants was sought via gatekeepers, namely senior pastors and music directors. Of the seven churches contacted five chose to allow access to their church singers. The gatekeepers were issued an email reiterating a brief rationale for the research. Also accompanying the email as an attachment was a copy of the *Ethical Clearance Information Sheet and Informed Consent Package*[31].

[31] See Appendix 1 for the Ethics documents.

The gatekeepers were asked to identify participants for the interview with special instruction requiring a random selection, with no preference given to sex, age (other than being over 18yrs) or perceived skill level. In this way, the researcher sought to maintain a "typical case sample" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Robson, 2002). Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) define *typical case sampling* stating, "Individuals are selected because they represent the norm and are in no way atypical, extreme, or very unusual" (p. 191).

Nine interviews were conducted. Each interview has been coded *IP* (Interview Participant) followed by sequential numbering; 1 to 9. The interviewees where obtained from *five* different churches of varying worship styles, each within the greater metropolitan Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

(iv) Data Management

Process of Analysis

The analysis draws on the social anthropological perspectives of Miles and Huberman (1994) who outline methods for qualitative analysis including:

- Affixing codes to a set of field notes drawn from observations or interviews
- Noting reflections or other remarks in the margins
- Sorting and sifting through these materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and common sequences
- Isolating these patterns and processes, commonalities and differences, and taking them out to the field in the next wave of data collection
- Gradually elaborating a small set of generalizations that cover the consistencies discerned in the database
- Confronting those generalizations with a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories. (p. 9)

Analysis and Synthesis of Findings

An analytical strategy was designed in order to: (1) manage the data, (2) organise the data, (3) analyse the data and, (4) interpret the data as findings. Creswell (2007)

presents these same stages in his graphic, "The Data Analysis Spiral" (p. 151), shown below (Figure 22[32]; p. 95):

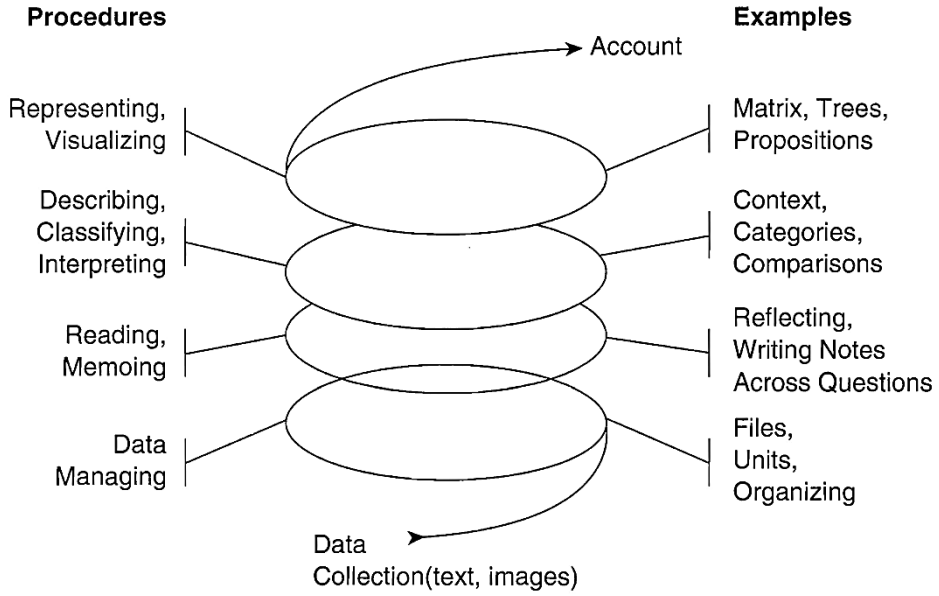


Figure 22: *The data analysis spiral (Creswell, 2007, p. 151)*

(Used by Permission)

Management of Data

Miles and Huberman (1994) identify five general principles for consideration in the management of data (p. 45). The researcher has ordered his data management according to three of the principles: formatting, indexing and abstracting.

1. ***Formatting***: The survey data was collated online using the Survey Monkey host as a depository for the data. Each survey respondent was automatically allocated a unique identifier by the Survey Monkey software which maintains data integrity, significantly mitigating the risk of data mismanagement. Quantifiable data was also analysed using Survey Monkey's *Create Chart* functionality. Where applicable, charts were created and stored on the researcher's personal computer; with some charts receiving cross tabulation analysis (for example, gender next to age). Interview data were transcribed into a document, utilising tables to ensure clear distinction between

[32] Qualitative inquiry & research design: choosing among five approaches by CRESWELL, JOHN W. Copyright 2011 Reproduced with permission of SAGE PUBLICATIONS INC BOOKS in the format Dissertation via Copyright Clearance Center.

researcher questions and interviewee responses. These have been stored securely.

2. ***Indexing***: "a generic term for what is usually called 'coding'" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 45), the indexing of the data was grouped as *SP* (*S*urvey *P*articipant) and *IP* (*I*nterview *P*articipant) followed by a unique numerical identifier (1-85 for the surveys; 1-9 for the interviews). For the ease of reading, the coding for each interviewee was replaced by a pseudonym[33].

3. ***Abstracting***: each of the nine interviews was assigned an "Interview Protocol" (Creswell, 2007, pp. 135–136) document which summarised the interview process around key questions; and in turn "linked clearly in the file structure to the longer material" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 45). The interview protocol document identified key demographic information including the name of the interviewee, church affiliation, and age.

The data were held in both soft and hard copy at all times. Once complete and closed, the online survey was downloaded as a pdf file and printed in hard copy with the raw data also remaining on the Survey Monkey website. The interviews were recorded in MPEG-2 Audio Layer 3 (mp3) format, with transcriptions being made and printed into hardcopy.

Analysis of Data

Analysis of data draws upon the conceptual framework[34] argued more fully in the literature review. The researcher maintained a document in softcopy in which key quotes were transcribed. Covering in excess of two hundred and fifty (269) subjects, this manuscript surveyed over three hundred documents including articles, books and online material. This material undertaking sought to focus the analysis of the data for the online surveys (Creswell, 2007).

Once closed, the raw data of the survey was analysed with all quantitative data distilled into charts. A complete analysis of the survey data, both quantitative and qualitative, was processed with the literature review weaved into the preliminary analysis for corroboration, elaboration and the revealing of fresh insight (Miles &

[33] The pseudonyms are listed at the beginning of Chapter 5: Interviews (p. 151)

[34] See p. 86

Huberman, 1994, p. 41; Rossman & Wilson, 1984, 1991). The analysis of interviews was also conducted with a preliminary assessment of the data being reflected against the literature. This linking of qualitative and quantitative data was used as "a 'systemic' approach to understand the interaction of variables in a complex environment" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 41).

Having undertaken preliminary analysis of the data; literature, survey and interview, a thorough analysis of the data as a single set of information was addressed under the five research questions. Figure 23[35] shows four design alternatives as described by Miles and Huberman (1994, pp. 41–42). This researcher's design has sought to follow a pattern of collection and analysis not dissimilar to design 3, beginning with the qualitative data found in the literature, followed by the mostly quantitative data of the survey, and subsequently followed by the mostly qualitative data of the interviews.

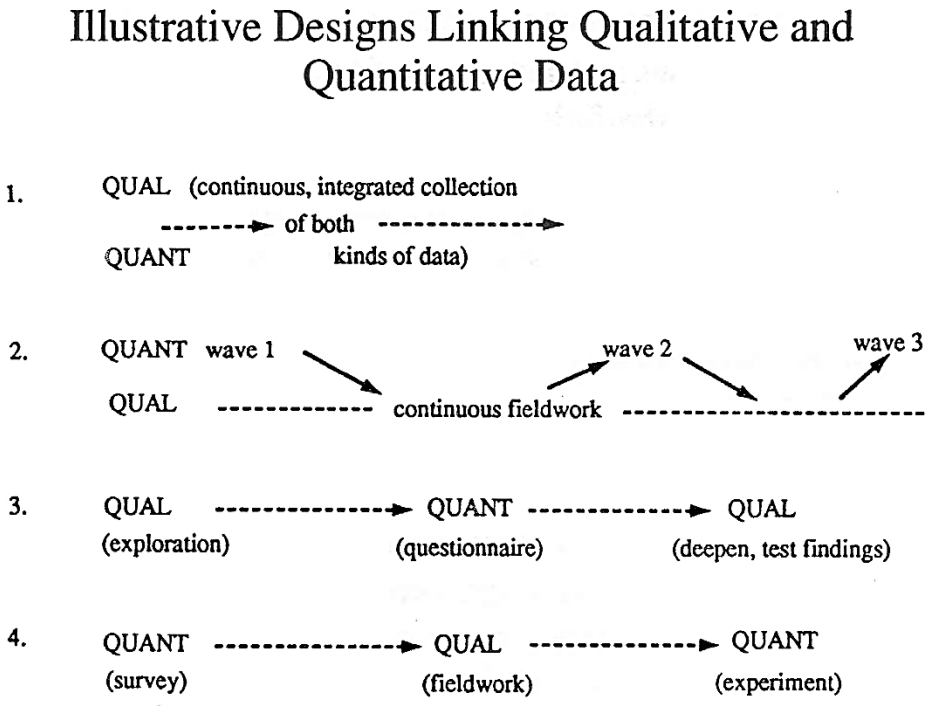


Figure 23: *Illustrative designs linking qualitative and quantitative data (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 41)*

(Used by Permission)

[35] Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook by MILES, MATTHEW B. Copyright 2011 Reproduced with permission of SAGE PUBLICATIONS INC BOOKS in the format Dissertation via Copyright Clearance Center.

It is important to note that the exploration of qualitative data (including the literature review) was ongoing throughout the data collection process so elements of design 1 with design 3 were incorporated. This, as Wolcott (1994) suggests is important in the development of descriptors from the data "as well as relating the description to the literature and cultural themes in cultural anthropology" (Creswell, 2007, p. 148).

(v) Limitations

Limitations of the study are both general requirements of qualitative research and specific to the research at hand. The management of these two sets of limitations is detailed below.

a) General Research Limitations

The most prominent limitation of qualitative research is found in the researcher conducting the study. The subjectivity of the researcher is expressed through *researcher bias*, "framing as it does assumptions, interest, perceptions and needs" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 87). The apparent bias of the researcher as a Contemporary Worship Singer himself could lead to preconceived ideas and interpretations of the data set. The researcher sought to curb the impact of research bias by applying filters of credibility, dependability and transferability (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 278–279).

A second limitation to qualitative research is that of *participant bias* (Robson, 2002, p. 102). It is difficult to determine to what extent participants respond to the researcher, either by survey or face-to-face interview, in a manner that seeks to please the researcher by offering responses that the participant determines, either stated or unstated, the researcher is seeking. At times during the interview process the research took on the role of antagonist, questioning responses that may have expressed participant bias in order to allow the participant to qualify and, if needed, change their response. Where a change of response was concluded, the participant was asked to qualify their change of response.

Both the limitations of researcher bias and participant bias were openly declared and discussed prior to the face-to-face interviews. The up-front declaration of both limitations along with an explanation of the overarching research agenda was used to curb the impact of these inherent constraints. Also, during analysis the researcher maintained a self-reflective process by asking himself how his own bias might be

affecting the analysis and interpretation of findings. Ultimately the remaining bias was exposed to challenge via supervisor feedback and third party review.

b) Specific Research Question Limitations

A number of limitations were placed on the study being conducted by the researcher. These limitations were used to focus and refine the work. These limitations included a restriction of age to only include participants 18 years of age and older, along with the geographical limitation of Australian churches.

A third limitation of only allowing protestant churches into the study was employed, thus disallowing the inclusion of participants from the Roman Catholic tradition. As reviewed in the literature review[36], the Christian church has undergone many schisms during its history; with the most significant separation being that of the 16th century Reformation. While the developments of Vatican II have transformed the Roman Catholic tradition, the reformation strands of Protestantism commonly cultivates singers whose practise is more closely aligned with this study. This choice was taken to limit the scope of the study, reducing the possible number of participants in order to focus on those singers most likely to participate in worship settings which employed contemporary worship repertoire.

A fourth limitation grounding this study is the small size of the research participant cohort. The limited number (survey – *n*85; interviews – *n*9) reduces the demographic range and restricts the opportunity to observe nuances as might be registered by geography or sex[37].

Finally, a limitation specific to this study, though not unusual in its nature at this level of enquiry, is the limited availability of literature specific to the Contemporary Worship Singer as defined in the introduction to this paper. The researcher sought to overcome this limitation by situating the study against the previously stated pillars of enquiry; worship, culture, environmental and voice as shown in Figure 24 (p. 100) below.

[36] See Literature Review: History of Singing in the Church (Chapter 2, p. 14)

[37] Further acknowledgement of the small research participant cohort and its narrow scope is offered in the opening remarks to the Conclusions Chapter (p. 198) and Further Research (p. 240).

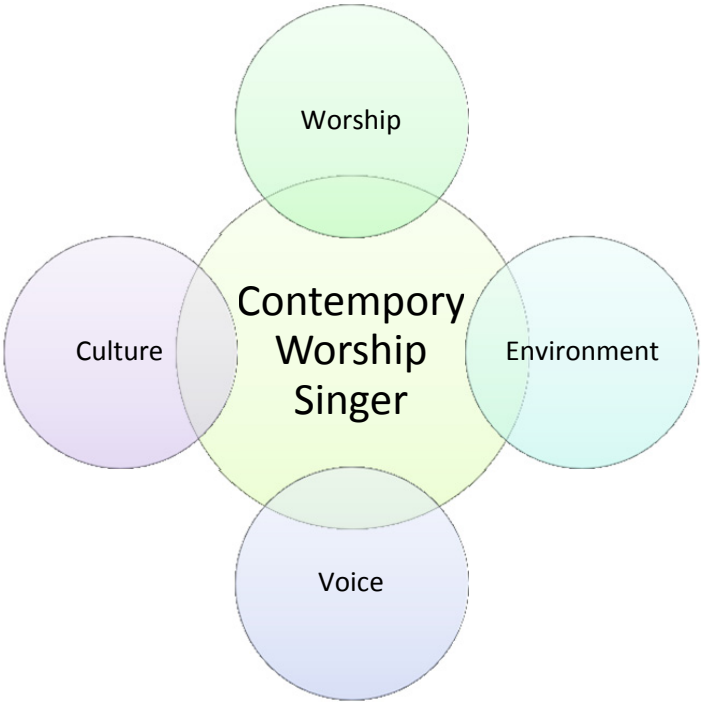


Figure 24: *Pillars of enquiry*

(vi) Summary

In summary, this chapter has provided an overview of the methodologies and design employed by the researcher. Ethnography has been employed as the qualitative research method for the nature and activities of the Contemporary Worship Singer. The gathering of data has been conducted in two distinct phases: online survey and face-to-face interviews.

Having developed the foundation of the study in Part I, the second segment (Part II) presents the new data collected through both survey and interviews.

Chapter 4: Survey has been designed to enquire of the Contemporary Worship Singer across multiple worship settings with no specificity given to participants regarding skill level or period of participation. The questions have been developed in alignment with the broad context of the Literature Review (Chapter 2). The data has been analysed and emerging questions for the interviews have been designed according to the findings of the survey results.

Chapter 5: Interviews continues the enquiry with the methodological design ensuring an increased depth of data is obtained. Both the Literature Review and Survey chapters inform and focus the interview questions achieving the scalable enquiry presented in the methodology chapter.

Chapter 4: Survey

This chapter reports on the first phase of data collection. The online survey was conducted from Friday 25 July 2008 until Wednesday 6 May 2009. During this time 85 participants from 16 Australian Christian churches completed (*n*78) or partially completed (*n*7) the survey. The 16 Australian churches were chosen in order to obtain a *heterogeneous sample*. Unlike the convenience sample where "unspecified biases and influences are likely" (Robson, 2002, p. 265), the heterogeneous sample is "a deliberate strategy of selecting individuals varying widely on the characteristic(s) of interest" (p. 266). A local coordinator organised for participants to volunteer for the study, providing they met the following broad criteria:

1. Participants were required to be 18 years or over.

2. As a way of delimiting the study, only protestant churches were approached.

Churches of between 60 and 1500 members were approached. This qualification was also designed to limit the scope of the data and recognises that "the average size of a congregation in Australia is around 70 people… and only 3% of congregations exceed 300 attendees" (NCLS, 2002, p. 1). The following graph (Figure 25; p. 103) shows the size of participating churches covered in the survey.

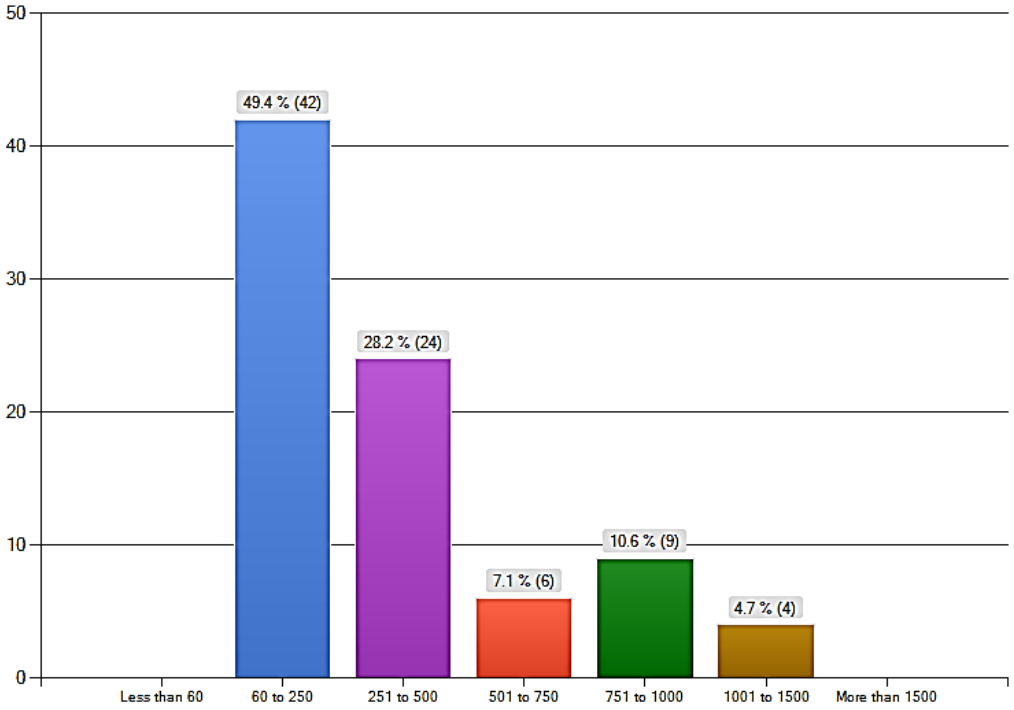


Figure 25: *How many people attend your church? (n85)*

The 16 Australian churches represented 7 protestant denominations as shown in the following graph (Figure 26) [38].

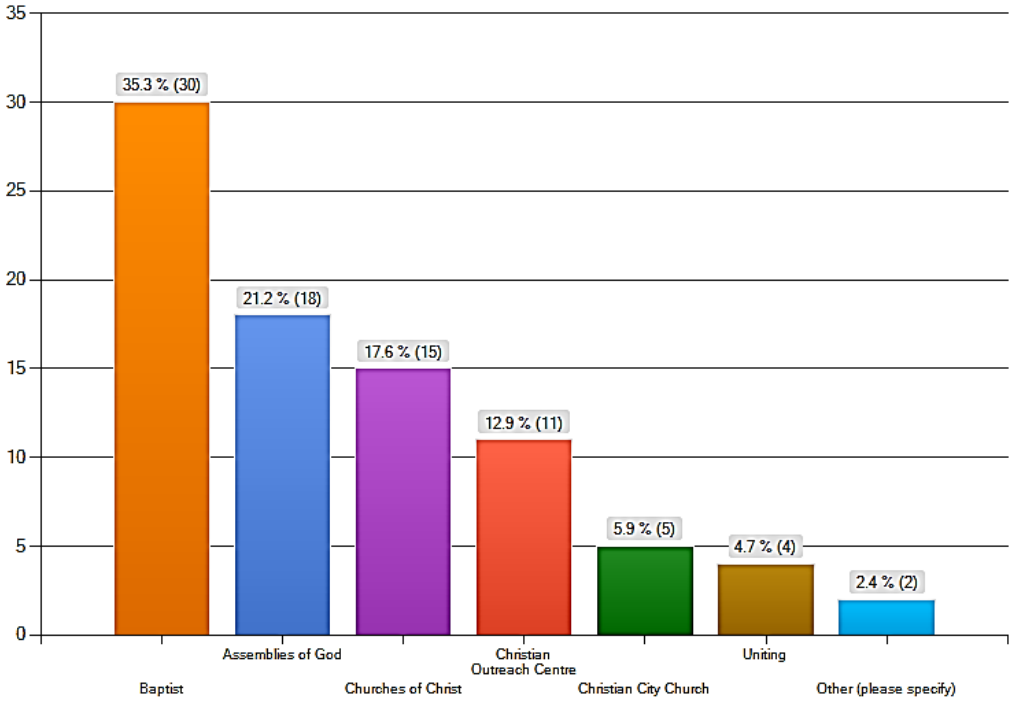


Figure 26: *With which denomination does your church affiliate? (n85)*

[38] 'Other' (*n*2) is broken into Assemblies of God (*n*1) and Salvation Army (*n*1).

Survey Data Analysis

The findings are presented in relation to the five research sub-questions:

1. What are the defining features of the various cultural contexts?
2. What are the identifiable attributes of the various environmental factors?
3. How is the Contemporary Worship Singer's identity formed?
4. What gives distinction to the Contemporary Worship Singer as a unique identity within the wider community of singers?
5. What modes of instruction might best serve to train the Contemporary Worship Singer?

The findings are also presented according to the conceptual framework with each of the structural pillars (Construct; Culture; Environment; Voice) addressed throughout.

1) What are the defining factors of the various cultural contexts?

Given the variety of denominations represented in the survey (*n*7) it is important to present the various cultural approaches to the worship activity. As stated in the literature review, "worship is always expressed in a particular cultural context" (Rognlien, 2005, p. 168) so survey participants were asked a range of questions in order to appreciate the cultural variety and defining cultural factors which might influence the Contemporary Worship Singer's role.

a) Worship Style

The local church's worship expression lies beyond the denominational banner of a local church, and is not related to the size of the church membership/attendance. Webber (1994) observes:

> Style is very different from content and structure. The content of worship is the Gospel. The structure of worship is the form that allows the Gospel to be remembered and enacted. Therefore, both content and structure are common elements to all worshiping communities. But style is open and flexible and relative to each culture, generation, and preference. (p. 263)

While some advocate for a removal of "labels such as charismatic and noncharismatic, anointed and not anointed" (Peacock, 1999, p. 54) individual church members still associate themselves with certain labels. When asked, '*How would you describe your church's worship expression?*' (Figure 27) only 7.1% (*n*6) answered 'Other' outside widely accepted labels such as 'Pentecostal' or 'Evangelical'.

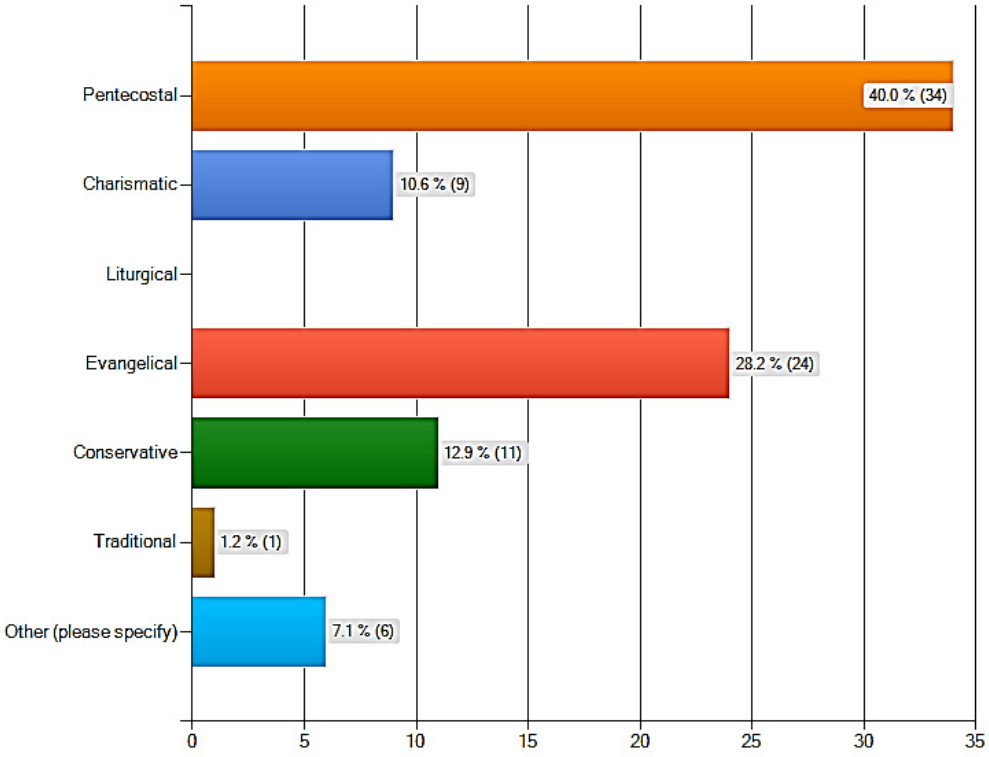


Figure 27: *How would you describe your church's worship expression? (n85)*

As shown in the literature review, singing has always played an important role in Christian worship (Kauflin, 2008; Koessler, 2011; Russell, 1997; Webber, 1994; Wilson-Dickson, 1992). Survey participants were asked what role their singing took in the worship service. The following graph (Figure 28; p. 106) displays the participants' responses:

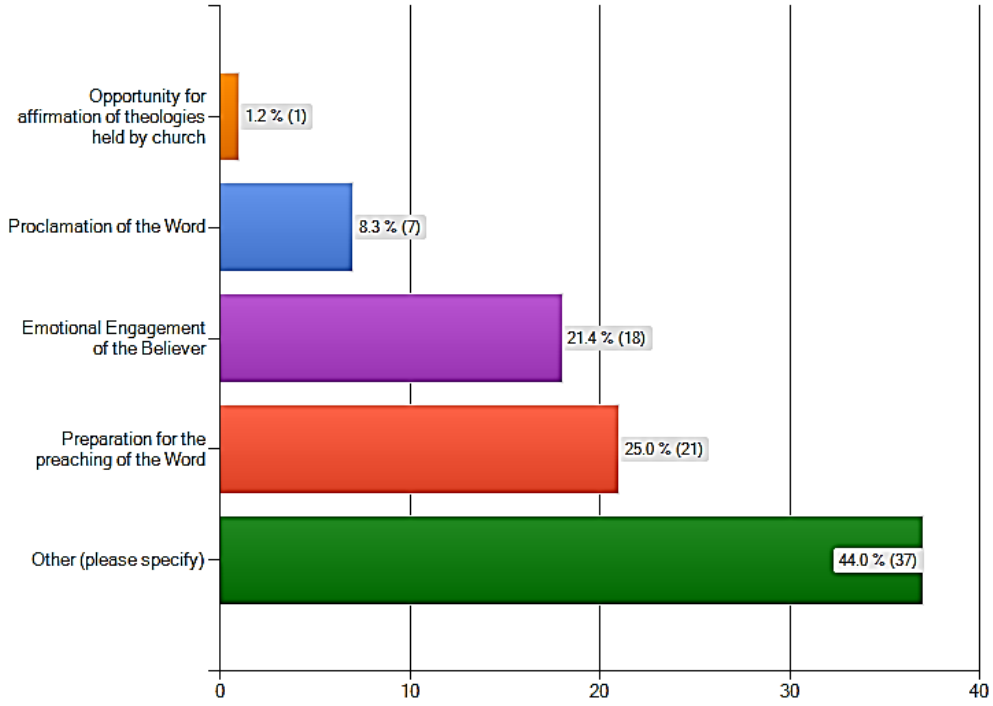


Figure 28: *In your opinion what role does your singing take in the worship service? (n84)*

Respondents viewed the role of singing as facilitating several key enhancements to the worship service. Analysis of the data revealed that many survey participants were keen to nominate their own distinction to the role of singing in the worship service. As shown in Figure 28 (above) nearly half of the survey cohort (44%; *n*84) selected other with a range of specified answers including: "inviting the presence of God to fall", "lead congregation to throne room of heaven" and "reaching beyond emotion to engage the spirit of the believer and prepare the word to hear God's voice individually as well as corporately".

b) Singing within the context

The long held notion of the Word's (scripture) preeminence seems to be currently challenged by the participatory nature of congregational singing within the modern church context across the variety of worship styles. Carson (2002b) suggests that "it is disturbingly easy to plot surveys of people, especially young people, drifting from a church of excellent preaching and teaching to one with excellent music because, it is alleged, there is 'better worship' there" (p. 30).

Participants regarded their role as a singer in the church service with importance. Eighty six percent (85.8%; *n*72) of respondents considered their role as either 'Medium' 42.9% (*n*36) or 'High' 42.9% (*n*36) in the overall church service.

Eighty two percent (82.1%; *n*69) think that the worship service (congregational singing) is of equal importance to the preaching of the Word (sermon). These findings would appear to confirm recent writings which acknowledge the slow decline of the sermon and the rising popularity of congregational worship (Gilley, 2005; Kauflin, 2008; Kraeuter, 1996).

The prominence of worship as reviewed in the literature has also seen a reconstitution of power within many church settings. Sixty nine percent of respondents (*n*57/83) believe that their worship team was a dominant group within the life and general activity of their church. Modern worship typically commences with the worship team on the ministry platform (stage). The worship team is perhaps the only church group that the general church membership sees as a collective every Sunday. The dual responsibility of being a dominant group in the life of the church and being the first visual point of contact for the congregation at each worship service heightens the worship team's activity and prominence. The majority of survey respondents (62%; *n*52/83) stated that, 'A corporate call to worship' best described their worship team's presentation of the corporate worship service (Figure 29). The responsibility of the worship team finds its climax in the team's singers. Any description of the worship team's presentation, including 'humble', 'driven', 'corporate call' or 'energetic performance' is best observed in the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer.

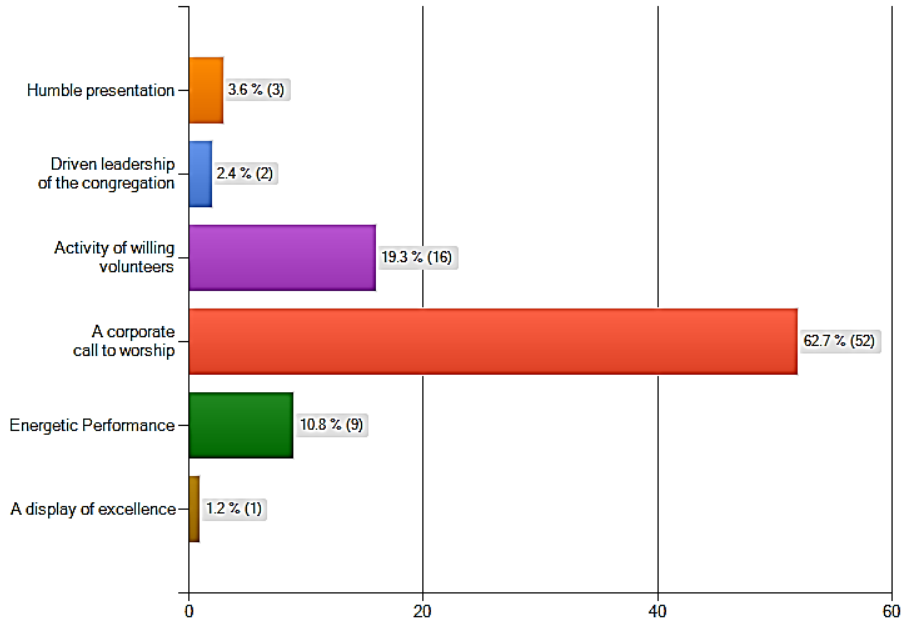


Figure 29: *In your opinion, which of the following statements 'best' describes your worship team's presentation of the corporate worship service? (n83)*

c) Singing and Theology

As important as the physical leadership of the worship service is, it is secondary to the reinforcement of theology/philosophy of a local church. For centuries music has been used as a means to conveying Christian theology (Wiersbe, 2000), but the recent rise of congregational singing as a dominant cultural factor has seen a reconstitution of the manner in which singing presents theology.

Traditionally, the belief system was enshrined in the lyrics. Recently this has shifted and for many worshippers now what is sung determines what is believed reflecting Kauflin's (2008) view that "songs are de facto theology...'We are what we sing'" (p. 92). Survey participants were asked to comment on the role the worship/music plays in the overall theology/philosophy of their local church. A small number of survey respondents resonate with theology informing the content of their music:

> (SP6) Confirmation of what we believe creating an atmosphere that allows members of the church to 'get into God' before the delivery of the Word.

> (SP10) Music in our church has always been an important part of expression of corporate worship. Typically, the more modern songs are lacking theologically however with careful and prayerful selection of the right songs they can still help point people toward God and allow them to worship Him through their own individual expression.

> (SP18) We pick songs that tie in theologically and thematically with the sermon as well as are 'doable' and interesting/enjoyable to sing/play.

> (SP34) Affirms what we believe and helps us remember it.

A limited number of survey participants identified no inherent value in music's role in delivering theology/philosophy in their local church (*n*5/78). However, the vast majority of respondents align themselves with Kauflin's view of de facto theology. Examples of responses of this nature included:

> (SP3) I believe it plays quite a major role in building a culture of praise and worship. It is the start and end of the service so it's fairly important. The Bible [sic] says that God inhabits the praises of his people and praise is spoken about throughout the bible, reminding us to continually praise God. On a more practical note it also readies the congregation in soul and spirit to be open to hearing the word of God.

> (SP44) The worship plays a vital role in preparing the platform for the preaching of the Word. The preaching team is [sic] encouraged to link in with what the worship team do

> and flow with the work that the worship team has done in bringing people into God's presence.
>
> (SP71) It's a pretty important part of church, as it's like preparation for the service, but I generally just sing and enjoy worship, and not think about the theology/philosophy of the church.

Within theologically constrained cultural settings, singers must adhere to and deliver music that is deemed theologically sound. In worship settings that place emphasis on music first and allow a more organic development of theology, the weight of responsibility is ambiguous:

> (SP25) Worship is very important because it gets people fired up and ready to hear Gods [sic] message. Anything can happen in worship!

d) Anointing

To codify the ideal represented by SP25's comments of, "*gets people fired up*" all within the scope of "*anything can happen*" is virtually impossible. Nevertheless one common element within many worship settings is the Anointing. The concept of the Anointing is covered in the literature review[39], however for the ease of the reader, the concept is briefly revisited here. The Old Testament practice of pouring oil over the head of a chosen individual to declare them chosen or fit for a specified task was known as 'being anointed' (Easton, 1996; Wood & Marshall, 1996). Additionally, the anointing, or presence of God, also takes on an otherworldly attribute as Bob Sorge (1987) explains:

> When we speak of entering into 'the presence of God,' we should remember that there are varying *manifestations* of the presence of God…First, God is omnipresent; his presence is everywhere, all the time…Second, Jesus told us that where two or three are gathered in his name, he is there in the midst of them (*see* Matthew 18:20)…And third, 2 Chronicles 5:13-14 gives an account of the cloud of glory filling Solomon's temple when the singers and musicians lifted their hearts in praise to God. This cloud of glory (the presence of God) so filled the room that the priests could not even stand to perform their service! Truly that was a very special manifestation of the presence of God, and it is that same type or nature of manifestation that we seek today! (p. 29)

[39] Chapter 2: Anointing (p. 55)

The expectation of the modern worshiper to experience the presence of God is also grounded in the New Testament. Webber (1994) writes, "Theologically, the invocation claims the promise of Jesus that 'where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them'" (p. 157). The desire to see a very special manifestation of the presence of God is maintained by many of the survey respondents. In addition, earlier research by this author indicated that the anointing has a particular role to play in the success of a meeting/service. Robinson (2002) notes "The anointing is often used as a yardstick as to the success or failure of a meeting" (p. 20).

> (SP60) I believe that you can't have a church service unless the whole service is anointed.

The question "Does the term 'Anointed' hold any significance for you in relation to the role of a Contemporary Worship Singer?" was designed to interrogate this concept. Many respondents declared yes (71.8%; *n*56/78). Typical responses included:

> (SP13) 'Anointed', to me, implies being set apart by God for a certain role. I definitely believe that God has set me apart for worship ministry, especially since it wouldn't have been my first choice! 'Anointed' in our church, also implies that God's hand is on you - that the Holy Spirit enables you more powerfully when you undertake certain roles, and that has been my experience since becoming a 'worship singer/leader'. It is like I have more talent or inspiration than I should!

> (SP40) All singers and musicians are anointed or called to lead by God, the church into His presence. How can one lead one into His anointing if they themselves are not anointed? Our singers and musicians seek His anointing as often as we can, so that our spirituality can be seen by the congregation who will want to emulate what we have.

> (SP67) This is like God's approval, setting his seal on someone. Someone who follows Christ and is living for him and has his seal set upon them is going to be more effective in worship.

Given the ambiguity surrounding the nature of God's presence and the personal interpretation as to whether something or someone is anointed, many survey respondents provided seemingly contradictory comments and views:

> (SP12) The Holy Spirit is in all Christians. But to have the Holy Spirit come UPON (participant emphasis) us for a particular task or role is another thing. Anointing is the Holy Spirit being UPON that which we are doing to bring that which is from heaven

> down to earth. I would rather a little less talent and having the anointing of God upon them, than very talented but a dead performance. Of course, to have both talent and anointing is ideal. However, it is often hard for a talented person not to get themselves in the way at times. It's like the rich man getting into heaven. They rely too heavily on their own skills or abilities.
>
> (SP43) I think that there are some singers and leaders who are anointed to lead and sing, But these people need to understand that if God can use a donkey (Balam) Then he can use anybody…
>
> (SP80) I love that word... I have been told by our Worship director that I am anointed in the role...but.... reality is I don't particularly feel anointed, I am just starting out to try worship leading ...as opposed to back up singer… and feel old and perhaps ill equipped to do the role...still I desire to lead and do the best I can so that I can see the congregation really connect with God. I hope that that heart will mean that my ministry is effective.

The apparent spectrum of thought revealed in the survey respondent's comments receives deeper investigation during the next phase of data collection[40].

e) The Anointing and Skill

Another cultural nuance arising out of the survey participants' comments was the development of spirituality versus musical skill. As Zschech (2002) writes, "There is a remarkable difference between a gifted musician and an anointed one" (p. 157). The context of Zschech's comments allows for individual perception. Many of the survey participant's responses echo this:

> (SP68) The anointing of a singer or musician for service on the music team at church is, I believe, absolutely critical. A talented singer or musician without anointing is unable to lead anyone to worship in Spirit and in truth—what they produce glorifies man and not God. But those anointed by God are enabled by God to lead worship and not just music.
>
> (SP76) I believe there are some people who God has gifted to lead people in corporate worship. They are not necessarily the people who are the most gifted musically.

Some survey participants (28.2%; *n*22/78) did not believe that the term anointed held any significance in relation to their role as a Contemporary Worship Singer:

> (SP25) No because a singer doesn't have to be anointed to be good at singing.

[40] Chapter 5: Interviews (the Anointing, p. 167)

(SP35) I believe that any person who can sing competently and confidently should be allowed to be on the singing team, if they are willing to commit to rehearsals etc. I do not believe any special 'anointing' is necessary or relevant.

(SP73) I do not believe that being 'Anointed' has any correlation with the effectiveness of a worship singer.

How does a Contemporary Worship Singer, or any Christian worshipper for that matter, discern that which is the real presence of God as opposed to that which is mere emotion? The need for discernment is fraught with difficulties when the cultures which the singers exist in help shape the same filters by which discernment might be applied. Rognlien's (2005) comments are relevant here:

> In traditions that emphasize the emotional aspects of our faith, it is sadly common to slip into unhealthy patterns of spiritual elitism, legalism, and counterfeit emotionalism. Genuine feeling can be replaced by inauthentic expressions and manufactured emotion in order to measure up to an unbiblical standard of emotionalism that has based spiritual validity on a certain intensity of feeling. These unhealthy and unbiblical perspectives are diametrically opposed to loving God with all your soul. (p. 121)

f) Performance Orientation

As surveyed in the literature[41], the pressure to perform and produce as a Contemporary Worship Singer is an integral part of the cultural context. As Best (1993) noted,

> Christian musicians must be particularly cautious. They can create the impression that God is more present when music is being made than when it is not; that worship is more possible with music than without it; and that God might possibly depend on its presence before appearing. (p. 153)

To interrogate this concept further, the survey asked, "To what degree do you think your worship team feels an expectation to emulate a 'worship experience' similar to that created and displayed by prominent worship teams such as Hillsong and PlanetShakers?" Nearly two thirds of respondents acknowledged some form of pressure (Figure 30; p. 113):

[41] See Chapter 2: Performance (p. 50)

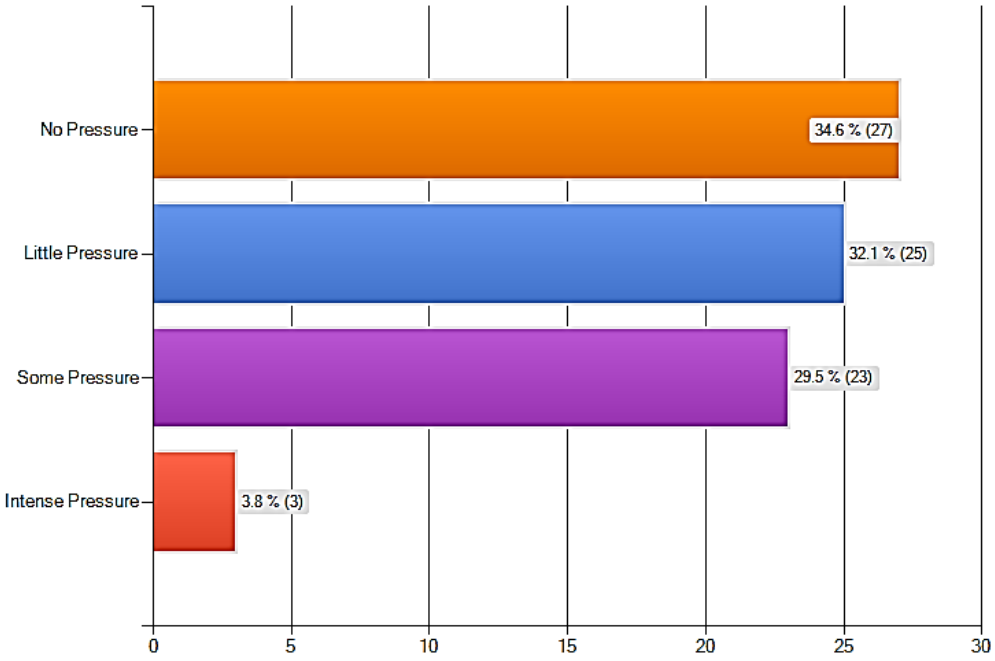


Figure 30: *To what degree do you think your worship team feels an expectation to emulate a 'worship experience' similar to that created and displayed by prominent worship teams such as Hillsong and PlanetShakers? (n78)*

Any perceived pressure to perform or produce a particular worship experience is often endured silently by the Contemporary Worship Singer. Zschech's (2002) words declare what is often unstated in many worship settings, "Excellent worshipers are genuine. That performance mentality must submit to serve the body of Christ" (p. 178). Here, the difficulty of discernment arises. How does a Contemporary Worship Singer facilitate the development of skill (which is almost unanimously encouraged in the literature) while simultaneously suppressing performance in favour of spirituality? Perhaps this is why worship/music directors are evenly divided in encouraging vocal tuition. Only 43.6% (*n*34/78) of respondents have been verbally encouraged by their worship/music directors to seek vocal tuition. In order to be an excellent worshipper one must develop in their skill. As Wilson (2001) asserts, "Merely singing songs will not teach you the subtleties of the craft" (p. 72).

To truly remove any sense of performance from a Contemporary Worship Singer's role, an overt reduction in any physical presence or visual activity might be justified. Survey participants were asked, "Are you standing still when you sing on stage at Church or is there movement involved?" (*n*78). Respondents declared a variety of movements from standing still to jumping (Figure 31; p. 114). Physical expression is a widely accepted form of Christian worship and gains its foundation from scriptural

example as Kauflin (2008) notes, “Biblical praise is normally expressed, spoken, and observable” (p. 170).

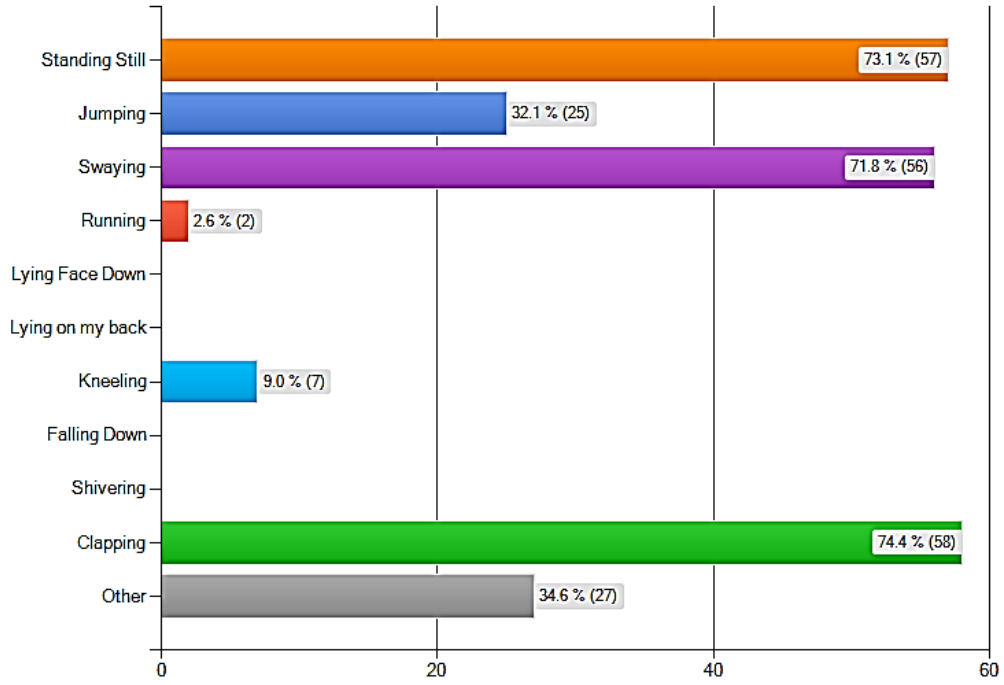


Figure 31: *Are you standing still when you sing on stage at church or is there movement involved? List all applicable actions that you might do over a one month period. (n78)*

One challenge facing the Contemporary Worship Singer is to identify both stated and unstated cultural rules. Some of these rules will inevitably contradict one another within the local setting.

2) What are the identifiable attributes of the various environmental factors?

The second theme of survey questions centred on the various environmental factors that influence the Contemporary Worship Singer’s role. The foundation for this can be found in the literature:

> It has been said that we shape our worship space and then our worship space shapes us. From the time people enter the place where you are holding worship, the ambient characteristics of that space will affect their experience. There are pros and cons to every kind of physical setting. (Rognlien, 2005, p. 79)

The physical setting of building, pew and platform contribute to the environment of the Contemporary Worship Singer. In addition music style and instrumentation, along with any technical reinforcement all contribute to the environment.

a) Style of Singing – Hymns or Choruses

The primary task of the Contemporary Worship Singer is to lead congregational singing. Both hymns and choruses make a claim for their ease of use. "The Protestant hymns were written to accommodate untrained voices and thus to permit the maximum participation of the masses in the worship service" (Russell, 1997, p. 99). Choruses, likewise, make their bid as being "melody driven and relatively easy to sing" (Schultze, 2004, p. 54). The data, however, was relatively even with many survey respondents (*n*59) acknowledging the vocal demands of their role according to either the use of Hymns or Choruses (Figure 32):

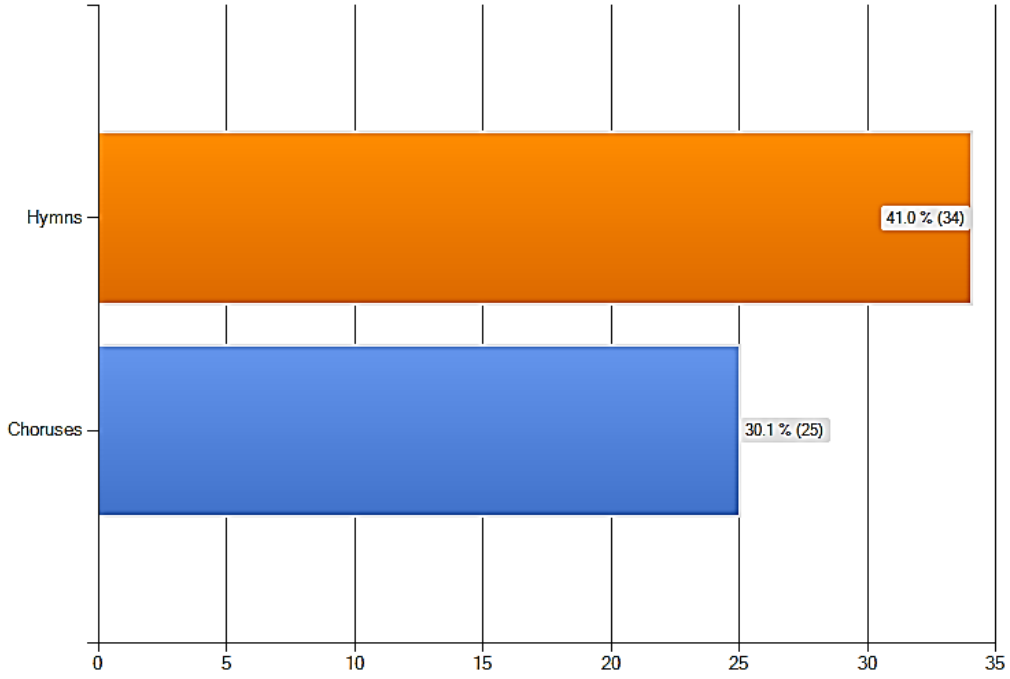


Figure 32: *If your church employs both hymns and choruses, which of the two musical styles do you find the more vocally demanding? (n59)*

Survey participants noted that their churches used both worship choruses and hymns with only 18.1% (*n*15/83) using only worship choruses. The literature revealed that a church's decision to use either hymns, choruses, or in most instances both, is rarely due to sing-ability. Kauflin (2008) believes the central concern is theological truth:

> This issue is far more than hymns versus contemporary choruses. Some hymns are sentimental and feeling orientated; some contemporary songs are rich with theological content. The real issue is pastors and worship leaders taking responsibility for what their churches are singing, leading them wisely into truth-based affections, and making sure good fruit is being produced. (p. 168)

Australian pastors and worship leaders obtain their worship material (songs) from a range of writers/publishers (Figure 33) but, "without a doubt, the greatest influence on the worship life of the Australian church in the last ten to fifteen years, especially from a musical point of view, is Hillsong" (Hanna, 2005, p. 33).

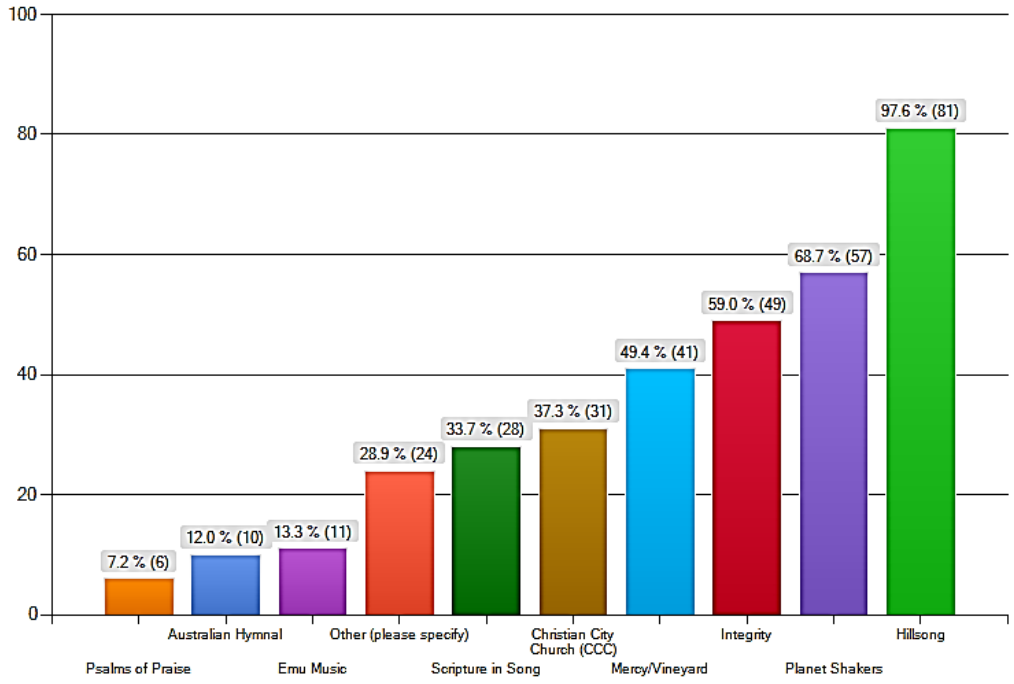


Figure 33: *Please tick the publishers of worship songs that your church utilisers during the worship service: (You can choose more than one) (n83)*

The overwhelming prevalence of Hillsong music (97.6%; *n*81/83) in Australian churches is similar to that of Vineyard worship material in the United States where "it is estimated that…eighty percent of all white Protestant churches…include Vineyard songs in their public worship" (Basden, 2004, p. 143). Hillsong produces over thirty new songs a year (Zschech, 2002) and when combined with the many other publishers of worship material available for use, the average contemporary worship team has a wide variety of choice (both in style and theology) available. Many survey participants (66.3%; n55/83) also indicated that their church used songs written by its own worship team members.

b) 'Sing-ability'

One challenge arising from the plethora of material available to the modern worship team is the non-existence of a standardised system for vocal arrangement. Kauflin (2008), also a well-known American writer of choruses and modern hymns says, "I

generally look for songs with melodies between a low A to a high D that are easy to learn and hard to forget. I also try to avoid complicated rhythms" (p. 106). The ideal of one-size-fits-all is unreasonable when applied to the corporate worship setting. Wilson (2001) suggests that singers should, "always be sure to sing in the key that best suits your voice" (p. 40), but this ideal falters in the reality of the corporate worship setting. Many worship teams transpose worship songs in an attempt to make them more vocally accessible (Figure 34).

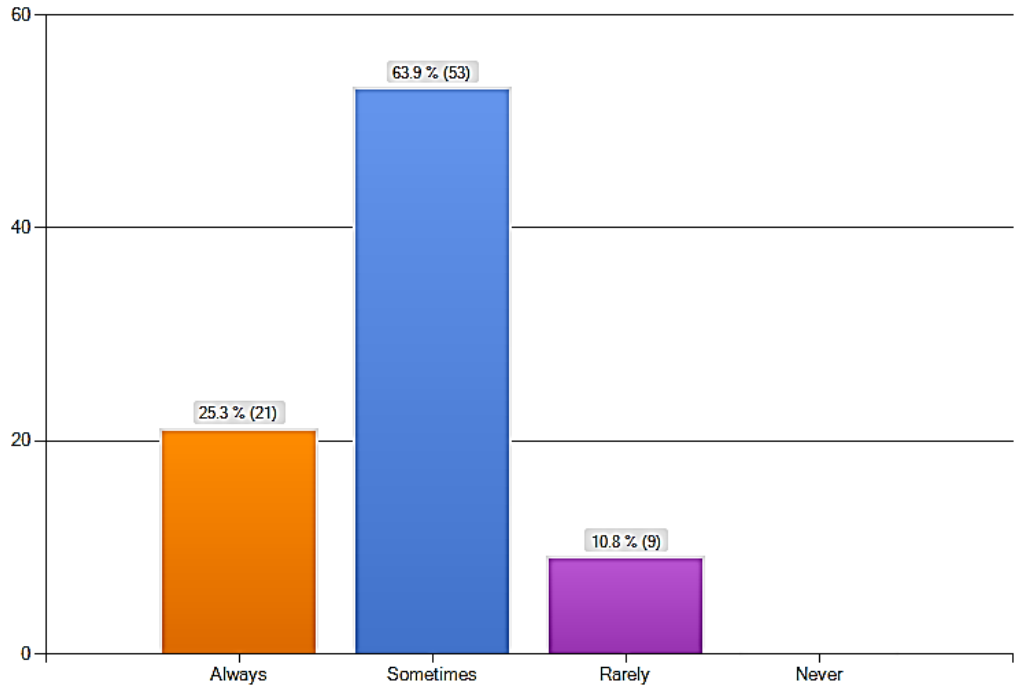


Figure 34: *Does your worship team transpose worship songs to make them more accessible vocally? (n83)*

This raises the question of who finds the songs more vocally accessible. A few high or low notes, whilst challenging, do not generally present long term concerns for the vocal health of Contemporary Worship Singers. However, prolonged and repetitive singing of melodies whose tessitura[42] sits outside the individual Contemporary Worship Singer's comfort zone may cause vocal inefficiencies which might ultimately lead to vocal wear and tear. Wingate (2008) warns,

[42] The subject of tessitura is covered in the literature review (Chapter 2, p. 81)

> If the problem cannot be resolved, the singer may need to sing a different vocal part at least temporarily. If the singer experiences chronic vocal fatigue from singing in an extreme tessitura for long periods of time, vocal injury may result. (pp. 58–59)

The survey data indicates that the sex of Contemporary Worship Singers is predominantly female (66.7%; *n*50/75) and Figure 35 shows the spread of voice type as identified by the survey participants with Mezzo-soprano (22.4%; *n*17/76) being the prevalent voice classification. Nine (11.8%) participants did not know their voice type, with four of these nine respondents indicated that they had received lessons from a qualified singing teacher(s).

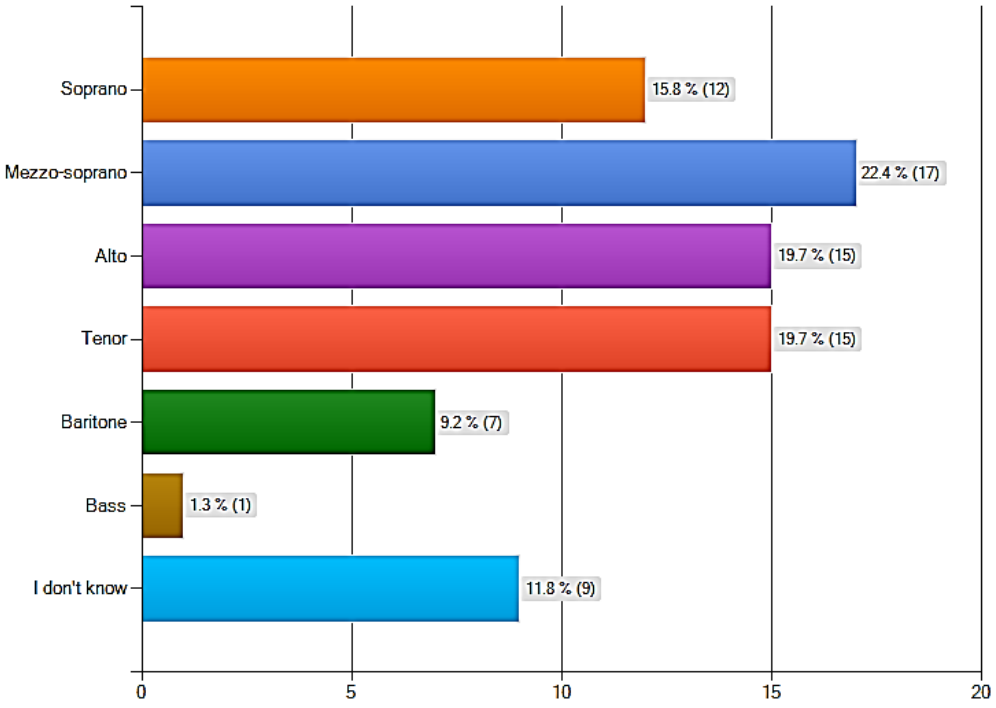


Figure 35: *What is your voice type? (n76)*

Thurman, Theimer, Grefsheim and Feit (2000) qualify that "the *essential* benefit of voice classification is the selection of music that does not tax a singer's voice beyond its capabilities for skilled, expressive singing, and beyond its current level of conditioning" (p. 779). It seems a radical notion to suggest that worship melodies would be arranged to bias less than a quarter of the church's singers. To heighten the matter further, Basden (2004) notes "the best contemporary worship leaders never do worship 'to the people'" (p. 203). The corporate worship ideal is that worship is done 'by the people'. Wiersbe (2000) writes, "If the worship service is platform–centered,

then we will be only spectators at a religious performance" (p. 88). In the context of musical arrangement Wiersbe's caution requires that the focus is on construction of key and resulting tessitura on the congregation's capacity to sing the notes as opposed to the Contemporary Worship Singer who is leading the singing.

c) Harmonies

While 71% (*n*56/78) of survey respondents indicated that the worship choruses/hymns mostly sit comfortably within their vocal range, many survey participants indicated that they have stopped singing because a song was uncomfortable (34.6%; *n*27/78). Many Contemporary Worship Singers overcome the challenge of songs being outside their vocal comfort by singing harmonies.

> (SP6) I may swap from melody to harmony and vice versa, or drop an octave.
>
> (SP41) Many of the songs sung are in Male dominant keys. So they can be either really high or really low. I will mime some notes that are too uncomfortable to sing if I cannot find a suitable harmony to compensate.
>
> (SP49) I will adjust to the upper or lower octave of the melody or find a harmony that works within my vocal range.

While 35.9% (*n*28/78) of respondents make no call for transposition many (*n*46/78) do request that songs be transposed up or down and their requests are often implemented as Figure 36 (p. 120) shows:

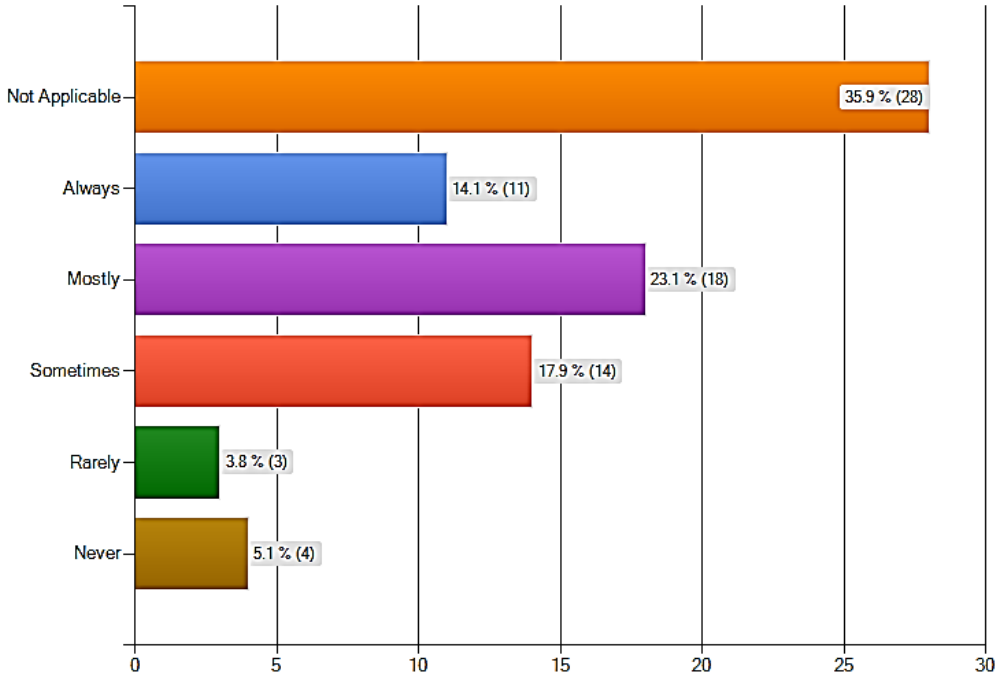


Figure 36: *If you do regularly request that songs be transposed up or down are your requests acknowledged and implemented? (n78)*

The ability to sing harmony is an additional skill required by the Contemporary Worship Singer and will be explored further in Chapter 5: Interviews (p. 303).

d) Skill Development

The skill development of Australian Contemporary Worship Singers is haphazard. Dawson's (2005) thesis found "There was a general consensus among singers that church teams do not provide adequate training for singers" (p. ii). Figure 37 (p. 121) presents the survey data from question 17 asking whether they had received training for their role as a church singer:

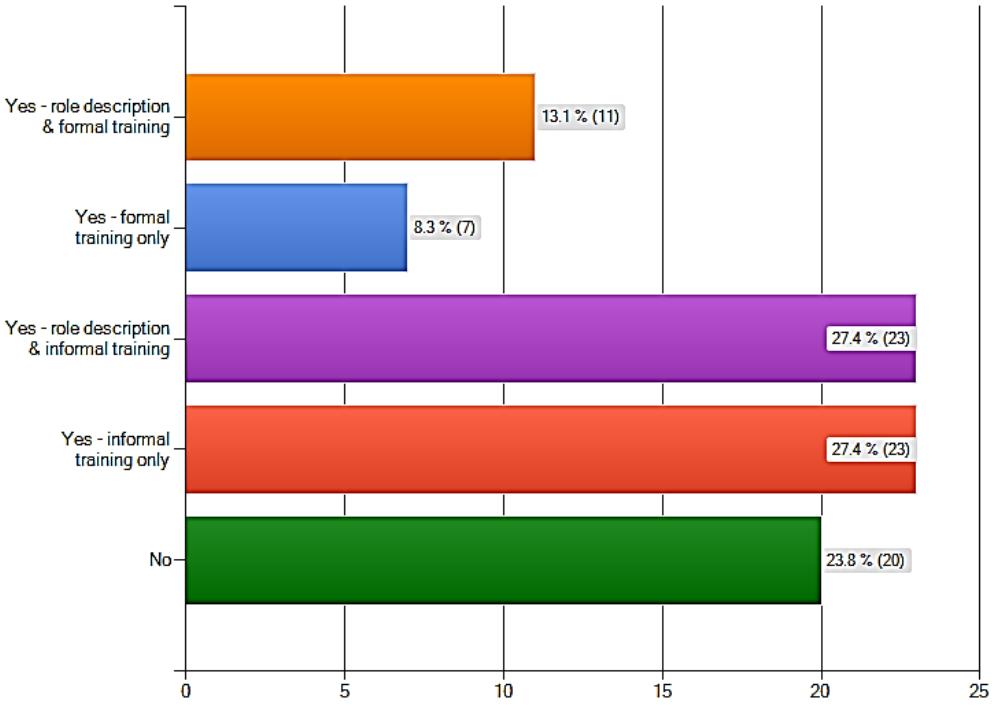


Figure 37: *Have you ever received training for your role as a church singer? (n84)*

Less than 25% of respondents had received formal training for their role as a Contemporary Worship Singer and nearly a quarter of respondents had received no training at all. This is a difficult area for the Contemporary Worship Singer to navigate. Church music director Rory Noland (1999) also recognised the tension remarking:

> People sometimes ask me what I would do if I had to choose between a highly talented musician who wasn't very spiritual or a deeply spiritual musician who wasn't very talented. I think that question captures the dilemma the church has been in with artists for a long time. (p. 35)

e) Skill and Spirituality

Compounding the challenge of seeking God's tangible presence, the Contemporary Worship Singer is faced with balancing skill and spirituality. "Musicians ministering at the tabernacle were those 'who were *trained* in singing to the LORD, all who were *skilful*.' Skill must be developed" (Kauflin, 2008, p. 35). While the scriptural precedent for skill development is clear, comments by worship advocates, such as Zschech (2002), remark "If worship is ever more about our talent than about being an excellent worshiper of the living God, then we are in serious trouble" (p. 153) can lead to uncertainty. Kauflin (2008) argues, "...rightly understood and pursued, skill can mark the difference between ineffectiveness and fruitfulness in our leading. It

can contribute to, or hinder people, from engaging with God. That's why we should make it a priority" (p. 34). When the discussion of the skill/spirituality balance is converged with a singer's ability to sing harmonies the practical necessity for skill development is observed. Russell (1997) states,

> Singing in harmony is not only a type of singing expertise. It is also a musical context in which the singers' musical knowledge and performance skills converge to produce a performance of a musical text. Part-singing requires more of the singer than merely producing a part while avoiding being distracted by the other parts that are being sung. (p. 98)

The majority (96.4%; *n*80/83) of survey participants are not required to sing harmonies. Logically the absence of any requirement to sing harmonies could lead to the absence of any endeavour to teach the skill of singing harmonies. This brings the study full circle to the Contemporary Worship Singer's need for harmonies to perform their task in order to facilitate corporate worship effectively. This area warrants further discussion and will be pursued in the interview questions[43].

f) Technical Competency

Another challenge facing the Contemporary Worship Singer in their environment is technical sound reinforcement. Wilson (2001) suggests that "Part of the art of contemporary music involves the interface between hardware, technologies and the tradition of creative human music-making" (p. 62). Ultimately, as Schultze (2004) notes, "Technologies are no better than the people using them" (p. 27).

The survey revealed that 97.6% (*n*81/83) of survey participants use a microphone in their worship setting. All survey respondents indicated that they hold the microphones exclusively (54.2%; *n*45/83) or in combination with mic stands (45.8%; *n*38/83). Even the use of microphones can require a Contemporary Worship Singer's discernment. Lucarini (2002) states his opposition to handheld microphones writing:

> *Put the microphones back on the stands*. Take the mikes out of the hands of the singer's. Handheld mikes encourage a performance style that emphasizes the performer, which often leads musicians to mimic secular entertainers in style and fashion and to desire music that is performance-orientated. (p. 136)

[43] See Chapter 5 (p.173)

While this view does not seem to be supported by the survey data (they all hold their microphones) Lucarini's opinion does highlight the existence of strongly held notions maintained by clergy and laypersons alike. Kropf (2005) notes "While preferences regarding styles of preaching, praying, or singing affect our participation in worship, what matters is whether full-bodied understanding and experience of the triune God is made manifest" (p. 41). Often the reconciliation of such contentions over preference are settled within the confines of the local church, but occasionally Contemporary Worship Singers will need to manage the assortment of ideas to facilitate their continued and effective ministry.

A second technical skill required by the Contemporary Worship Singer is that of obtaining a good monitor (foldback) mix. Kauflin (2008) leaves no room for interpretation stating "A good monitor mix is a must" (p. 237). The majority of survey participants have foldback of some kind (Figure 38), and respondents are, for the most part, able to hear themselves clearly through the foldback system (Figure 39; p. 124).

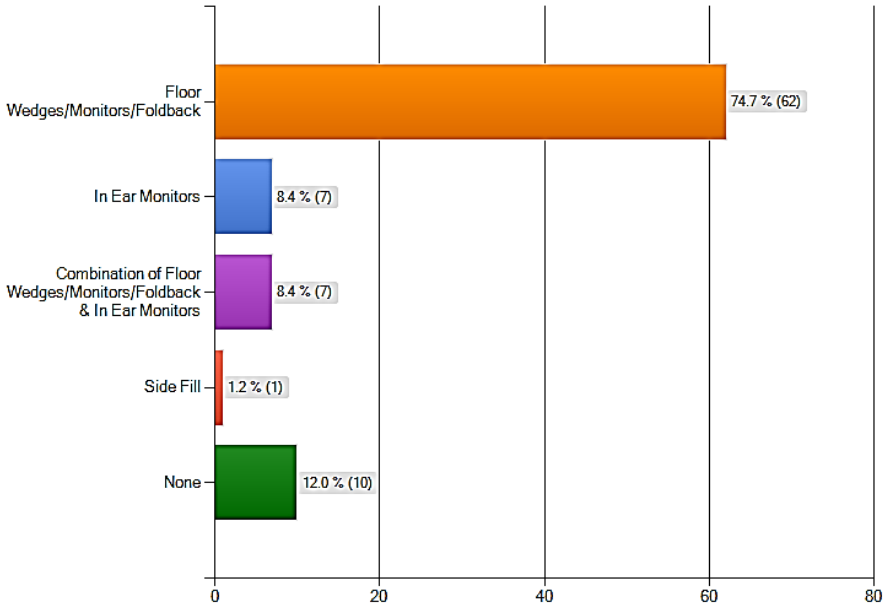


Figure 38: *What kind of foldback does your church sound system have? (You can choose more than one) (n83)*

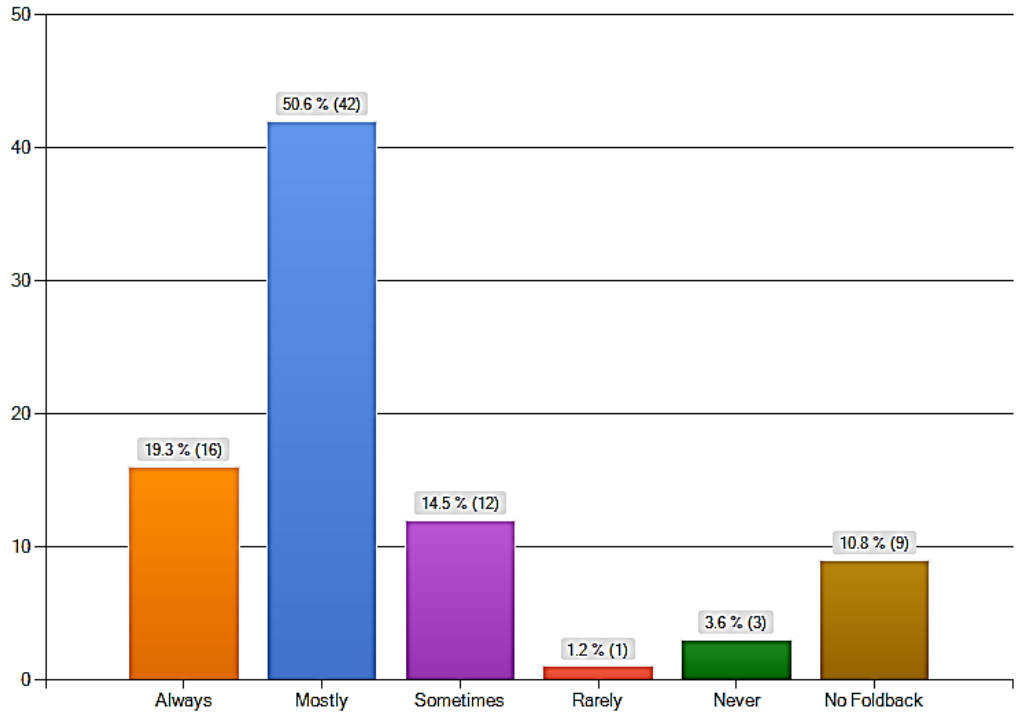


Figure 39: *Can you hear yourself clearly in the foldback system? (n83)*

This result might be due in part to 77.1% (*n*64/83) of survey respondent's churches having dedicated foldback sends for the singers. Rio and Buono (2009), in their sound technology manual for worship teams, *House of Worship: Sound Reinforcement*, provide a concise description of foldback and its use stating

> …sometimes labelled monitor or effects knobs…your board (mixing console) may have sets of two, four, six, eight or more aux sends. With the aux knobs, you can set up a separate mix for your performers, preacher, or choir by adjusting the aux send level control of each channel, which are fed to the aux master and out of the mixing console to the monitors. (p. 49)

Dedicated foldback sends allow the Contemporary Worship Singer to request an individual mix. The degree of variability is determined by how many foldback sends the church might have. A church with 8 sends of foldback has a greater degree of flexibility to provide a specific foldback mix to the Contemporary Worship Singer than a church with only 2 foldback sends.

g) Position of Singers on Stage

A final consideration of the Contemporary Worship Singer's environment measured in the survey was examined with question 33: "Where are the singers in your church

currently placed on stage?" Rio and Buono (2009) note that the placement of the singers on stage is particularly important. They observe that "the purpose of all instrumental music is to support the singers. Where the singers are positioned on the platform relative to the band and preacher will play a role in achieving a fulfilling worship experience for all" (p. 159). The common position of the Contemporary Worship Singer is front of stage alongside the worship leader (75.9%; *n*63/83).

Further analysis of the singer's placement on stage when correlated against worship style (for example Pentecostal or Evangelical) showed no distinct preference for placement by those worship styles. When asked whether worship team members where displayed on projection screens as a part of a live video presentation at the front of the Church for the congregation to view (*n*28), all the respondents who indicated yes (17.9%; *n*5/28) were exclusively Pentecostal (Contemporary) in style.

3) How is the Contemporary Worship Singer's identity formed?

The third matter of interest, the Contemporary Worship Singer's identity and how it is formed, was the focus of the next part of the survey.

Data arising from the survey would suggest that Contemporary Worship Singers commence their involvement early in their adult life. The scope of age covered in the survey is represented in the following graph (Figure 40).

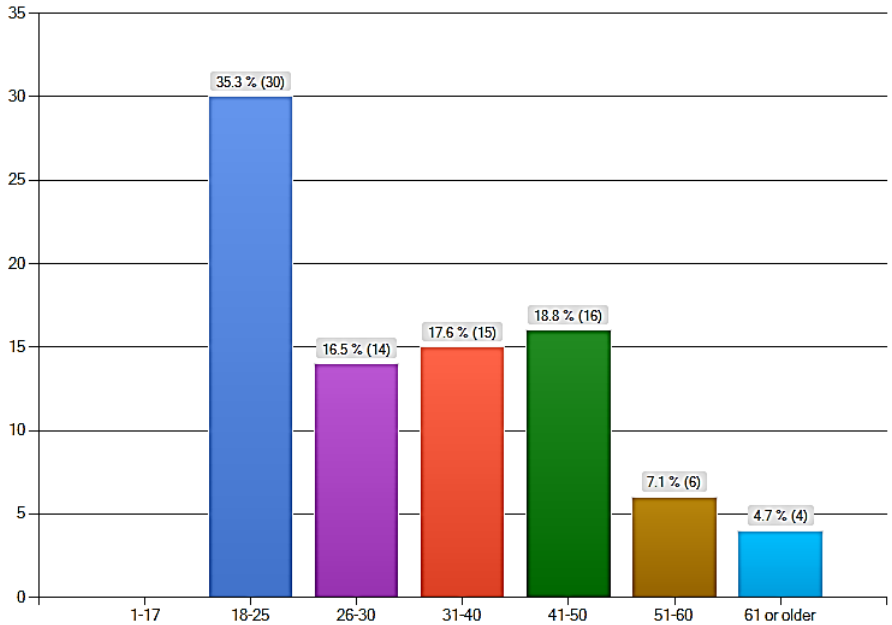


Figure 40: *Age (n85)*

There is a significant drop in participation from 18-25yrs to 26-30yrs. Figure 41 shows a significant drop in female participation between the two age groups (18-25yrs and 26-30yrs) while male participation remains relative consistent through to the age of 61 and older.

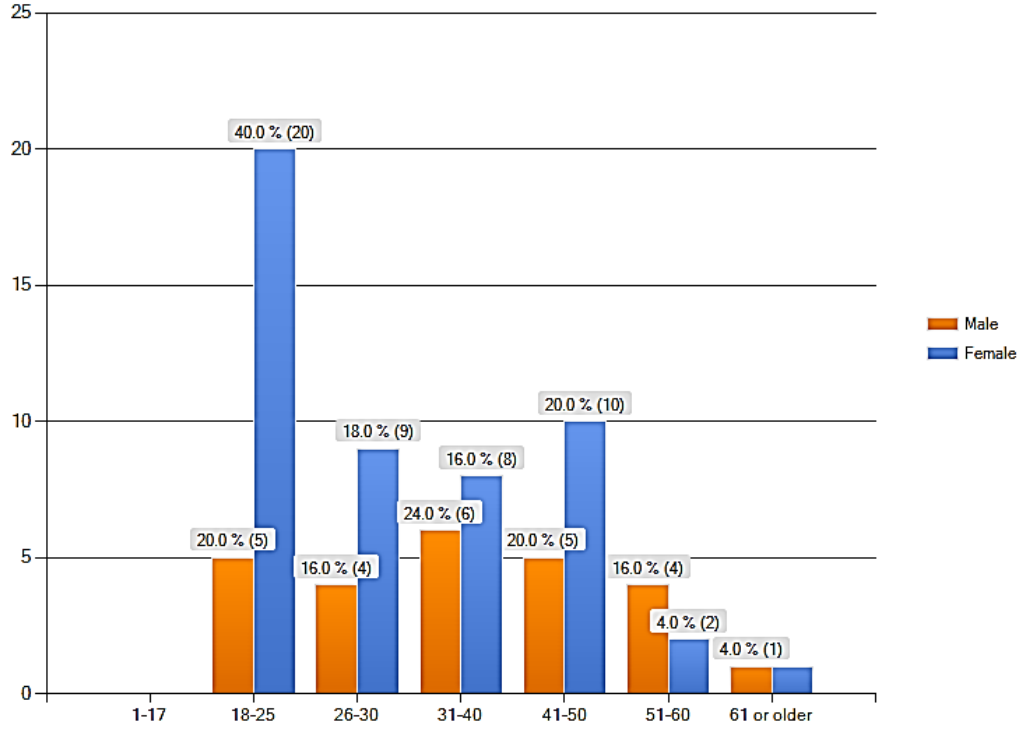


Figure 41: *Participation cross filtered against sex*

a) Skill and Talent

The predominance of 18-25yrs fulfilling the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer within their worship teams also raises the question of talent and the development thereof. Talent is not necessarily tantamount to skill. Joan Russell (1997) takes the view, "…that the majority of the population has musical talent and, under appropriate conditions, can cultivate it in some way" (p. 96). Talent, it would seem, is not always a label that is easily applied (Helding, 2011). While reflecting on a popular televised singing talent quest and commenting on the subject of talent Kauflin (2008) writes "*American Idol* has shown us how deceived musicians can be about their talent. Wanting to sing doesn't mean someone is called or gifted to sing" (p. 198). Survey participants were asked how important a singer's talent was when fulfilling the role of a church singer (Figure 42; p. 127).

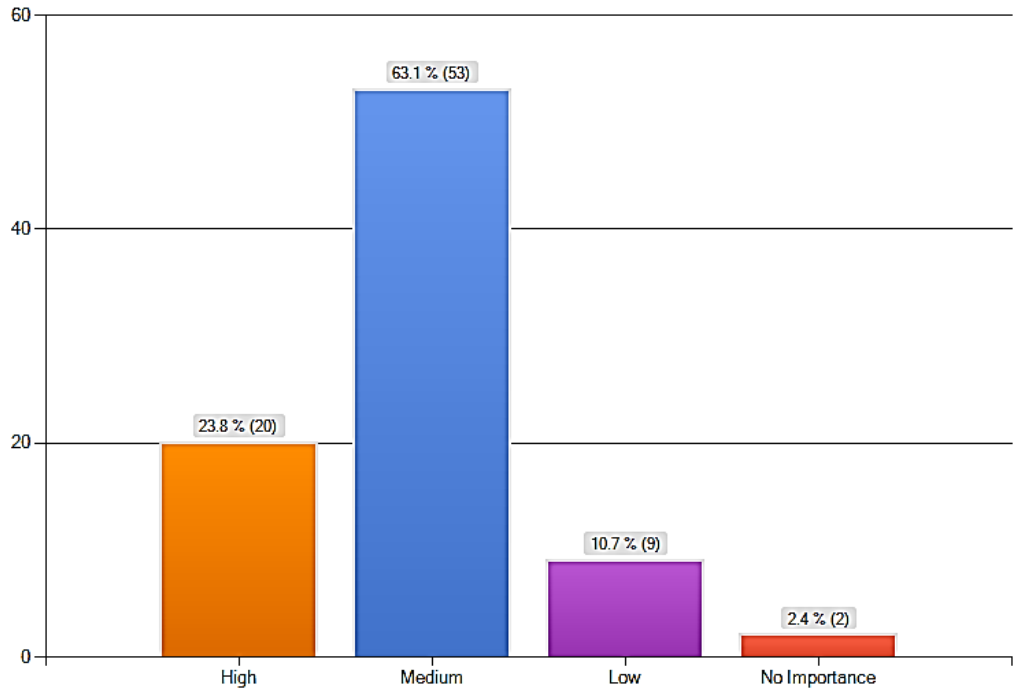


Figure 42: *In your opinion, how important is a singer's 'talent' when fulfilling the role of a church singer? (n84)*

Survey participants were asked to qualify their response to question 15 (Figure 42) with a short (50 words or less) comment. A limited number (13.1%; *n*11/84) of respondents believed that talent has little to no consequence on the church singer's role. Participant 25 wrote,

> It doesn't really matter if a singer can sing or not, because we are all praising the same God. If someone who cannot sing, but looks fantastic on stage when worshipping then that's good, if they can't do either, then that is still alright.

SP25's comments seem to focus on the visual attributes of the Contemporary Worship Singer's role. Kauflin (2008) also recognised this cultural nuance when he stated that "When someone says, 'Susie's a real worshiper,' they usually mean Susie is expressive when she sings" (p. 169). The majority (86.9%; *n*73/84) of survey participants placed more importance on the talent of the church singer:

> (SP36) There is nothing more off putting than singers singing out of tune (flat), out of key (not harmonising) or out of time.

> (SP40) Talent is extremely important as the singer must be able to sing melody or harmony 'on-the-fly'. To do this, the singer must be listening constantly to other singers whilst leading with singing.

The need for anointing is also recognised. The following comments are representative of the respondents who support the inclusion of the anointing and heart orientation as valuable features of their role:

> (SP33) 'Talent' usually directs an individual into a ministry area but it is God's calling and anointing that is of upmost importance.

> (SP76) You obviously have to have somebody that can sing in tune and has a certain level of ability. However the attitude and heart of a person is more important than a person's talent. If you don't have the heart for worship then your talent won't help you.

> (SP83) Though I feel you need to have talent, all the talent in the world without having your heart set on glorifying God is of no use.

Question 16 from the survey takes the same query regarding talent from question 15 but centres the enquiry on the survey participant's view of themselves (Figure 43).

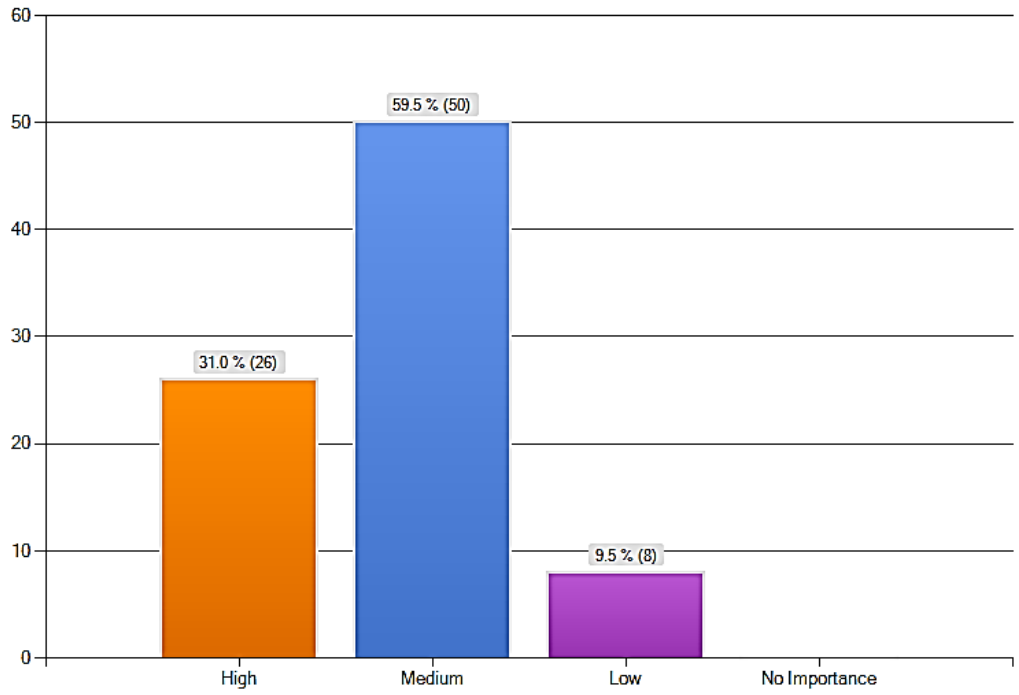


Figure 43: *How important is your vocal 'talent' when fulfilling your role as a church singer? In 50 words or less please explain your answer. (n84)*

There is a slightly heightened concern for the respondent's own vocal talent in the data of question 16 as represented by SP25, who indicated in question 15 that vocal talent was of 'Low' importance and then changes their level of importance to 'Medium' when the question of talent is personalised:

> (SP25) I like to have a nice voice in order to praise my God to my fullest.

Contemporary Worship Singers seem to hold no distinction from their secular counterparts when considering how their talent might intersect with their role. In commenting on the general development of singing Chapman (2006) writes "Throughout this history of mankind, singing has been an integral part of all cultures. More recently, however, in western cultures it has sometimes become an elitist activity – for the 'talented' rather than for the community" (p. 2). A distinct difference is the Contemporary Worship Singer's inherent need to constantly check their talent and motivation against their spirituality. Gilley (2005) explains that "the problem is that the main business of entertainment is to please the crowd, but the main purpose of authentic Christianity is to please the Lord" (p. 31). Noland (1999) adds further justification writing,

> In other words, the purpose of my ministry is not to impress people with my art but to demonstrate God's power and love. We can all tell, for example, when a singer is concentrating more on his or her vocal technique than on what the song is about. (p. 63)

The challenge of monitoring motivation and agenda cannot be underestimated. The Contemporary Worship Singer is constantly being challenged to live the exemplary Christian life. As Noland states, "Character is fast becoming the hottest issue facing artists in the church today" (p. 13). Being a Contemporary Worship Singer is not simply about the task being performed on the platform in a church service. This area of enquiry is continued during the interviews under the heading "Is the role of Contemporary Worship Singer a demanding one" (p. 304).

4) What gives distinction to the Contemporary Worship Singer as a unique identity within the wider community of singers?

Analysis of the Contemporary Worship Singer's identity leads to the investigation of those aspects of identity that distinguish them from the wider community of singers.

a) Identity Classification

Question 8 interrogated the type/style of singing a Contemporary Worship Singer does. A high proportion, 88.2% (*n*75/84; Figure 44), classified their singing as Contemporary as opposed to Pop, Sacred or Classical.

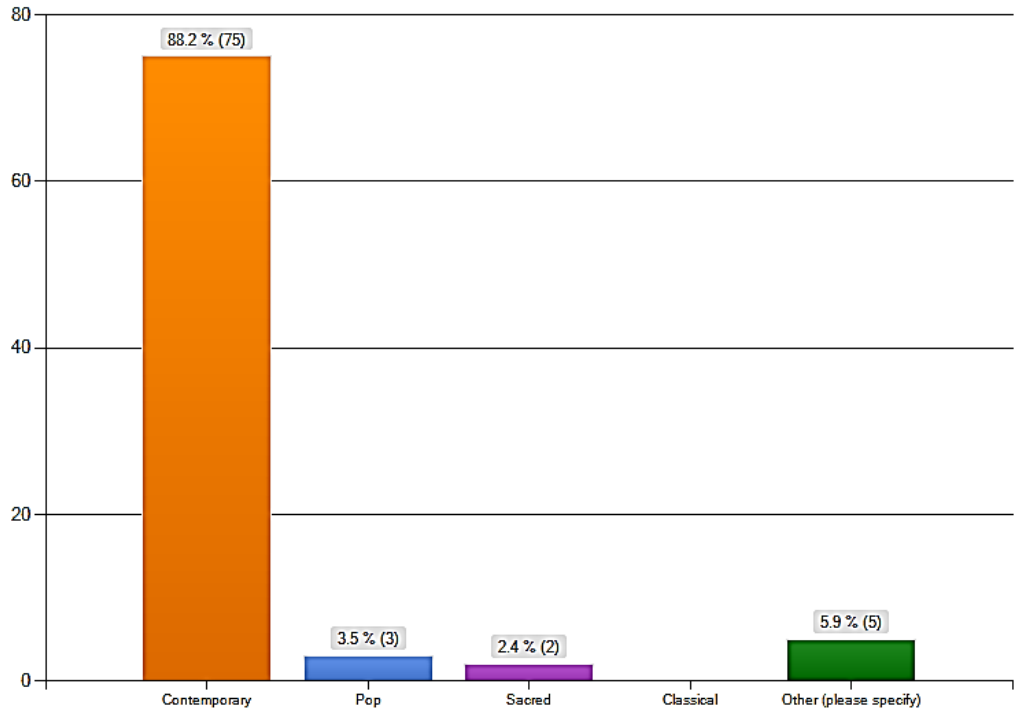


Figure 44: *How would you classify the type of singing you do? (n85)*

When asked whether they would refer to themselves as a 'pop' singer, the majority of respondents said 'no' (85.9%; *n*73/85). The Contemporary Worship Singer seems to be accepting of the term 'contemporary' to designate musical style, but is eager to distance themselves from the title of 'pop' singer. As Webber (1994) writes "Pop music has influenced the church and Christian music through the rise of chorus music" (p. 201) so the need to distance the role from the term 'pop' is peculiar. Survey participants were asked, "What title would you give your role?" (Figure 45; p. 131):

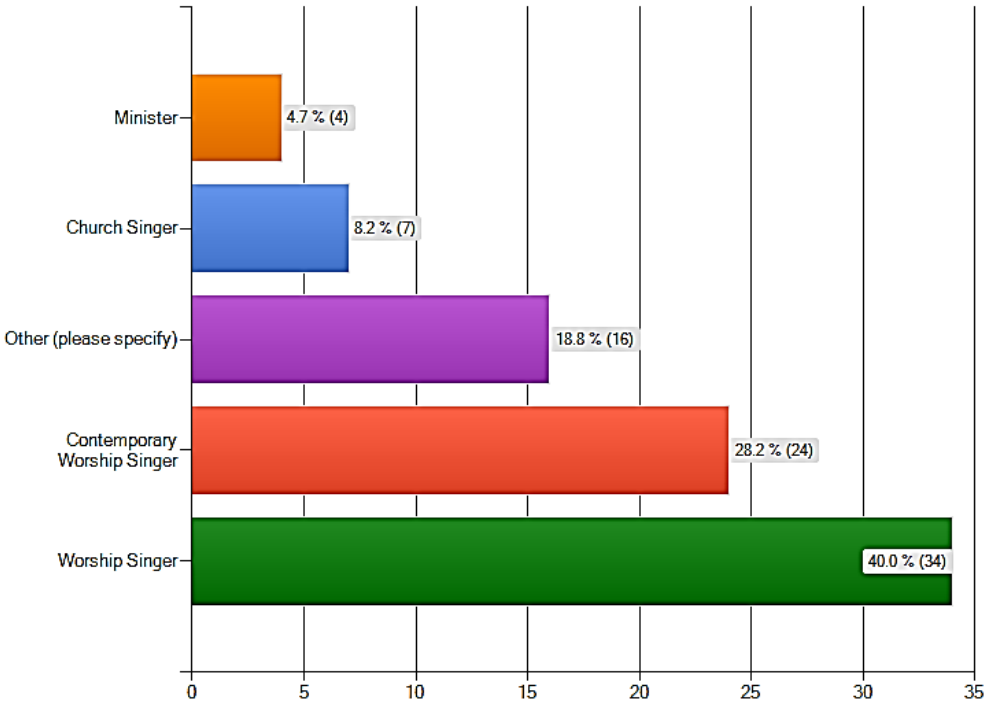


Figure 45: *What title would you give your role? (n85)*

While Contemporary is readily identified as the music style engaged by the respondents, only 28.2% (*n*24/85) of survey participants were happy to attach the term contemporary to their role. Many participants felt the need to attach the term 'worship' to their title. When combining the data of those respondents who gave their role the title of 'Worship Singer' and 'Contemporary Worship Singer' with those from the grouping of 'Other' (who also used the word 'worship' to qualify their title[44]), 77.6% (*n*69/85) of survey respondents seek to use the term 'worship' as a means of qualifying their roles' title. Further analysis of the Contemporary Worship Singer's identity (when also considering their title) notes that when a relationship between survey participants selection of title is correlated with the nomination of singing style (Figure 46; p. 132), the term 'contemporary' bears no determinable significance in relation to singing style. All nominated titles showed an even predominance of the contemporary singing style.

[44] Other: Worship Leader (7.7%; *n*9/85) and Worship Pastor (1.7%; *n*2/85)

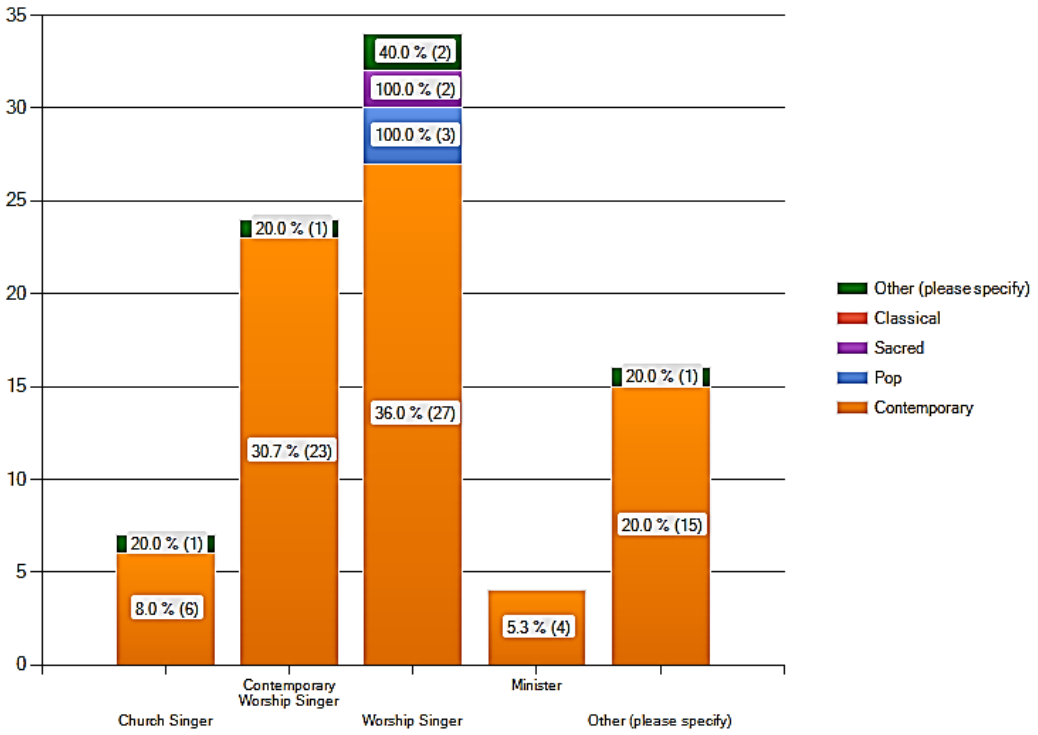


Figure 46: *Title and style (n85)*

Furthermore, the majority (71.8%; *n*56/78) of survey respondents do not regularly sing outside their worship/music team context (Figure 47). The specification of the identifier 'worship' is therefore more important in the cultural context.

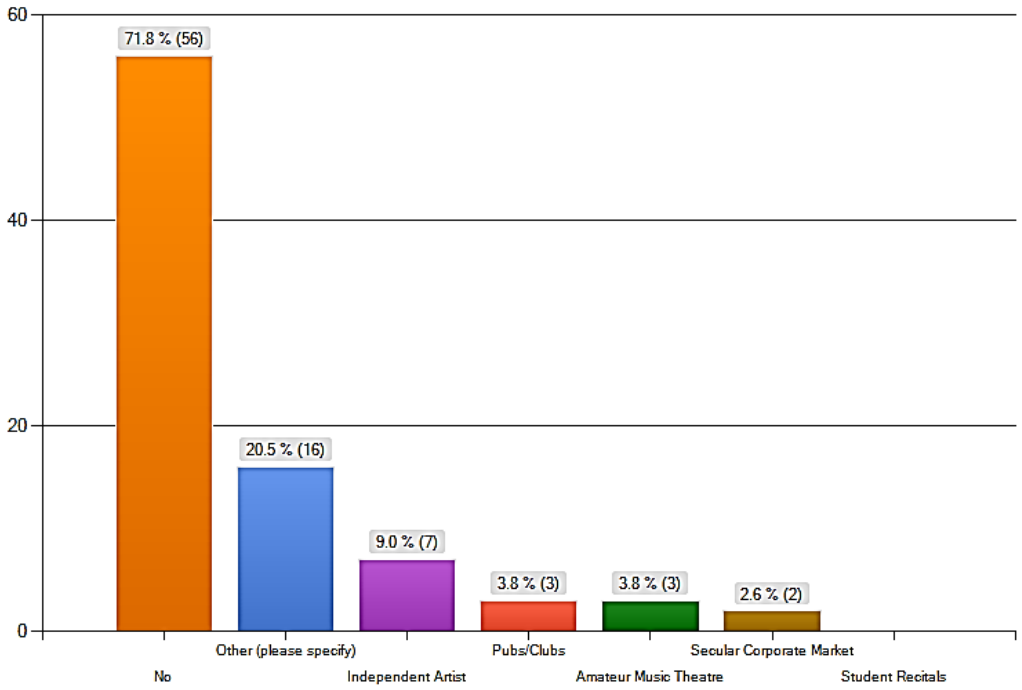


Figure 47: *Do you regularly sing anywhere outside your worship/music team context? If so, where? (You can choose more than one) (n78)*

b) Title and Context

The discussion of title and singing style finds further qualification when correlated against the survey participants' singing context. There seems to be no significant correlation between the survey participants' nominated title and their context of singing (Figure 48).

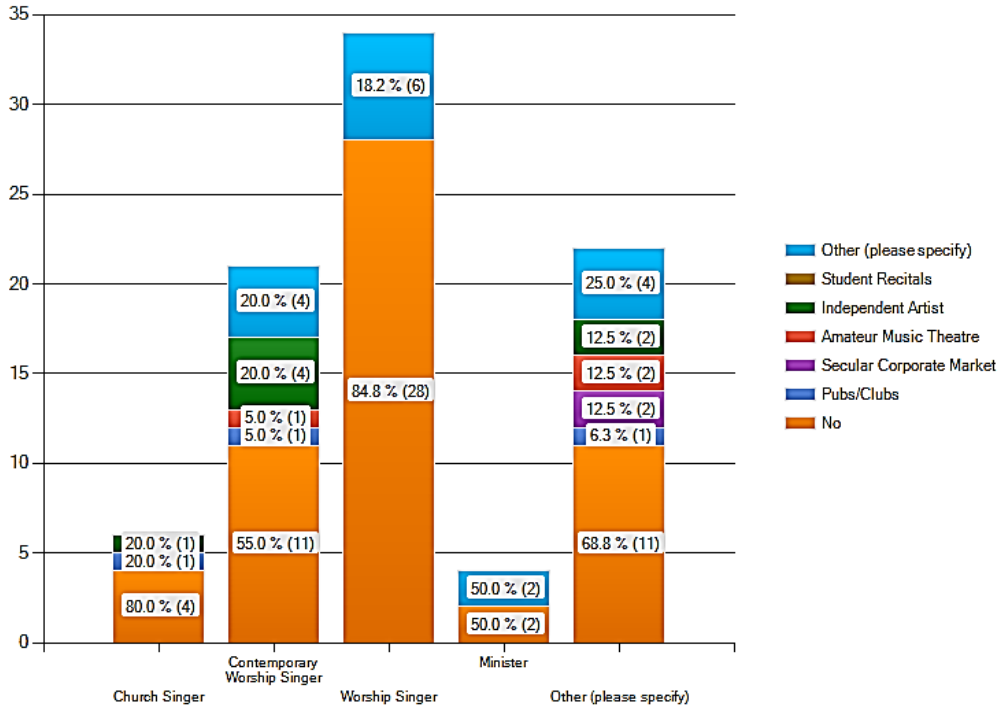


Figure 48: *Title and singing context (n78)*

However, the majority of respondents who do sing outside the context of their worship team nominated their style of worship singing as contemporary. The results are shown in Figure 49 (p. 134):

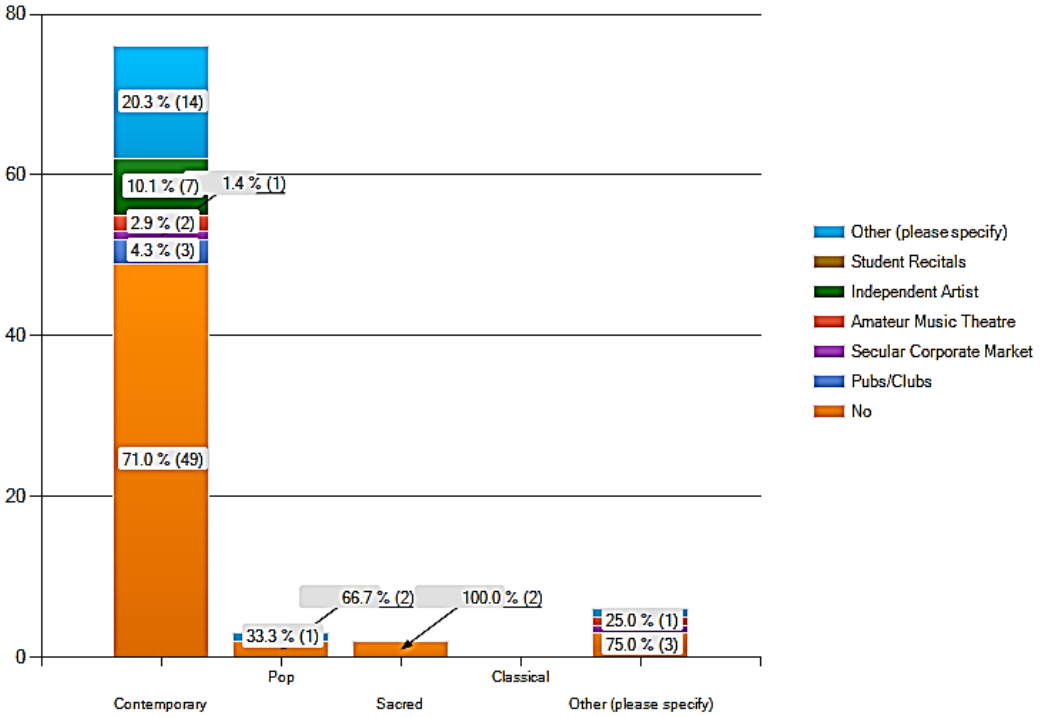


Figure 49: *Singing style and context (n78)*

The data suggests that there is a distinction between the Contemporary Worship Singer and their secular counterparts. A question to rise from this analysis might be 'Why does the Contemporary Worship Singer generally acknowledge their employment of a contemporary singing style, but hesitate to nominate themselves as a pop singer?' Is the lack of singing conducted by survey participants outside the context of their worship team indicative of this need to distance themselves from the label of 'pop' singer or is the reasoning less remarkable? That is do church singers simply feel content in their expression of 'contemporary' singing as a 'worship' singer and therefore feel no need to pursue other opportunities to sing? This will be pursued in the interview phase of date collection (Chapter 5, p. 303).

c) Musical Qualifications and Vocal Training

Given the general volunteer status of the Contemporary Worship Singer, it is perhaps not surprising to note that 65.4% (*n*51/78) of survey respondents have no formal musical qualifications (Figure 50; p. 135).

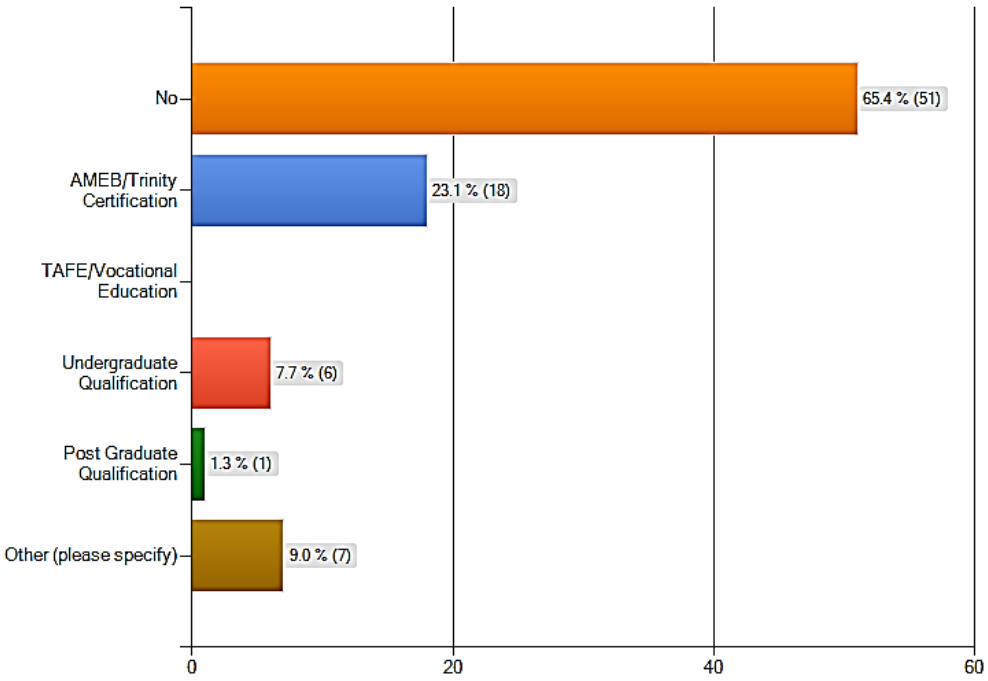


Figure 50: *Do you have any formal musical qualifications? If so please list: (You can choose more than one) (n78)*

While formal music qualifications seem to rate low in their necessity to fulfil the roles of Contemporary Worship Singer, many survey participants have undertaken vocal lessons from a qualified singing teacher. Kauflin (2008) recognises that "If you want to grow in a particular area, private lessons are often the best option" (p. 40). Nearly fifty eight precent (*n*45/78) of respondents indicated that they have received lessons with 42.2% (*n*19/45) of those lessons taken over a period longer than 2 years (Figure 51; p. 136):

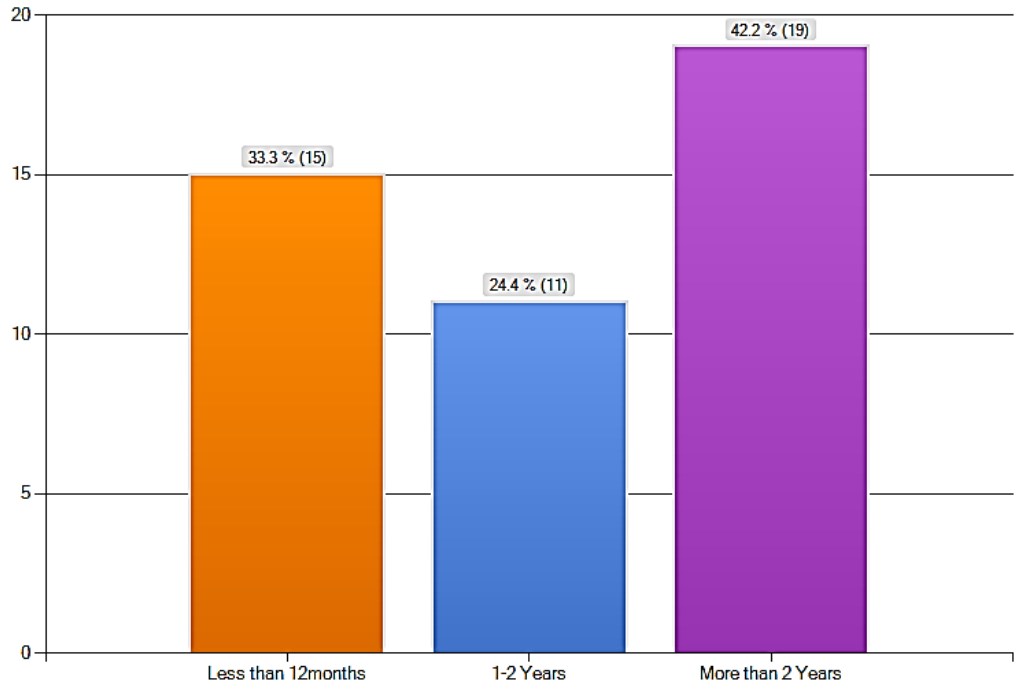


Figure 51: *How long have you been receiving or for how long did you receive voice lessons from the qualified singing teacher(s)? (n45)*

Of all respondents 42.3% indicated that they had not received any singing lessons. In correlating this statistic against formal music qualifications (Figure 52) twenty eight (35.9%) respondents have received no musical qualifications or singing tuition.

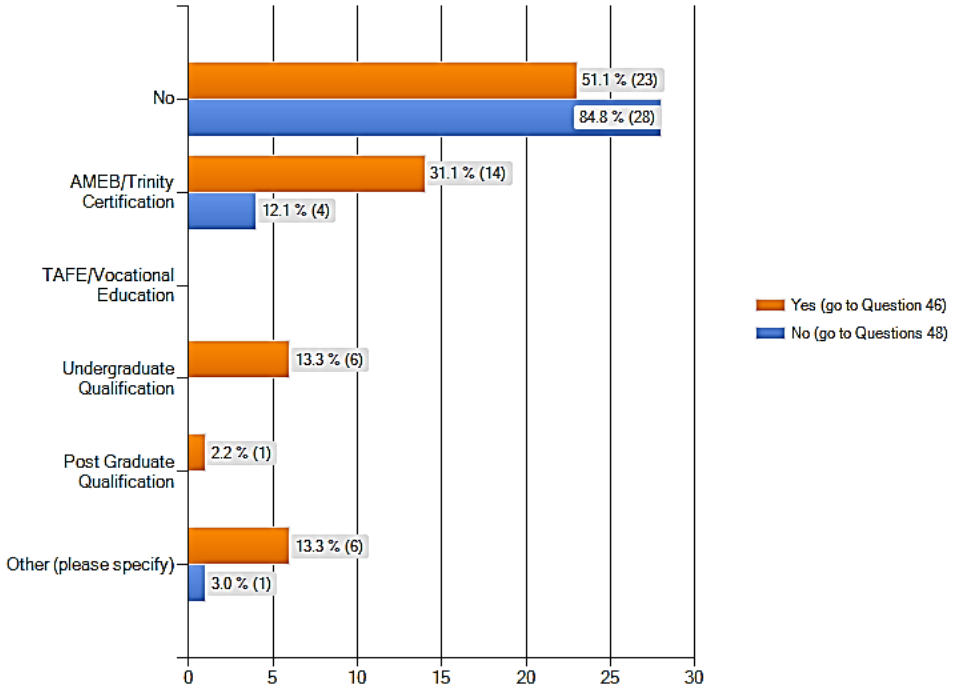


Figure 52: *Singing lessons and musical qualifications (n78)*

Chapman (2006) believes that singing lessons are the necessary ongoing pursuit of practicing singers. She states "Some singers argue that after a certain point singing lessons are no longer necessary. In my opinion this is a foolhardy concept – unsupervised singers very rarely maintain their level of technical prowess" (p. 9). Respondent 52 highlights the difficulty faced by those Contemporary Worship Singers in regional Australia when they state:

> Being out in the bush it is really hard to find adequate training, it is also from a coordinator's perspective difficult to find singers who are eager to go beyond the training they get at rehearsals we are in the process of having separate training for singers at the rehearsal and encouraging them to warm up before they get to the service run through. We are in desperate need to resource to help the music directors to help their own singers.

d) 'Qualified' Singing Tuition

This research raises the question of how a 'qualified' singing teacher is defined. When commenting on voice training for church singers Dawson (2005) states "…tuition is rarely given by teachers with appropriate knowledge of contemporary vocal techniques" (p. ii). As already established, survey participants widely acknowledge that the musical style generally employed by their worship teams is 'contemporary'. Robert Edwin's (2007a) warning that "Classical technique serves only classical and traditional Broadway legit singing" (p. 208) is an important note in this discussion. Taking Edwin's comment a step further, it would appear classical technique alone will not serve the Contemporary Worship Singer well.

Contemporary vocal technique, when employed by a singing teacher who has intimate knowledge of both worship culture and church repertoire, will support the Contemporary Worship Singer effectively over the long-term. Survey participants who received singing lessons were asked whether, in their opinion, their singing teacher had an intimate knowledge of the respondent's church environment and the type of songs sung. Nearly half of the respondents, 46.7% (*n*21/45), believed their singing teacher did not possess that 'intimate knowledge'. This statistic may not be representative of any cultural lack of understanding amongst Contemporary Worship Singers. Church singers who do seek out qualified singing lessons might be limited in choice for a range of reasons including their geographical location. The argument that singing lessons by a classical singing teacher who has no knowledge of the church scene over the option of no singing lessons is a strong one. At the very least, a

classical pedagogue can provide general instruction in matters of vocal health including warm-ups and the monitoring of vocal demands.

e) Singers Perception of Vocal Demands

Another crucial key to the individual singer determining the necessity of vocal instruction is found in the singer's own perception of the demand in the vocal task. Survey participants were asked to choose from a selection of descriptive terms which best described the vocal load required by their role as a worship singer (Figure 53).

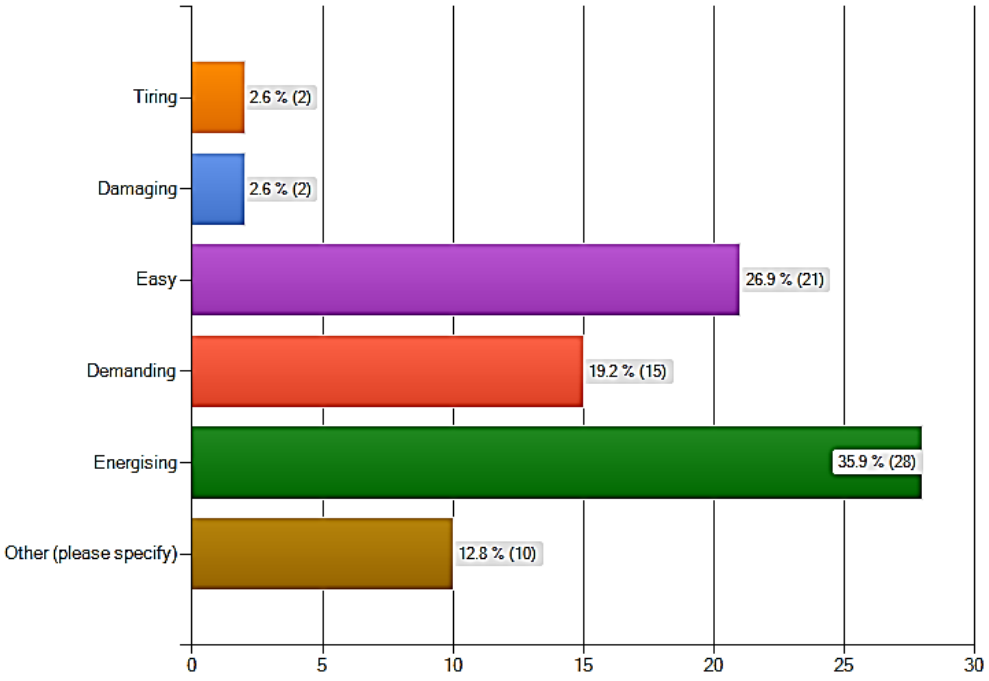


Figure 53: *Which of the following words best describes the vocal work load required by your role as a worship singer? (n78)*

A small number of survey respondents (*n*19/78) provided a summation of their task with negative terms such as 'Tiring' (2.6%; *n*2/78), 'Damaging' (2.6%; *n*2/78) or 'Demanding' (19.2%; *n*15/78). On the other hand the majority of respondents (*n*49/78) identified their task with positive terms such as 'Easy' (26.9%; *n*21/78) and 'Energising' (35.9%; *n*28/78).

By correlating the respondents' perceived vocal work load with the amount the respondents are singing over a 4 week month (Figure 54), it is noted that the sense of 'Easy' drops dramatically from 44.4% of the cohort (*n*16/78) when singing 1-4 times to 18.5% (*n*5/78) when singing 5-8 times. 'Easy' does not rate when singers are singing more than 8 times over a 4 week roster. Any sense of 'Energising' actually increases the more the respondents participate (1-4, 27.78%; 5-8, 40.7%; 8-12, 50%).

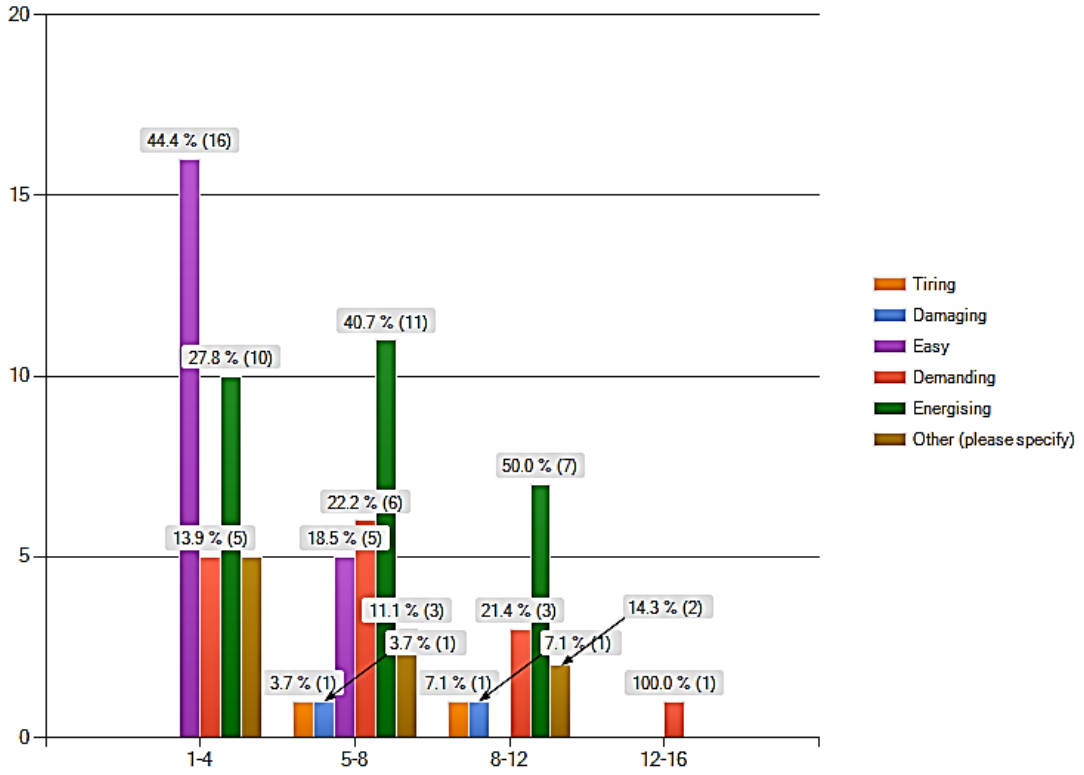


Figure 54: *Work load and 4 week roster (n78)*

The erosion of 'easy' may well be due to an increase in vocal output and the swell of 'energised' participation due to a sense of belonging and worth through contribution.

When discussing the Contemporary Worship Singer's vocal load it is also worth considering how they might perceive their vocal condition. When survey participants were asked how they would describe their current vocal condition, 55.1% (*n*43/78) indicated 'healthy' (Figure 55; p. 140):

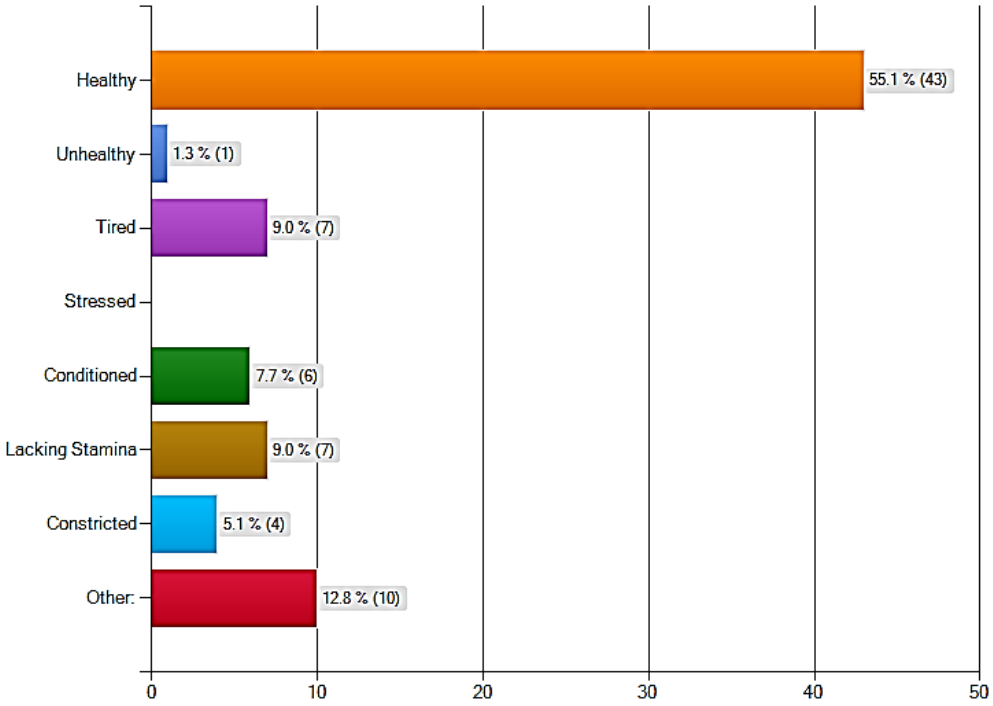


Figure 55: *How would you describe your 'current' vocal condition? (n78)*

While 62.8% (*n*49/78) nominated a 'Healthy' or 'Conditioned' status for their current vocal condition, it is important to note that when the negative options are grouped ('Unhealthy' [1.3%; *n*1/78], 'Tired' [9%; *n*7/78], 'Lacking Stamina' [9%; *n*7/78], and 'Constricted' [5.1%; *n*4/78]), thirty percent (*n*19/78) of respondents express some form of vocal duress. Interestingly, those respondents who have received vocal lessons express a greater sense of 'duress' than those who have not received vocal lessons (Figure 56; p. 141). This remains consistent when respondents' vocal condition is correlated against the perceived singing teacher's intimate knowledge of the environment (Figure 57; p. 141). Wilson (2001) asserts that "Body Awareness is important for all singing performers, even those intent upon building a career out of voice-overs and studio recordings" (p. 23); and even church singers. Dayme (2009) concurs with Wilson's assertion,

> Informed singers are acutely aware of the need to prevent vocal damage, however many potential singers are uninformed and unfortunately early warnings are so insidious that they are often overlooked. (p. 157)

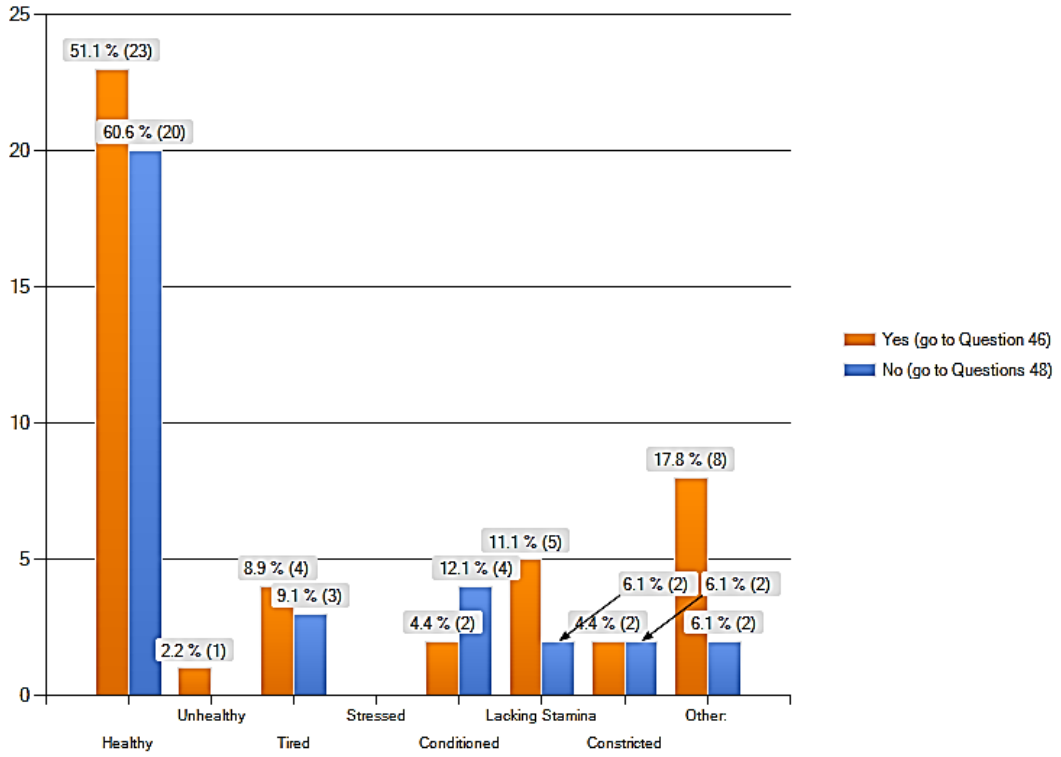


Figure 56: *Singing lessons and vocal condition (n78)*

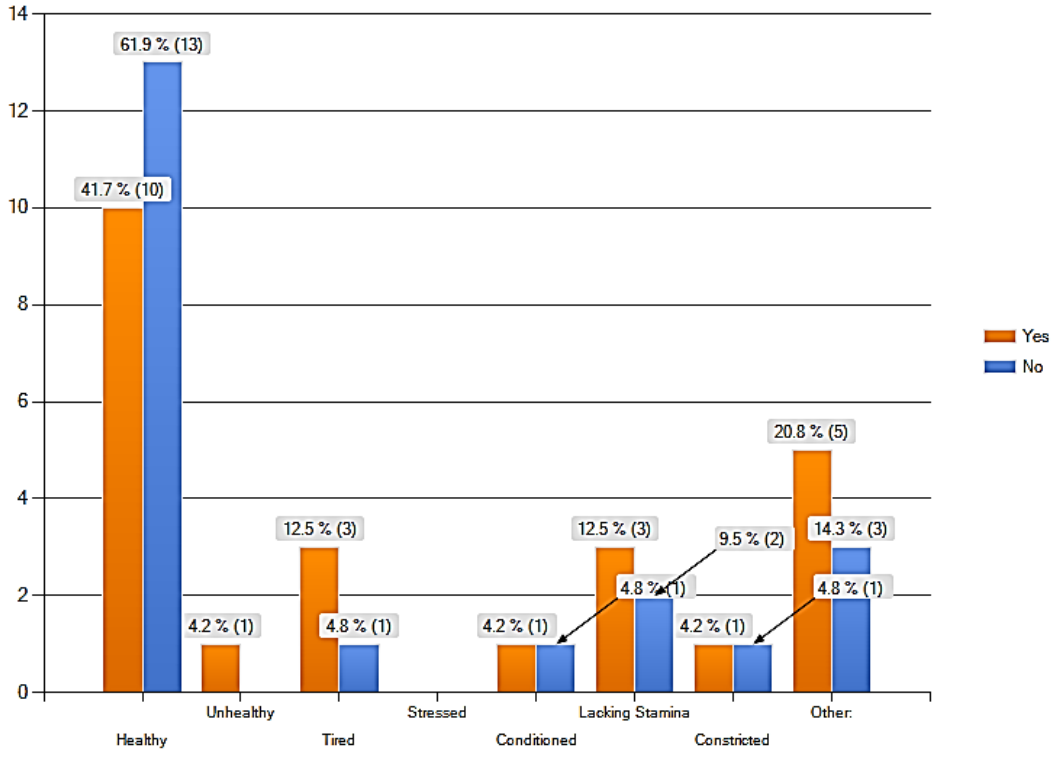


Figure 57: *Singing teacher's intimate knowledge and vocal condition (n45)*

Without the development of holistic awareness as advocated by both Wilson and Dayme, the Contemporary Worship Singer might believe their voice is healthy, when it may be otherwise.

The data reflected a slightly heightened awareness of vocal duress in the responses provided by participants when asked which best described their vocal condition directly following the close of a church service (Figure 58):

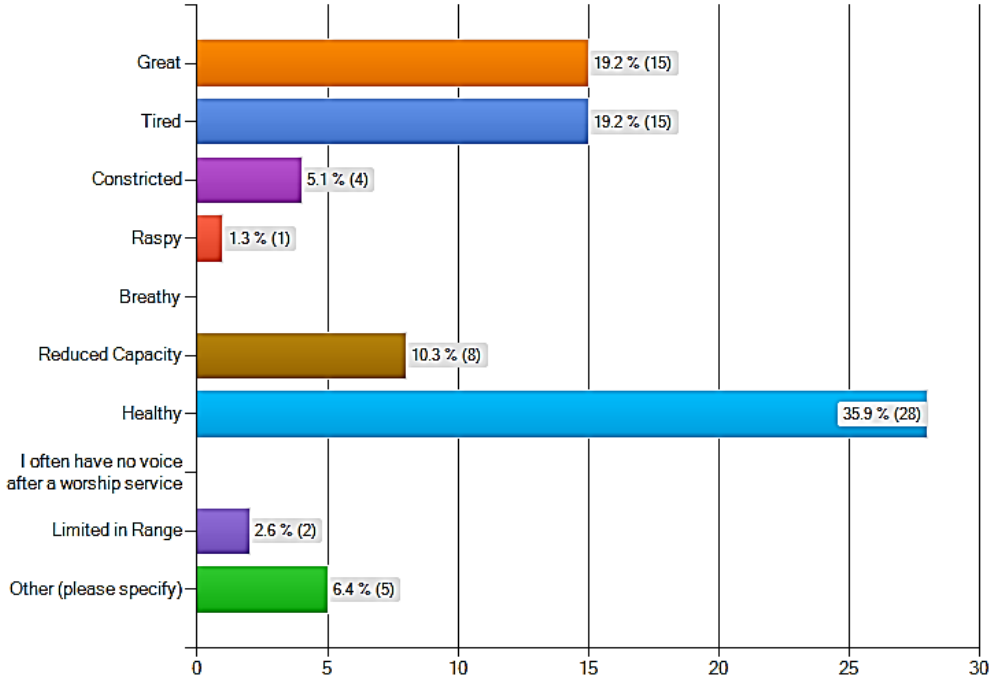


Figure 58: *Which of the following 'best' describes your vocal condition directly following the close of a church service in which you have been a singer for the worship team? (n78)*

There is a minor reduction in respondents who nominate ‘Healthy’ (35.9%; *n*28/78) or ‘Great’ (19.2%; *n*15/78) to describe their vocal condition directly following the church service from the 62.8% (*n*49/78) who nominated ‘Healthy’ or ‘Conditioned’ as their ‘current’ vocal condition. With the reduction of positive response comes the increase of negative response. When those options which have a negative stance are grouped, such as ‘Tired’ (19.2%; *n*15/78), ‘Constricted’ (5.1%; *n*4/78), ‘Raspy’ (1.3%; *n*1/78), ‘Reduced Capacity’ (10.3%; *n*8/78), and ‘Limited in Range’ (2.6%; *n*2/78), thirty nine percent (*n*30/78) of respondents express some form of vocal duress.

It is also interesting to note the perceived vocal condition directly following a church service when mapped against the different worship styles (Figure 59).

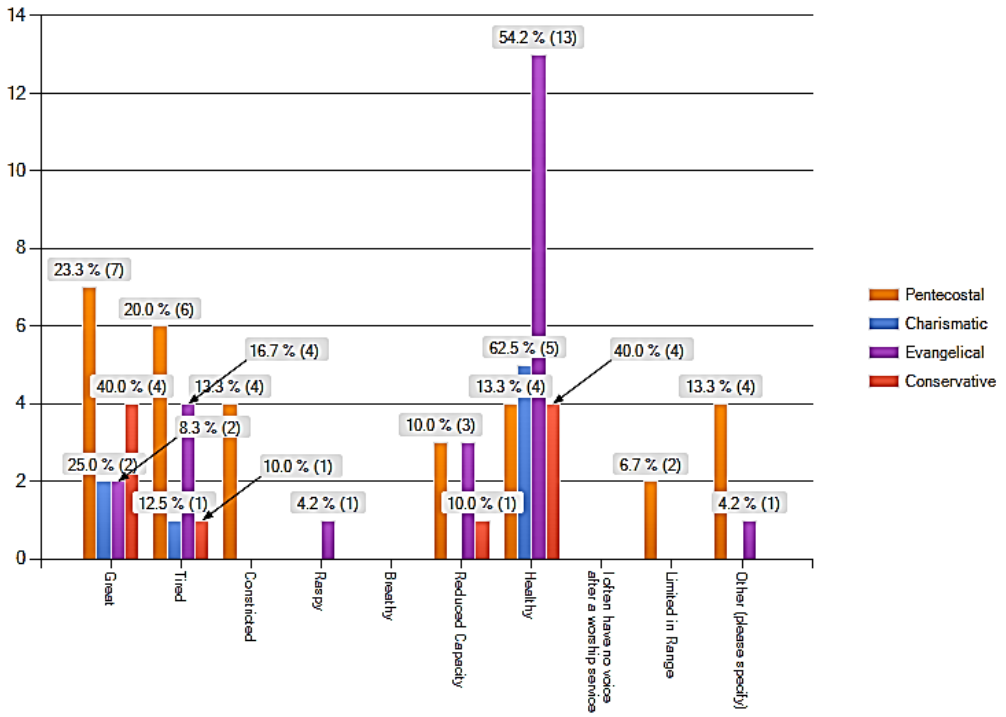


Figure 59: *Vocal condition after worship and worship expression (n72)*

In order to highlight the prominence of this issue, the data is presented in the following table (Table 3):

Which of the following 'best' describes your vocal condition directly following the close of a church service in which you have been a singer for the worship team?						
	How would you describe your churches worship expression?					
Answer Options	**Pentecostal**	**Charismatic**	**Evangelical**	**Conservative**	**Response %**	**Response Count**
Great	7	2	2	4	20.8%	15
Tired	6	1	4	1	16.7%	12
Constricted	4	0	0	0	5.6%	4
Raspy	0	0	1	0	1.4%	1
Breathy	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0
Reduced Capacity	3	0	3	1	9.7%	7
Healthy	4	5	13	4	36.1%	26
I often have no voice after a worship service	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0
Limited in Range	2	0	0	0	2.8%	2
Other (please specify)	4	0	1	0	6.9%	5
				answered question	**72**	
				skipped question	**6**	

Table 3: *Vocal condition after worship and worship expression (n72)*

The evangelical expression rates highest with positive responses (Healthy and Great) with 15 respondents (20.8%; *n*15/72), and while the Pentecostal worship expression rated the second highest positive responses with 11 respondents (15.3%; *n*11/72) it also rated the highest when collating the negative responses from 15 respondents (20.8%; *n*15/72; Tired, Constricted, Raspy, Breathy, Reduced Capacity and Limited Range).

5) What modes of instruction will best serve to train the Contemporary Worship Singer?

Central to this study's purpose is the development of a greater understanding of the Contemporary Worship Singer's identity and environment, in order to heighten the modes of training currently employed by singing teachers. Skill acquisition for the Contemporary Worship Singer, such as learning to sing harmonies is often informal, and yet Dayme (2009) highlights the need for an intentional approach.

> The essence of vocal technique has been realised when all of the physiological, mental, and emotional factors work harmoniously to produce the desired tone in a spontaneous and dynamic manner. This co-ordination and skill are achieved with proper direction, hard work, and patient, disciplined practise. (p. 32)

a) Instruction

As already discussed, some of the survey respondents have received vocal tuition from a singing teacher (Figure 51). Another opportunity for training of the Contemporary Worship Singer is mid-week worship team practices:

> The rehearsal is the place where the team can hone its musical and leadership skills, a context in which a team can try out new ideas and concepts and an opportunity for a team to bond outside of the stress of being in front of a congregation. (Siewert, 1998b, p. 65)

Survey participants were asked to indicate whether their worship team meets for a weekly practice (Figure 60; p. 145).

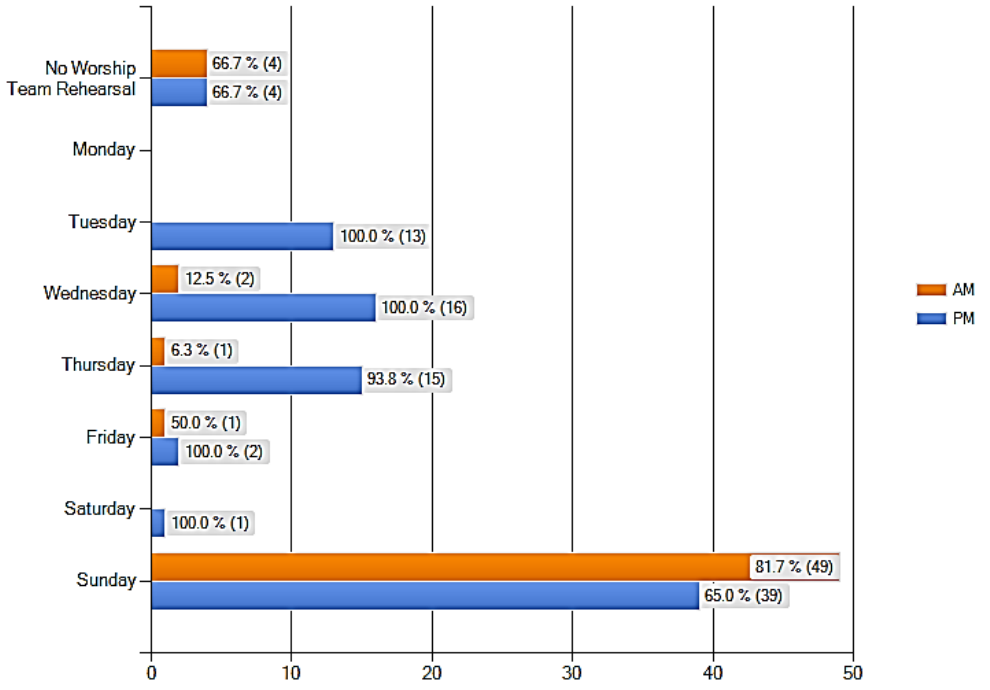


Figure 60: *Does your worship/music team meet for a weekly practice? Please list all practice times. Only tick applicable times. (You can choose more than one) (n78)*

While 8 respondents nominated that their team had no worship team rehearsal at all, only 46% (*n*36/78) of respondents have a mid-week rehearsal which is not adjoined to the Sunday service. This is an important statistic in the light of Siewert's recognition that stress might be associated with being in front of the congregation, and in turn the perceived impending threat of the congregation might lead to a reduction in the capacity of the singer to learn new skills or hone the craft. Further inquiry highlights that only 26.9% (*n*21/78) of respondents exist in teams which conduct separate practice time specifically for the singers. Kauflin (2008) notes, "It helps during rehearsals to have someone else working with the vocalists while I work with the band" (p. 230). The necessity for separate rehearsal time is recognition of the unique learning needs of the Contemporary Worship Singer.

b) Warm-ups and Cool-downs

Otolaryngologist, Matthew Broadhurst (2009) states "the importance of dedicated singing instruction and vocal hygiene cannot be emphasised enough to maximise the efficiency of sound production and vocal longevity" (p. 4). Broadhurst's comments are directed at the individual instruction of a singer, but they are no less poignant when concentrated on the grouping of Contemporary Worship Singers in a worship team. Both efficiency and longevity should be key goals in any singer's task,

including the Contemporary Worship Singer. A key factor in developing vocal efficiency and longevity are vocal warm-ups and cool-downs. Survey participants were asked how disciplined they were in the regularity of their vocal warm-ups (Figure 61).

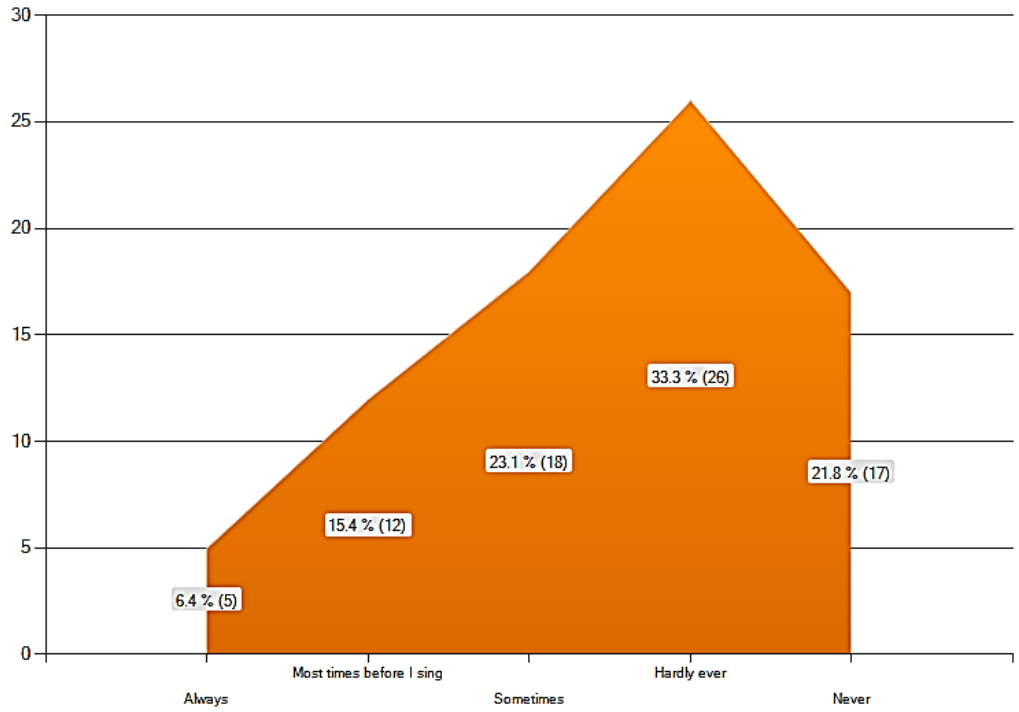


Figure 61: *How disciplined are you in the regularity of your vocal warm-ups? (n78)*

Figure 61 displays a distinct weighting of 'irregularity' towards the discipline of vocal warm-ups. The significance of warm-ups is still relatively under-researched (Sundberg, 1987) but the process and benefits are widely acclaimed in existing literature (Dawson, 2005; Peckham, 2000; Robinson, 2002; Sataloff, 2006a; Sundberg, 1987; Waterman, 2002). Dawson's 2005 inquiry into voice training and the church singer also notes the unsatisfactory approach to vocal warm ups by many church singers:

> Some singers considered this rehearsal as their vocal warm-up for the day while others stated that by rehearsing the least demanding songs first they were gradually warming the voice. It is a fact the voice needs to be warmed slowly before engaging in rigorous phonation. Such flippant approach to warm-up is insufficient to prepare the muscle system required for singing. A much more disciplined approach to vocal warm-ups is needed to ensure the voice is adequately prepared for athletic voice use. (p. 60)

In describing the content of their warm-ups (Figure 62) only 12.8% (*n*10/78) respondents described their warm-ups as a rehearsed procedure:

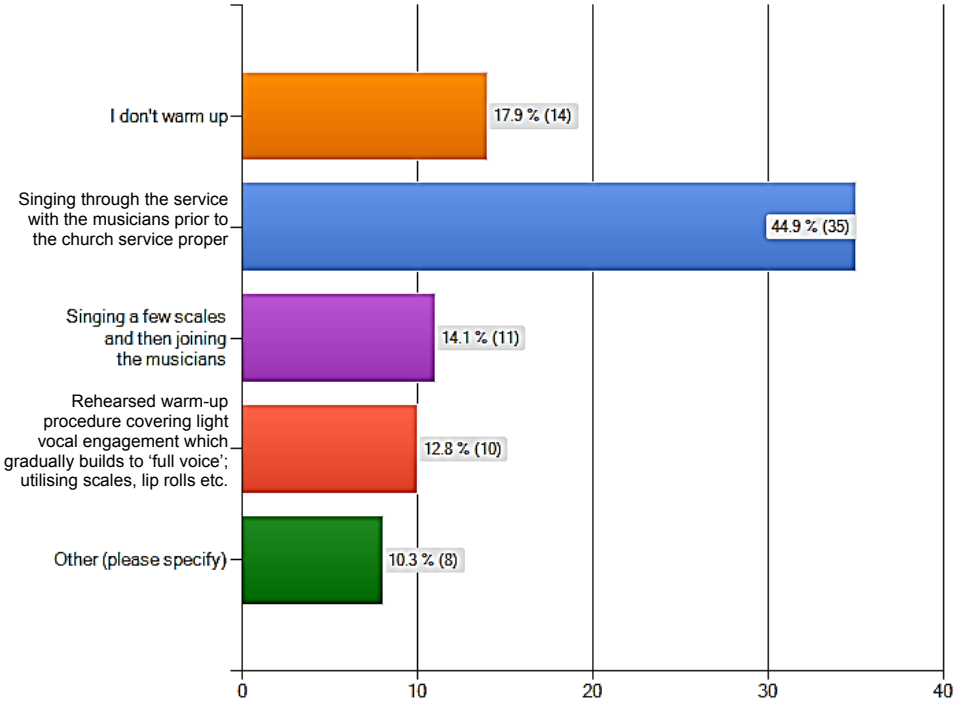


Figure 62: *Which of the following best describes the content of the warm-up: (n78)*

All other responses (including 5 respondents ['Other'; 6.4%; *n*5/78] who declared they warm up in the car on the way to church) fall far short of an intentional vocal warm-up necessary for efficiency and longevity. "The longer the performance the shorter the warm up and vice versa" (p. 220) as advocated by Baxter (1990) in his *The Rock-N-Roll Singers Survival Manual* is not an acceptable nor adequate approach to warm-ups. Whether singing one worship set of 30mins at church or four sets of 45mins in a pub, the singer needs to employ all diligence to their vocal warm-up regime. Sundberg (1987) supports this approach by stating "Warming up in a hurry or in a wrong way also tends to result in poorer voice function than normal. It seems that the poorly warmed-up voice is less durable than the appropriately warmed-up voice" (p. 193).

Survey participants were also asked whether time was allocated by the worship team for group warm-ups or whether it was considered the individual's responsibility. Wingate (2008) observes that the practice of group warm-ups in choirs is standard practice:

> Most choral directors will provide a period of warm-up at the beginning of rehearsal. This is a general group warm-up and may not provide the best warm-up for individual singers. When possible, singers should try to perform some warm-up exercises on their own before arriving at rehearsal. (p. 64)

Only 3.8% (*n*3/78) of respondents indicated a time was allocated for group vocal warm-ups. While this might seem like a positive result in the light of Wingate's comment, it could also suggest that both training in the importance of warm-ups and cultural understanding of the necessity for singers to vocally prepare with a disciplined warm-up regime is lacking. This observation is substantiated by the virtual non practice of cool-downs by many survey respondents (Figure 63):

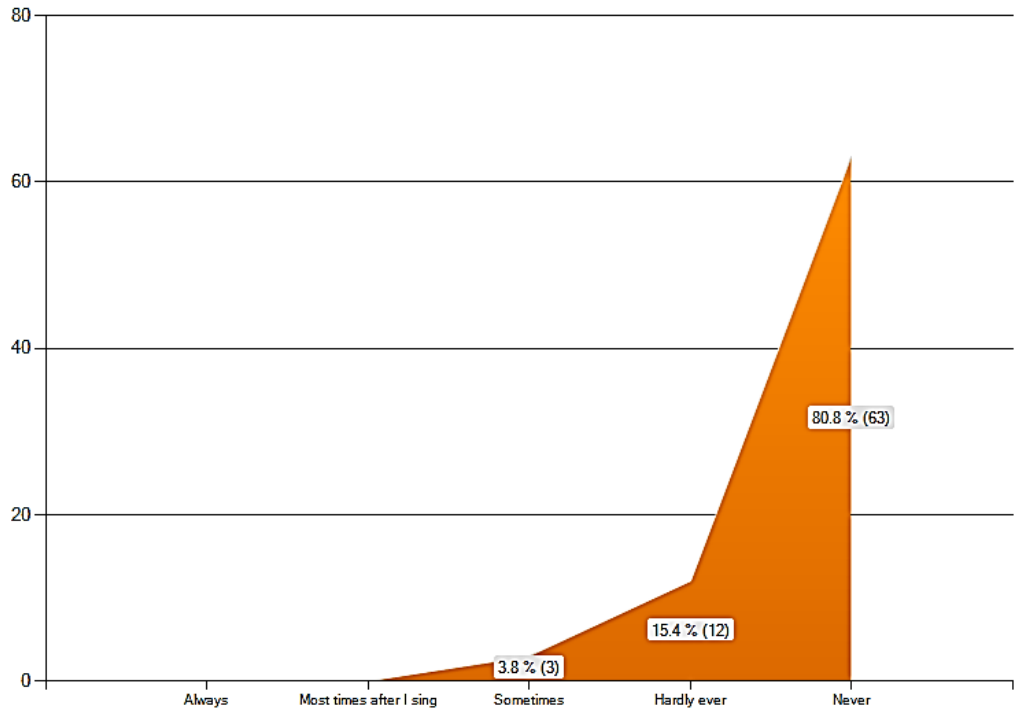


Figure 63: *Do you ever employ vocal warm-downs? (n78)*

Sataloff (2006a) supports the virtues of a vocal cool-down. He has written "Consistent practice each morning prepares the vocal folds and muscles of the vocal mechanism for the demands of the day. The evening cool-down regimen is similar to the athlete stretching and cooling down after running" (p. 247).

What also seems apparent from the data is that those who have received singing lessons are more likely to warm-up the voice in preparation for its use (Figure 64).

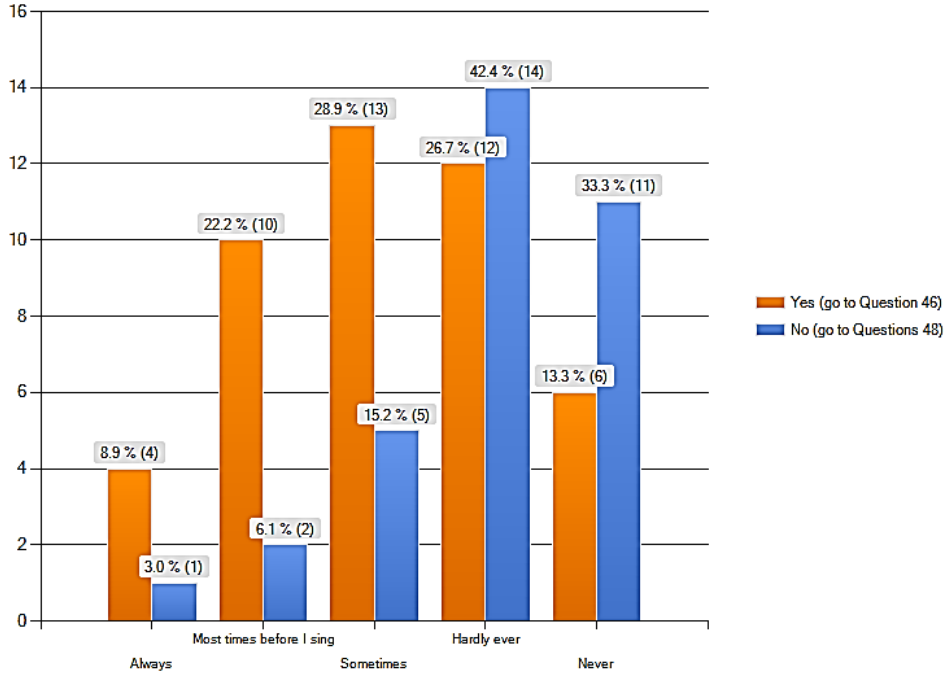


Figure 64: *Vocal warm-ups and singing lessons (n78)*

However, singing teachers might be disappointed to learn that while their students might consider themselves more regular with their warm-ups, this does not always lead to a proper warm-up regime as presented in Figure 65:

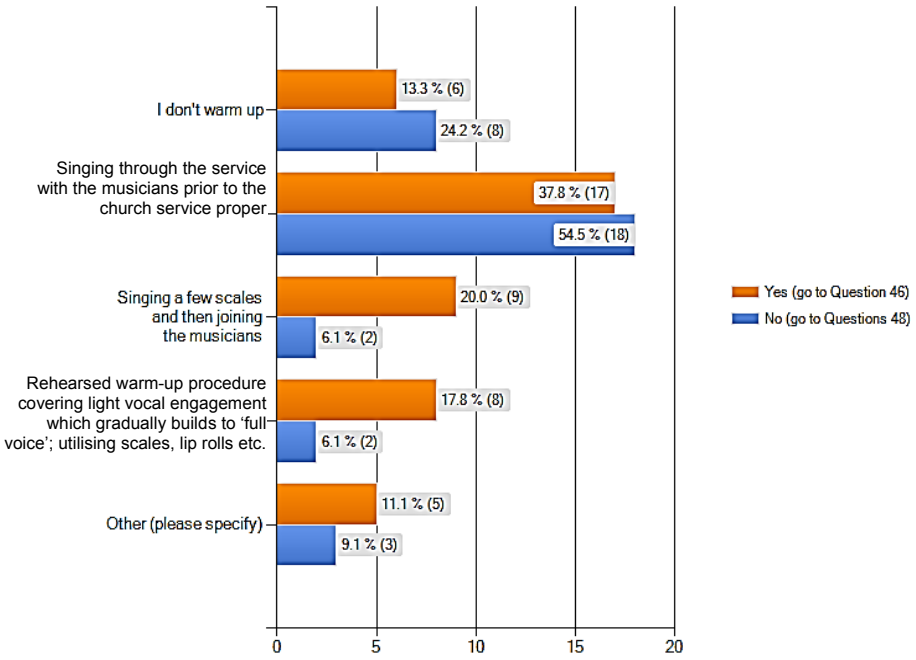


Figure 65: *Type of vocal warm-up and singing lessons (n78)*

The survey results construct a quantitative overview of the conditions in which a Contemporary Worship Singer must practice their craft. The analysis of the survey data revealed many questions requiring deeper investigation. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) suggest "In a qualitative study, quantitative findings are secondary and are used to supplement and/or augment the primary qualitative findings" (p. 97). The interview questions have been designed out of the quantitative data arising from the surveys. The following chapter presents the analysis of findings from the interviews.

Chapter 5: Interviews

Interview Data Analysis

In order to further focus the research beyond the survey, a deeper level of inquiry was conducted via interview. The interviews were designed and delivered in a one-on-one, semi-structured format with "considerable freedom in the sequencing of questions,…their exact wording, and in the amount of time and attention given to different topics" (Robson, 2002, p. 278).

Nine interviews were conducted. Each interview has been coded *IP* (Interview Participant) followed by sequential numbering; 1 to 9. The interviewees where obtained from 5 different churches of varying worship styles, each within the greater metropolitan Brisbane, Queensland Australia. The denominations represented are as follows:

- Uniting Church (UC) (IP1 and IP9)
- Baptist Church (BC) (IP2 and IP3)
- Church of Christ (CC) (IP4 and IP5)
- Worship Centre (WC) (IP6)
- Christian Outreach Centre (COC) (IP7 and IP8)

For ease of reading the researcher has allocated an alias to each interviewee. The alias' are as follows:

- IP1: Evelyn
- IP2: Helen
- IP3: Margaret
- IP4: Heather
- IP5: Debra
- IP6: Carl
- IP7: Candice
- IP8: Sharon
- IP9: Kristine

The online survey data was obtained Australia wide. The interviews were undertaken in Brisbane for two reasons: a) analysis of the national online survey data did not reveal significant geographical differences; b) budgetary and time constraints led to

facilitating the interviews within driving distance of the researcher's home over a period of less than one month; Sunday 28th February to Sunday 21st March 2010.

In order to develop consistency in the collection of data, it was decided that each interview would be conducted in the church of each interviewee. It was thought that this might help the interviewee to contextualise their role more easily, bringing to mind circumstance and situation more readily in their "natural, nonmanipulated settings" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 12).

Most of the interviewees have been a part of their current worship teams longer than 5years. Two interviewees (Heather and Carl) had been a part of their current worship teams less than 2years, but each indicated that they had extensive involvement in worship teams prior to their current experience. Four interviewees had been involved with their current worship teams longer than 10years. Helen and Debra had been in their worship settings for more than 15 years.

All participants indicated an extended engagement with the Christian faith, mostly from childhood. Debra declared the age of her faith (10years) to be shorter than that of her involvement with the worship team (15years). The incidence of non-Christians participating as members of the worship team is not widely practiced and for the most part is not recommended given that "this is a leadership-type ministry and, hence, is ordinarily not a place for new or immature Christians" (Kraeuter, 1993, p. 27). However not everyone agrees with this position. Timothy Kellar (2002), senior pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church (New York), which maintains a Reformed (conservative) theology declares, "…we often include non-Christian musicians in our services who have wonderful gifts and talent. We do not use them as soloists, but we incorporate them into our ensembles. We believe this fits a Reformed 'world-and-life view'" (p. 239). Kellar goes on to assert,

> When we incorporate non-Christians into our services, we pray that the gathered worship itself will have an impact on them. We model for them the difference between just performing and seeking to 'catch the conscience' with our music. When we invite non-Christians to use their talents in corporate worship, we are simply calling them, along with every creature, to bring their 'peculiar honors' and gifts to praise their Creator. (p. 239)

In the case of Debra, Kellar's position has proven its worth, with her ultimate claim and adherence to Christianity after 5years of involvement with the worship team as a non-Christian.

A final demographic of the cohort is observed in the predominance of female participants. Only one male interviewee (Carl) was available for participation. The ratio of 1:8 (male to female) is peculiar given that the verbal invitation to participating churches encouraged both men and women's involvement. The online survey data presented a 1:2 (male to female) ratio. The difference in these ratios might be explained by the time that the interviews were conducted. Only Uniting Church and Worship Centre interviews were conducted outside normal work hours (on Sunday) which in turn might have restricted the level of male participation.

Analysis of data collected from the online survey contributed to the development and design of questions for the interviews (Creswell, 2007; Silverman, 2010). Thus, the interview questions congregated under the five sub-questions[45]: They are:

1. What are the defining features of the various cultural contexts?
2. What are the identifiable attributes of the various environmental factors?
3. How is the Contemporary Worship Singer's identity formed?
4. What gives distinction to the Contemporary Worship Singer as a unique identity within the wider community of singers?
5. What modes of instruction might best serve to train the Contemporary Worship Singer?

Interviewees where not informed of these sub-questions, nor were they granted prior access to the questions. The questions were designed to be open-ended due to their flexible nature, ability to unearth expected answers, and their tendency to "make a truer assessment of what the respondent really believe(d)" (Robson, 2002, pp. 275–276). The sub questions will be used as sub-headings for the following analysis.

[45] These are the same five sub-questions presented in the Conceptual Framework (p. 86)

1) What are the defining factors of the various cultural contexts?

a) Worship Style

In order to commence the body of the interview each participant was asked the same question: *how would you describe the worship style of your church?* Most interviewees chose to define the worship style of their church as either contemporary or traditional. The distinction is perhaps best observed in the responses given by Evelyn and Kristine who both attend the same church, but sing in two different services, morning and night respectively.

> (Evelyn) A lot of people prefer the traditional kind, but the young ones now prefer the contemporary, so we do have two different services and the morning one is more traditional but the evening one is more contemporary.

> (Kristine) Well I would probably say its (contemporary), especially the evening service because we've got a lot of younger people with young families…, it has traditional aspects but it also has contemporary aspects especially with the music.

Many of the responses centered on music as the defining factor of style. Kristine clarified her thoughts regarding the defining nature of the music stating,

> …sometimes it can be easier for people to do that (singing) than say to listen to a sermon all the time and just sort of like take all of that in, it's just sort of like you're communicating with God personally.

While many of the participants defined the worship style easily, a number of them were just as quick to justify their worship style:

> (Margaret) I would describe it as a contemporary but paying heed to our heritage if that makes sense, so I think that we acknowledge where we've come from and I think in our worship gatherings and therefore in our worship we try to be inclusive so I think whilst we're contemporary we still feel it's appropriate to acknowledge we have a multigenerational congregation and that it's appropriate, to at times include worship, vocal worship that is from a different era.

The distinction of style was also derived from the style of repertoire, that is hymns or modern choruses.

> (Heather) Some people although they don't have hymns each Sunday they like to have a hymn each Sunday, some people might not go along with that rule, some people would

lead more upbeat songs (modern choruses) but then it also reflects on how the congregation gets involved in that.

Only one participant (Sharon) did not instinctively provide the contemporary/traditional delineation. Rather she chose to describe the worship style in the more subjective terms of personal experience:

I guess I can really speak of my own experience too of worship like that for me worship is very joyful, very full of joy, defining what's going on here I think we're really reaching for a place of allowing God to move more… a lot more free(dom) of expression, we used to be a lot more structured.

b) Singing through history

Participants were offered the statement: *Singing has played an important role throughout the history of the Christian church*. The statement was followed by an inquiry as to why, in their opinion, this is the case. Many of the interviewees centred their answer on the inclusivity of the corporate act of singing.

(Helen) …it's something that we can do together, when you think about it especially in medium to large sized gatherings of people we can't all go on a prayer walk, like if a church of 300 gathers on a Sunday morning we can't go on a prayer walk together, it's not always helpful to have really long period of meditation times in a gathering of that size but we can sing…

(Margaret) I think that music has an extremely broad base of connection, that allows people to express maybe what they themselves can't express can't find the words or the actions but here is a forum where they are joining in and giving a voice to themselves to how they speak and how they think and how they feel.

(Debra) I just think people find singing joyous, it just gives them, it makes them happy, so I think that's why it brings or people find that as more of their worship over prayer and other things I think yeah the singing just, it's a happy feeling isn't it!

Candice noted the vulnerability that comes with singing in the context of today's culture stating,

I think probably because…it tends to strip away everything from people, people that don't normally sing will sort of; it requires an effort to sort of sing and lay bare something that they might feel a little conservative about and want to sort of publicize say

> their singing voice maybe in today's culture because singing is so highly regarded as like a career or something.

This is an important point. While singing is a celebrated activity in modern western society, it is not widely practiced in everyday life. Bohlman, Blumhofer and Chow (2006) in *Music in American Religious Experience* agree stating,

> Hymn-singers think it is 'natural' for adults to erupt in group song, seldom thinking how idiosyncratic such an act is. Millions who sing hymns in congregations never sing outside the shower; at best they mumble impatiently during the National Anthem at a Little League game. (p. vi)

Ultimately the Contemporary Worship Singer is required to encourage the worship participants as a collective whole; including those who enjoy singing and those who don't. What impact perceived 'non-singing' has on the Contemporary Worship Singer's task and subsequent vocal health has not been reviewed by this study; but would be an avenue for further research.

Both Carl and Sharon framed their responses in a distinctly different manner to the general cohort. Carl was keen to recognize the creative aspects of singing and music stating, "I believe that God has placed in us his creative spirit so that's the first side of it; that we are creative beings and we express ourselves quite creatively." When asked why he chose to frame his response highlighting music/singing as the creative output as opposed to other creative expressions such as painting he reverted to the observation that,

> Some people will find it harder to enter into that worship in song, however in a congregation situation there's so many people singing, there's so much noise around you it really doesn't matter if you sing badly or if you can't sing at all you can be a part of it, you can experience it, you can share in it regardless, whereas painting particularly is a visual art and if you're not good at it you know everyone can see it.

Carl's clarification ties together the corporate value of singing together with an acknowledgement that some worship participants are reluctant to engage.

One of the interviewees from a Pentecostal church, Sharon provided a fourth explanation for the prevalent use of music in the church, both historically and today, nominating the spiritual aspect of music when accorded to the church.

> I also think that there is a significant thing that happens in you when you lift your voice to God and you open your heart and it changes something in you it's a step of faith if you like it's something that because it's easy to stay quiet and sometimes when things are really tough it's hard to actually open your mouth and say praise or sing praise, and I think music is just the language of God, it's the language of the spirit, it's the language of the heart, it's the language of love, I mean it touches so many you know out of the context of worship too music is just, it's so alive and dynamic.

White (2000) qualifies the Pentecostal orientation to worship in his book *Introduction to Christian Worship* claiming, "Pentecostal worship...has stressed the unexpected possibilities of spontaneous worship" (p. 40). Sharon exemplifies this statement when she says, "…music is just, it's so alive and dynamic."

Interviewees were then asked whether they considered music/singing to be more highly regarded now than in the past. Three participants (Margaret; Sharon; Kristine) did not believe that the value placed on music/singing had changed much over time. Sharon noted, "perhaps it's just more available due to iPods" and Kristine was keen to acknowledge the historical importance of hymns saying, "…even if you went back to say fifty odd years ago or something where everything was mainly just hymns but they were still very integral part of the service."

Helen also recognized the mid-late 20th century as a point of importance but concurred that music/singing is more highly regarded now than in the past:

> The contemporary worship music movement, you know which we saw the genesis of in the 70s and then its burgeoned and now we've got sort of massive enterprises built around it, your Hillsong's, your Passion's, your Spring Harvest's, you know those sorts of organizations globally, um yeah we've got a whole infrastructure haven't we now around church music.

Once again the responses seem to orientate to the style of music; that is traditional being recognized as hymns from the past and contemporary as being modern choruses of today. Heather reflected on her upbringing in church including the denominations of Uniting and Baptist. She recalls, "…my parents both sang in choirs and you don't see that now." This finds support in Breward (2001), who notes, "Parish choirs have been in decline since the 1960s, and musical standards have slid, although congregational singing has stayed vigorous where ministers and organists have successfully educated people for musical change" (p. 374).

Carl suggests that this musical change in the church can be tracked against music outside the church. He commented,

> …as music in the secular world has developed so it also has in the Christian world in that there is certainly a greater appreciation for the sound of different instruments, the talent and the skill of different musicians and then the recognition of worship song and worship singers also…

Carl's comments seem to align with those of Zschech (2008) who states, "As the culture of future generations continues to change in response to the times, so does the language and so does the music" (p. 34). The idea, as proposed by Zschech and Carl, that the development of Christian music is somehow wedded to its secular counterpart is also supported by Evans (2006) when he quotes Faulkner: "Up to the Enlightenment, Christian ideas and attitudes had been major factors in determining the progress of music. As a result of the Enlightenment, leadership in musical creativity rapidly began to shift to the secular sphere" (p. 35). Evans notes that, "by understanding the cyclical nature of congregational music and the various cultural reactions it exhibited at different points throughout history, we can come to a fuller appreciation of current practice and purpose" (2006, p. 24). This is to say that while the 21st century Christian church is currently happy to derive stylistic influence from the secular community it has not always been so (Basden, 2004; Evans, 2006; Howard & Streck, 1996). Evans goes on to suggest that, "most curiously we can note that artistic trends tend to have kept pace with theological ones" (2006, p. 24). Debra views this practice when she says, "I think the older style church probably was more focused on the literature of the Bible…and some of the hymns I think were important." Kauflin (2008) agrees. "As grateful as I am to God for the outpouring of modern worship songs, I think the riches of hymnody far outweigh what we've produced in the last thirty years" (p. 190).

The majority of interviewees did affirm an increase in importance of music/singing within the modern church. This assertion must be held in tension with the heightened commercial availability of music and the muddying of clear delineation between that which is Christian and that which is secular. As Evans (2002) warns,

> This trend towards artist driven product is one that has leached [sic] out through the Christian music industry generally, and indeed, through most other areas of Christian capitalism. Many Hillsong composers have become personalities within Christian culture

> as a result of slick marketing and international exposure. In the current environment, as with the secular industry, music is marketed and sold primarily through an artist's name, rather than genre or even quality. The ramifications of this, on individuals, denominations, and the quality of the music itself, are yet to be fully realised. (p. 186)

c) A sense of belonging

The socio-cultural impacts on the Contemporary Worship Singer are of particular interest to this research. In other words, does the Contemporary Worship Singer derive any sense of belonging or self-worth from their involvement in the worship team? All but one (Candice) acknowledged receiving some level of self-worth from their involvement in their worship team. Margaret's comments summarise many of the respondent's thoughts with the succinct reflection, "I think we kid ourselves if we think we don't get some sense of identity out of what we do but I don't think it's the essence of my identity." Imbedded in Margaret's response is the tension between acknowledging the heightened awareness of identity and not wanting this to be seen as an egotistical position.

> (Carl) It's a conversation I've had many times because it's one of those things that I have to be careful of that I'm not up here singing because I enjoy the sound of my own voice and I'm not up here singing because I want to impress anybody with the sound of my own voice.

> (Helen) …because of its up-frontness there's that trap of, you know, you're worshipped but that's not what we're about you know so I think it's something that you've really got to guard in your own heart and mind.

This tension is readily observed by many of the leading authors in the field of contemporary worship (Kauflin, 2008; Kimball, 2004; Kraeuter, 1991; Noland, 1999; Zschech, 2002). Perhaps this tension has developed as a direct outcome of the Christian capitalism as suggested by Evans (2002). Noland's (1999) following comment certainly recognises the challenge facing singers in the church when seeking not to develop an egotistical stance.

> Our society tends to put anybody who has talent on a pedestal. We turn the most successful artists into superstars. The superstars are indulged and pampered. They become rich and famous. So servanthood and being others-orientated doesn't come naturally for any of us. (p. 53)

One way to manage the tension, outside any defined cultural parameters, seems to be found in orientating one's sense of worth as attributed from God:

> (Kristine) …I guess you feel like in the sense that it's almost like God has asked me to do this and you think that when you do it well and when you do put a lot of effort in you think yeah I am good enough to do this because if God thinks I'm good enough to do this then yeah then I should have the confidence in Him.

The concept of 'confidence in Him' aligns with New Testament teachings. Maintaining this orientation is difficult in a post-modern culture that is generally focused on what they individually experience (Dawn, 1995; Sweet, 2000). Wiersbe (2000) also identifies this cultural difficulty by highlighting the, "conflict between the objective and the subjective in worship. We're too prone to judge a worship experience by our feelings rather than by the fact that we have obeyed God and tried to please and glorify Him" (p. 109).

In order to delve more deeply into the notion of the Contemporary Worship Singer's sense of belonging, participants were asked whether they believed some singers are more favoured than other singers in the team. The cohort was divided in their responses. Evelyn was immediately dismissive stating "I don't think it's anything like that at all." Of those interviewees who acknowledged favoritism in the culture, some identified it as something they had observed in other churches, but not their own.

> (Kristine) I've been sometimes to other churches and maybe there is more of a lead singer and the others are sort of like backup singers so I guess if that's what you're asking maybe some singers are more highly regarded but I wouldn't say overly so…

> (Heather) ...I think churches would have their favorites I think they would, probably not a good thing but obviously there are people that are very gifted musically you know they might have had training all that kind of stuff, of course they sound better.

When asked whether she had observed the same favoritism in her own church Heather responded, "It's funny you say that (smiling), I don't think there are favorite individuals but there certainly would be a favorite music team over another music team. Definitely!" This sense of a collective ownership of the focus was echoed by

other responses, particularly when considering special events[46]. Margaret confirms this in her response. “I think when we’re looking at special events where we’d hand pick a team, we would look at choosing vocalists who can produce a sound appropriate to the event.” Candice says “...if we might have a guest speaker on we’ll probably have some of the stronger team on that morning than any other morning…” One interviewee, Heather, recognized stresses which can arise when one team is favoured over another either externally or internally. When asked to qualify her observations she noted, “The one frustration would probably be how they probably talk down another team because they probably think that they’re better than the other one.” The idea of a ‘stronger’ team seems to indicate that the members of the worship team assembled for special events display higher levels of skill. The two interview participants from the Baptist church acknowledged that skill was a consideration:

> (Helen) I think that’s partly based on skill, and it’s probably partly based on presence a little bit as well in terms of the things that people bring to that role because it’s really not just enough I don’t think in a church context to be a technically good singer...
>
> (Margaret) I think when we’re looking at special events where we’d hand pick a team, we would look at choosing vocalists who can produce a sound appropriate to the event that we’re putting on...

It was apparent from the interviews that none of the participants exhibited any unease with the notion that some singers might be favoured over other singers because of skill or any other reason.

Finally, Helen provides additional contextualization to the unique nature of the church environment and the favouritism of certain singers,

> ...there is a tension with being involved in church music where a lot of compromises are made. Not everyone on your team has got formal training, not everyone on your team will have had, a lot of performance experience. We’ve got quite a blend, we’ve got people who’ve done degrees in their chosen instrument through to someone who just enjoys it (and) can carry a tune but has a great heart and I think the tension there for people who

[46] “Special Events” might include hosting a visiting speaker, a themed service or the annual Christmas Carols.

> are professional or semi-professional is just dealing with that reality and understanding that sometimes compromise has to be made...

The next question, '*Do you think we have a celebrity culture in our modern worship teams?*' brought lively response. In qualifying their response, interviewees where asked to state whether they thought the presence, or absence, of a celebrity culture was a good or a bad thing. Only two participants, Evelyn and Sharon did not believe there was a celebrity culture in modern worship. Of particular note was the response from Sharon who became visibly agitated when the suggestion of a celebrity culture was raised.

> I would never use that word celebrity for our worship team. Well obviously people like Darlene Zschech might. You might say oh, I can't think of anyone in the worship world who would call her celebrity seriously they might say well you know she's come with a gift and God has you know moved her in different places and she's been able to…touch many lives and share with many people but in terms of celebrity gosh that's a horrible word to use in this context.

When her apparent discomfort was recognized and noted by the facilitator she indicated that,

> ...at the end of the day if you look at their lives (they) are just the same as anyone else they get up, they live their lives they have families you know they have responsibility probably the word I'd use is that maybe that there's a greater responsibility on their lives than celebrity.

While each of the other interviewees readily acknowledged a celebrity culture, the cohort was evenly divided when declaring it good or bad. Three participants (Helen; Margaret; Carl) consider it a good development, three participants (Heather; Debra; Candice) believe it is bad and Kristine stated that it could be deemed either good or bad. Each church grouping maintained a shared thought. For example, both Baptist interviewees thought it was a good development. The Church of Christ interviewees both considered the celebrity culture to be a bad development. Both points of view were supported by Evangelical and Pentecostal persuasions alike, and it is probable that individual churches are defining their own stance on such matters, beyond that of the traditionally held views of denominational persuasions.

A variety of comments illustrate the tension between positive and negative views of the celebrity status:

> If it brings people closer to God I think it's a good thing but if people lose the focus of worship singing and realize that like for me if worship singing is not for your self-gratification it's not for to put yourself above everybody else it's basically a tool to lead other people to God as like whether it's in a service or whether it's at a concert and whether you're the only person singing or whether everybody else is singing with you.

Margaret seems to also acknowledge this inherent tension of that which is perceived to be positive against that which is possibly negative.

> I think it puts a lot of responsibility on the person who is in that position of having this cult following…I think it's good if people can model this amazing connection with God and, an ability to worship Him without restraint and, to model by taking on that responsibility really seriously you know a life that is lived in service of God…

Motivating this celebrity culture is accessibility to and awareness of particular individuals. Helen notes that technology and social networking are both making it easier to observe persons of interest.

> I can be following Vicki Beeching's Twitter, I can be on a blog that Matt Mar has written in the US you know. I've got a friend who is playing bass for Michael W. Smith and he posts videos to his Facebook site so the world becomes a very small place.

Soanes and Stevenson (2008) define *celebrity* as "a famous person" (p. 227) with the term *famous* qualified to mean, "known about by many people" (p. 514). One person's name (Darlene Zschech) featured in six of the nine interviews (Margaret; Heather; Debra; Carl; Candice; Sharon). This would suggest that Zschech is 'known about by many people'. It could be argued that this qualifies her as a celebrity according to the above definitions. Importantly, the definition does not attribute characteristics to the celebrity. Thus a celebrity can be known for both positive and/or negative reasons. This qualification is important in the culture of the Contemporary Worship Singer because, as seen in Sharon's agitation to the concept of celebrity, she nonetheless was one of the six participants who referred to Darlene Zschech by name. Sharon was asked whether removing her perceived 'negative connotation of the word celebrity' would alter her position on the use of the term. Her response, "Yeah I guess so" might support the notion that for many Contemporary Worship Singers the term celebrity is in need of cultural clarification.

The central theme of those interviewees who, like Sharon, considered the concept of celebrity to be a negative thing centered on the manner in which individuals might be

identified as different to those within the Christian community who are not recognized as a celebrity.

> (Heather) I guess Hillsong people would be celebrities. If Darlene Zschech came to church I'd get a little bit excited...Cause she's just has an amazing voice but then if I think about it long enough I think well she's just a person like me, she's just a mum like me but you've got the DVDs you've got the CDs you've watched her on TV. Probably doesn't make her a better singer although she's obviously had training so that would make her a better singer, …people would probably get more caught up in the service if they knew that Darlene was singing.

Debra indicated, "I don't think they should be treated any differently to anyone else in the church." Additionally, Candice was concerned about the idolization of some of the Christian celebrities by young people within her church.

> Particularly with the youth…, I know there used to be heaps of fuss about Darlene Zschech and now it's all Brooke Fraser, Kim Walker they're the big ones... Yeah so they get a lot of attention and there's just a lot of 'oh gosh they're so amazing' and it's like they're just a person what about the person they stand next to?

Lucarini (2002) holds concerns for the manner in which individuals are idolized in current Christian culture. Reflecting on his own experience as a Contemporary Worship Leader, Lucarini writes, "The respect and adoration given to me was faintly reminiscent of the rock star power I experienced as an unsaved performer" (p. 32).

d) Congregational Singing equal to the Sermon

Interviewee's were informed that 82.1% (*n*69/84) of survey respondents indicated that the worship service (congregational singing) was of equal importance to the preaching of the Word (sermon). The interviewees unanimously agreed with this finding. Kristine succinctly stated, "I think every aspect of a service has its own value whether it's like a two minute prayer or a twenty minute sermon."

While each interviewee resonated with the survey results, it was not always with an easy conscience. Helen admitted,

> I think that I probably would have expected people to say that preaching the Word was more important than the singing and partly I wonder if that's because the voice of tradition might be telling us that that's the right answer (laughs)…I think it really reflects

the way the church cultural landscape has shifted with the contemporary worship music movement.

Cherry (2010) has recognized the shift in the prominence of congregational singing within the contemporary worship service. While commenting on the importance of the Word in worship Cherry writes, "In the case of contemporary worship, extended times of singing and extended times of preaching…have replaced the readings" (p. 69). This shift, as Cherry notes, is not dissimilar to the reformation's "two fold worship experience of Word and Table" (p. 69).

When asked why there had been a perceived shift in the balance towards an equality of singing and preaching, Margaret suggested that, "(it) can be a reflection of the fact of music is so much more part of our lives you know through radio, through iPods, through the Web we have access to so much more collections". Margaret, Heather and Debra each readily admitted a preference for the congregational singing.

(Heather) I would be quite happy to go to church and sing for two hours and not have a sermon.

(Debra) I definitely get more out of the songs a lot of the time than the sermon that might also be because I have kids, the only things that I get to listen to are the songs (laughs).

e) De facto theology

Kauflin (2008) acknowledges the need for balance when considering the church's singing and the pastor's preaching. He observes,

Most people understand it like this: Worship is when we sing and experience God's nearness, express our love for him, and allow his Spirit to move in our midst. All right-brain activities. Hearing the Word, on the other hand, appeals to our left brain. It's mind food. It's for our intellects, designed to make us think, not feel. Some Christians have so separated worship and the Word that they'll attend one church to experience the Spirit during the music, then visit another to get good teaching. (p. 89)

Kauflin goes on to suggest that it needn't be a matter of either/or. Actually our singing can be enriched with theologically sound lyric. Kauflin suggests that "Songs are de facto theology…we are what we sing" (p. 92). This statement was offered to the interviewees to obtain an insight into their concern and understanding of theology in the songs that they sing. Margaret was to the point; "It's like garbage in garbage out". By this she indicated that poor theological content contained in the lyrics may

influence the spiritual formation of the Christian. Sharon agreed with this sentiment, claiming that her discernment was well attuned to material that was not in keeping with her personal beliefs. She stated "When I do sing words I want to know that I believe them, that they come from my heart that if I'm singing to God then I'm believing that they're going to God's ears.

The personal connection to the song's lyric was also expressed by Margaret who commented,

> I don't want to be singing stuff and having other people sing it and speaking it into their lives that's garbage…. yes I'm no theologian but I do have a brain, so my trust is that, those core elements are in those songs, and the theology that this church subscribes to is not discounted within that song and then it's me exercising not saying oh that you shouldn't have let that song in there because I'll choose never to use it but simply I have a whole range of things to choose from and I'm exercising my choice to choose this song over another because my assessment and that's all it is, is that possibly there's a message in there that I'm not 100% comfortable with and I think you'd find with all your worship leaders they have their favorite songs and their non-favorite songs could be for a whole heap of reasons, not just musical but also lyrical.

Beyond the lyrical content, for Evelyn it was all about the music genre; traditional versus contemporary.

> Musically speaking the old traditional hymns do speak out that way, but the contemporary, it depends on the song, now, I know some of them I just don't like myself and a lot of them are so repetitive that musically speaking they don't do anything for me, so it's a case of when we do something we cut out a lot of the repetition and we just try and get the meaning through from the song.

Helen took great assurance in the knowledge that many of today's writers are theologically trained "like your Vikki Beeching who went to Oxford to study theology". Helen elaborated,

> For a lot of Christians I think they would probably sing songs more than they would recite scripture or read scripture and I guess that's why for some people, they wanted to really closely examine lyrics and theology behind songs and that's been a really important component of their song selection.

f) The Anointing

As reviewed in the literature (Chapter 2) and noted by the survey data (Chapter 4), 'Anointing' is a topic that polarizes in both understanding and opinions. Evans (2002) has noted "One common perception is that the singing of congregational song releases the presence of God: the view that praise singing brings God's presence to a meeting is one of the most solidly believed principles of praise" (p. 124).

The difficulty surrounding the discussion of Anointing is discerning its activity in the worship space. Accordingly interviewees were asked to explain their own understanding of the Anointing with a request to qualify its importance in the task of a Contemporary Worship Singer. Six interviewees suggested that the Anointing plays an important role in the task of leading singing for Christian worship. Many of these positive responses centered on a 'sense' or 'feeling' of the presence of God. Sharon gushed "it's beautiful like, I love it." When asked to qualify this response she responded,

> You get a sense of the presence of God just falling. When I say falling it's just like in your heart you just I feel it physically the presence of God so I'll feel sometimes a warmth either come up through my legs or some sort of lightness in my chest or head or my heart will beat faster. God's always used that one if I'm in a congregation and there's a chance to like respond to God and if I feel he will make my heart beat so fast I can't stay in my seat I have to come and respond to him.

The attributing of 'feelings' to sensing God's presence was not restricted to Pentecostal participants. Debra (Church of Christ), when reflecting on her own experience, recalled "I feel like it's really, really, God's here, you know you get that real feeling in your body and it's a different feeling to when you would…just be singing." Kristine also seeks the sensation of God's presence including her preparation for worship.

> In whatever I'm doing, whether it's the preparation leading up to it, or the actual worship singing…I sometimes well actually a lot of the time I can really feel Him with me. It's almost like an out of, not quite an out of body experience because I'm still experiencing it and sometimes it's almost like I'm running on autopilot; like I have very little control of what's going on. Because there have been some times that I remember when I've been sick or coming up to the…the worship the service and we've picked a new song and I don't really know it and sometimes it just comes out of me like it's almost like God's controlling me which is great because like hopefully the people will see God through me.

The feeling that God is in control of ones' faculties when employing them to the task of Contemporary Worship Singer registered in the responses a couple of times. Carl suggested,

> The anointing for me is something that goes beyond your natural ability, it's something that we have in a general way because it's something that drives you to use that gifting for the service of God but it's also something that comes upon us in a special way. To give you an example there are times when I'm up here singing when I can feel the Holy Spirit prompting me, speaking something into my mind, into my heart that he wants to express to the congregation and it will happen that the music will die down a little, the congregation will quiet down because the Holy Spirit is opening up a space for that to be expressed so that comes out and it's expressed and it will touch a number of people because that's what the Holy Spirit wants to do he wants to speak to somebody in the congregation or a number of people within the congregation that to me is the specific or special anointing as opposed to the general anointing that God gives us to that drives us into that desire to worship

The 'general anointing' as coined by Carl is also acknowledged by Heather who agreed that the Anointing is an important aspect of the Contemporary Worship Singer's role, but stopped short of identifying any task specific anointing. Heather commented, "I guess when I became a Christian and then was baptized I felt anointed with the Holy Spirit then and I always had the presence of God around me."

Not all the interviewees were agreeable to 'the Anointing' being attributed a defining part in the task of the Contemporary Worship Singer. Helen did not like the idea that feelings would be used to determine an individual's sensing of the anointing. Helen qualified her position by remarking,

> There's probably a part of me that would feel under-qualified in recognizing His anointing at a particular moment…Why should I be able to tell? And is that based purely because I'm feeling great this morning or I really love those songs or I thought the preacher spoke really well. How much does our humanity play into whatever our recognition or our definition of whether God's anointing has fallen and has been given in a particular moment in time?

Interview participants were asked a second question regarding the Anointing: Do you think some singers are more anointed than other singers? Sharon initially used a broad brush stroke to nominate who she thought was anointed for the role of Contemporary Worship Singer. "I think God wants to pour out his anointing in

everybody like I think it's probably more about how much we are willing to seek the presence of God, ask for it, connect with it, be in it, seek Him". Following this response Sharon was queried *does that mean then that Darlene Zschech has sought the presence of God more than you?* She responded, "I think I would say that I do feel when looking at her, like without knowing her, I'd say that the favor of God is on her life yeah." The interviewee was pressed further by the interviewer with the question "...*more than you?*" The following presents the interaction:

> (Sharon) No because the favor of God's on me too (laughs) you know I feel that really strongly
>
> (Interviewer) But yet you lead, you lead singing for 250 people she leads singing for the globe
>
> (Sharon) Yeah but I would struggle to say that God favors her more than me
>
> (Interviewer) So she's not more anointed than you?
>
> (Sharon) (pause) it's just one that's really hard to say yes or no to because I think God loves us all and I don't think he sort of has favorites like that, like when I say he favors, the favor of God is on her you can see that on her life in that doors have opened, things have happened but
>
> (Interviewer) More so than yours?
>
> (Sharon) Well no not really like there is absolute favor of God on my life I could tell you, you know so I'd have to say I guess I'd have to say no but at the same time I know that I would feel that she has a greater responsibility like so you know leading that many people or whatever (laughs) it seems almost blasphemous to say no her anointing's not as strong or whatever but
>
> (Interviewer) Why does it feel blasphemous?
>
> (Sharon) I don't know it just feels like, it feels like I wouldn't want to dishonor her gift or position I give that honor you know like it's hard work

Sharon was not the only participant to single out Darlene Zschech. Margaret also acknowledged Zschech's significance. She stated,

> If you ask me to name one I'd be naming Darlene Zschech, I just think God has incredibly gifted her and used her and she has allowed herself to be used by God and I'm

> sure that she would say that there are equally capable singers that she knows maybe even within the context which she works but God has chosen to use her, and I think that maybe can reflect her heart and her passions and her willingness

Carl also mentioned Zschech in his discussion of anointed singers, but qualified, "I've never made a huge study of how the anointing works or what the contemporary understanding of the anointing is. Most of what I say is formed out my own experience and my own personal understanding". This admission of uncertainty pertaining to the theology of the anointing was the only comment from across the nine interviewees. None of the nine provided a theological apologetic for their stance on the anointing and its distinguishing features. Many of the participants' explanations pertaining to the anointing valued sensing and feeling. Kristine made the following comment which, though not representative of the other advocates of the anointing for singers, is summative:

> Being another singer you can sort of almost, it's almost like an aura about them if that makes any sense. Like they seem to be in a, they don't just seem to be singing the words they seem to almost be like communicating with you through emotions and through what they're singing.

2) What are the identifiable attributes of the various environmental factors?

The second stage of the interview centered on environmental factors and the manner in which these factors where perceived to influence the interviewees role as a Contemporary Worship Singer.

a) How important is your worship space to your role as a Contemporary Worship Singer?

The notion that the liturgical space impacts on worship and the worshipper was studied in the review of the literature (Chapter 2). Most interviewees acknowledged awareness that the space was important to their role and the worship, but often found themselves searching for ways to articulate the reasons why. Evelyn stated "I like to be in the church – I just feel that there's more atmosphere." Kristine who is a member of the same church as Evelyn (but worships with the night congregation) responded similarly: even though her worship service is conducted in the church hall as opposed to the church sanctuary. In commenting on the reasons for the different use of space Kristine remarked,

> I think the reasoning behind that as far as I can gather was that it was more of a relaxed space so that you can invite…people to church and they can come into a hall that for them just looks like a normal hall there's nothing I guess too overwhelming or intimidating about it.

Carl also recognized that the space was important in forming a welcoming and participatory environment for the worshipper. He stated,

> The architecture is designed here to be inclusive, to be very inclusive, not necessarily to set us apart as a team but to allow the entire congregation to be included in what we're doing here to feel close to, the engine of worship if you like which is the, I don't mean that this makes us worship but this is the instrument if I can use that term of, of worship for the congregation

Helen referred to the equipment within the space commenting "it's become more important when you think about things like lighting, staging, sort of the production elements of it; you know I think we've seen the rise of importance of those elements." Heather suggested that the quality of her task might be heightened with better equipment when she commented: "I suppose if you've got bigger and better things to work with you might be able to do a better job, you know better sound, you know better equipment, and of course you're going to sound better."

Only one interview participant (Sharon) did not consider the worship space to have any bearing on her activity as a Contemporary Worship Singer stating "It's always nice to have pretty things, but that…doesn't make a difference to the worship."

b) What do you prefer; Hymns or Choruses? Why?

Australian churches predominantly use Hymns and the modern day chorus in the worship service. Leon Neto (2010) writes:

> Praise and Worship songs are largely accepted in most Christian churches and have been integrated into corporate worship. The same way traditional hymns were the sound image of the Great Awakening and tent revivals, Praise and Worship songs are the face of the new millennium Christian church. (p. 196)

Interviewees where asked to state a personal preference for the traditional hymn or the modern chorus. Three participants (Margaret; Heather; Candice) preferred Choruses and one participant preferred Hymns (Carl). The remaining five interviewees suggested a personal fondness for both forms though Kristine conceded that her worship team often rearranged the traditional hymns to make them more

accessible: “We tend not to make them sound exactly as they’re written; we sort of tend to jazz it up or down.”

c) Do you ever find it difficult to sing any of the songs?

Carl stated that his personal bias was founded on the challenging melodic structures often found in hymns: “old hymns…are quite challenging vocally and from a purely physical singing experience I love getting my tonsils around (them).” This statement which highlights the difficulty of some songs (in this instance hymns) seems to stand in contradiction to Cherry’s (2010) assertion that singing should be inclusive. Writing about the general suitability of singing as a “primary communal activity” (p. 155) Cherry notes: “there are no musical qualifications – vocal training is not required for singing prayers and praises to God” (p. 155). Cherry’s argument is supported with over 2000 years of Christian worship history displaying singing as a lasting activity of the church, however interviewees often expressed vocal difficulty in singing the songs. This brings into question the accessibility of singing, regardless of its inclusivity.

Accessibility of the song repertoire is highlighted by Helen when she comments on the difficulties inherent by both musical forms: hymns and choruses. She remarks,

> I’ve found hymns challenging. Something I’ve noticed with the use of guitar led music (choruses) is that…composers who are guitarists…they tend to write in more of a tenor range so if you’re looking at, you know Matt Redman’s music, Tim Hughes and people like that, often when you get the songs in their original keys they can be difficult for an alto; and also I think fairly difficult for a congregation to access vocally, so yes I do feel that the music is quite challenging.

Both Evelyn and Debra agree, proposing that the main issue is a vocalist’s range:

> (Evelyn) a lot of music writers don’t write for singers and there is such a low and high range in the songs that it is difficult unless you have a voice that you can cope with two or three range octaves.
>
> (Debra) Yes (laughs) I mean I’ve only got a certain range (laughs) I can only go so far singing (laughs).

Interviewees were asked to provide an estimate of how many songs, out of ten, they felt sat comfortably within their range. The following table presents the responses (Table 4; p. 173):

Interviewee	Ratio of Comfort	Maintenance of Comfort (stated by interviewee)
Evelyn	5/10	Change key of song (transpose)
Helen	*Question was not asked*	
Margaret	6 or 7/10	Sing down an octave
Heather	7 or 8/10	Change key of song (transpose)
Debra	8/10	Change key of song (transpose) or Harmonise
Carl	10/10	Extensive range capable of singing in any key
Candice	9/10	Harmonise
Sharon	10/10	Harmonise
Kristine	10/10	Change key of song (transpose)

Table 4: *Vocal comfort*

The Pentecostal participants (Candice and Sharon) exclusively used harmonies to maintain vocal comfort while interviewees from other worship environments (Evelyn; Kristine; Heather; Debra) generally transposed the keys of songs to maintain vocal comfort for the singers. This anomaly could be explained by the predominant use of modern choruses in the Pentecostal environments which are easier to harmonise by ear due to their simple chord structures. This stands in contrast to the comparatively complex harmonic structures of the traditional hymn which may require a more practiced harmonic performance.

d) How important is it to be able to sing harmonies?

Given the above responses regarding the maintenance of vocal comfort the interviews queried the importance of Contemporary Worship Singer's capacity to sing harmonies?

Helen acknowledged the benefits of being able to sing harmonies, but did not think that it was absolutely necessary to the role stating,

> I actually think that unless you can sort of naturally sing harmony or unless you're a music reader – to just do it by ear or to be taught the capacity to do that in limited rehearsal times is quite difficult. Yes, you could teach someone the line but that would probably take multiple rehearsals not just a couple of hours.

Heather and Debra both considered the importance of harmonies as high but conceded that they could not spontaneously create a harmony line that was not taught to them. Carl does not have the same limitations stating "99% of the time if somebody brings a new song I can hear the harmony." Where harmonies where nominated by the interview participant as being utilized by the worship team, the harmony was developed exclusively by ear.

In Carl's worship team there is a "fairly strong emphasis on harmony." He further explained,

> We will very often sing three part harmony. We tend to work with three, what we call front line singers, apart from whoever is leading the team and so that will almost always be a tenor, an alto and a soprano; and regularly as three front line singers we will all be singing harmony and the leader will be singing melody.

e) How important are singing lessons for the Contemporary Worship Singer?

Recent literature has established that instruction of the voice is beneficial to the general development of the Contemporary Worship Singer (Dawson, 2005; Neto, 2010; Robinson, 2002, 2010b). Neto (2010) asserts,

> Praise and Worship style is most likely the newest of all styles of Christian music and, due to its novelty, can still be adapted and have its standards modified and shaped by professionals of the next generation. In this context, voice teachers can have a major role in providing this new generation with enough guidance to support the basic characteristics of the genre, while training better and healthier singers. (p. 199)

While the literature states the need for voice instruction[47], the interviews questioned whether this translated to action among Contemporary Worship Singers. The survey data revealed that 57.7% (*n*45/78) of respondents had received singing lessons with only 19 of the 45 continuing beyond 2 years of instruction. Further analysis suggests that only 9 of the 45 respondents had received singing lessons for more than 2 years from singing teachers who had specific knowledge of the contemporary worship environment (Figure 66; p. 175).

[47] See Chapter 2: Literature Review (p. 75)

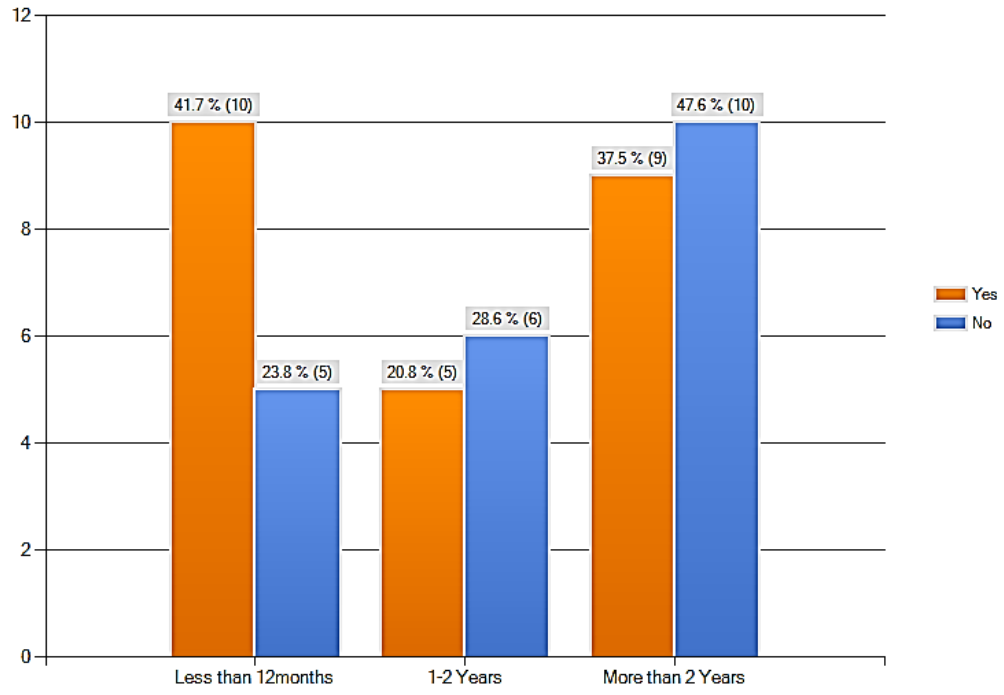


Figure 66: *Singing teacher's knowledge of worship style vs. time spent in tuition*

None of the interview participants were receiving lessons at the time of the interviews. While only two interviewees (Heather and Candice) had never received singing lessons, four participants (Evelyn; Helen; Sharon; IP9UC) specified that their instruction was classical.

Robert Edwin has been quoted as saying "that he finds no improvement in CCM (Contemporary Commercial Music) singing via classical repertoire" (Neto, 2010, p. 198) yet, for the most part, this view has yet to filter to Australian worship teams. Margaret believes that the vast majority of instruction has been classical. She states,

> In terms of (our church) worship team there are very few people who have had singing lessons. The people that have had would be the elder bracket of the people that make up our worship gathering in a much more traditional context and I think there would be very few who would have taken contemporary singing lessons. In fact I could maybe even count them on my hand.

Helen and Carl were both cautious about seeking vocal tuition for the Contemporary Worship Singer. Carl commented "Many vocal coaches actually don't understand contemporary worship and exactly how it works; and the style that we use up here. What we're doing up here is quite different to a pop singer or an opera singer." Sharon's classical singing teacher was up-front in stating that her singing lessons

would not cover contemporary worship repertoire: “She said we won’t do the sort of songs you would sing in church. She wanted to introduce me to something different.”

As stated previously, two participants had not received any lessons. Heather was comfortable with her general vocal ability claiming,

> I’m quite happy with how my voice sounds (laughs) without having to go (to singing lessons), and other people have said how my voice sounds nice so I don’t feel that I need to go and have lessons. Yeah I don’t think I need to.

Candice’s worship team singers are readily encouraged to seek vocal tuition but she admits “out of fifteen or twenty (worship team singers) I know of (only) a few that have had singing lessons previously.”

Given that none of the participants were currently undertaking singing lessons, they were asked what type of tuition (classical or contemporary) they felt would best serve the Contemporary Worship Singer. Candice claimed ignorance given that she had never had any singing lessons and both participants from the Church of Christ denomination (Heather and Debra) felt that both disciplines would serve the purpose. The other interviewees were more definitive. Sharon and Kristine both referenced their personal experience in support of classical instruction. Sharon had received, in her opinion, poor contemporary instruction; “I had a couple of lessons with a contemporary teacher and really didn’t get much out of it at all.” Kristine suggested that her classical teacher had catered to both the classical and contemporary disciplines. She remembered that her teacher “used to give (her) classical songs and then she’d give (her) a pop song or a contemporary song to work on using the tools that (she’d) learnt through the classical music.”

The four remaining interviewees (Evelyn; Helen; Margaret; Carl) each believed that contemporary tuition would best serve the Contemporary Worship Singer. Margaret’s response summarises the collective view of these four respondents:

> I think they both up-skill you and give you a better base to start from, but I think I’d be erring on the side of contemporary if you are singing contemporary worship songs and that is the product that you are aiming to produce.

3) How is the Contemporary Worship Singer's identity formed?

The interviews addressed the third research sub-question with the first question focusing on a finding from the online survey phase of data collection.

a) Why are Contemporary Worship Singers predominantly young?

Interview participants were presented with the statistic arising from the survey that revealed that over 50% of Contemporary Worship Singers are under the age of thirty. One observation was that older church members may have different priorities. As a participant who is under 30 years of age, Kristine highlighted,

> I guess as you get older you have more commitments. A lot of people get married and have children and I guess once you hit that thirty plus mark you've got other things – especially with family I guess to worry about. So maybe you have to step away from certain things that you do

Debra agreed that family commitments would be a contributing factor, but also suggested that the contemporary repertoire may have a bearing on the statistic. She commented:

> I just think as you get older you have families…and your commitments change. I also think…if you are sitting in the age (of) fifty and over, perhaps you don't like singing so many of the contemporary songs, you might like them congregationally but perhaps not to sing them as a worship leader.

Helen suggested that while age and preference of music style were to be considered, culture had a part to play.

> I think that the culture beyond the church in our world values youth (laughs) and, yeah potentially that's an area where the church could be doing a better job of valuing all age groups from the front. I think it's also got to do with the trends in contemporary worship music. If your 62 and classically trained and the church that you are going to is only singing Tim Hughes and Passion and Hillsong with male worship leaders are you going to feel like what you've got to bring matches that context? Possibly not! If you're a part of a church that's got a broader diet then yeah maybe of songs maybe you could see yourself fitting but I think the days of having an entire service with content that would fit that persons demographic and vocal style are probably gone in contemporary evangelical churches.

Evans (2006) has indicated that "by understanding the cyclical nature of congregational music and the various cultural reactions it exhibited at different points

throughout history, we can come to a fuller appreciation of current music practice and purpose" (p. 24). Many recent writers (Cherry, 2010; Kauflin, 2008; Kimball, 2004) are encouraging the use of a diversity of repertoire. Cherry (2010) has written "There is strong merit in suggesting that a wide variety of types of congregational song are useful – even needful – for the church in our day" (p. 156)

In reflecting on the statistic of Contemporary Worship Singers being predominantly under 30 years of age Carl, suggested something a little more sinister might be at play.

> I actually think that there is a little bit of snob value in having somebody young looking and good looking on the stage. It's not perhaps a good way of putting it but I think that perhaps what happens is the younger better looking people are more confident being on stage for a start.

b) Why are Contemporary Worship Singers predominantly female?

Similar to the previous question, interview participants were informed that two thirds of survey respondents (*n*50/75) were female. When asked why this might be, interviewees were diverse in their response.

Evelyn joined Kristine and Heather in suggesting that perhaps men were more drawn to playing instruments. Evelyn speculated, "Well I think a lot of men like to be on guitar, drums and things like that."

Both interview participants from the Pentecostal environment of Christian Outreach Centre (Candice and Sharon) thought that perhaps men's confidence was a contributing factor to the predominance of women's involvement. Candice speculated that "maybe males are a bit more self-conscious about it or don't feel the drive or maybe they even see so many women and go oh it's a girl's thing (laughs)." Carl, also from a Pentecostal environment, commented on the nature of the worship culture in which he exists stating,

> I believe that women are more sensitive to creative gifts to a large extent. I think there's a certain expectation or understanding that women are (pause) that it's okay for a woman to express herself creatively. Whereas traditionally men have been workers with their hands or with their brain; rather than being seen largely as creative beings.

Both Helen and Margaret view the gender differential as a sub-cultural nuance. In commenting on modern worship Margaret considers the lyrical context to be overly feminized. She suggests,

> It's all quite lovey-dovey; quite feeling – you know – 'I love you!' Raising the whole feminized, the context of a Sunday worship gathering has been feminized. I think (there) is probably the argument that leading the charge in that feminization is probably the lyrics to the music, and so it doesn't surprise me that one has attracted more women and that has turned off more men.

c) Is skill/talent important as a Contemporary Worship Singer?

As reviewed in the literature (Chapter 2) the subject of skill and talent draws much discussion because of modern worship's drive for excellence. A tension is developed between the desire for excellent musical (vocal) standards and the reality that the worship team is manned by volunteers. This tension is almost universal among the interviewees. Only one participant (Evelyn) considered that skill and talent played no necessary part in the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer.

Margaret acknowledged that a certain leniency is employed with many singers. She states,

> We're in a church and we work with volunteers. There's grace extended…it doesn't get extended if you literally can't hold a tune and there's a process that we go through when people express an interest to be part of the worship team here, so I think it's extended to an incredibly high degree.

Five interviewees used 'singing in tune' as the standard by which a person should be judged; skilled or talented. Numbered among those who believe holding a tune is a prerequisite Carl lists other skills required:

> I believe that there is an expectation to be a frontline singer, somebody who is holding a microphone, that there is a degree of talent there; that you can hold a tune, that you can follow the rhythm, that you can remember the words for the song – that you don't sound like a warthog while you're up here singing

Heather considered a person of questionable talent and/or skill to be a potential distraction,

> If someone's really keen to get up there but they don't have a natural skill or talent, it's probably best to find them another area to serve in because it can be distracting from the purpose of being up there.

The matter of purpose and intent was also addressed in Helen's response when she said,

> If I was just to talk to someone about their interest in the team then the two words I would use in helping to qualify their involvement and shape their thinking about it would be skill and heart. I want you to be a good singer; that's really important. I don't necessarily want you to be professional but I want you to be able to sing and I want you to be bringing the right heart to this ministry.

d) The word 'Performance'

Bringing the 'right heart to the ministry' is a tricky business for the Contemporary Worship Singer. The word 'performance' plays a significant role here. The Contemporary Worship Singer's primary task is to publically perform their duty as a leader of worship. As reviewed in the literature[48], performance can be presented in four different ways; each with a subtle change of orientation. The challenge is to discern the subtleties which can cause the Contemporary Worship Singer to employ a 'right heart' or a 'wrong heart'.

Interview participants were asked how they felt about the word 'performance'. Margaret was quick to highlight the inherent tensions implied by the word.

> It's a tension and a line we need to walk with wanting to do our best and to not be distracting; and to be able to lead as a team the congregation. We want to be doing all those things to God's glory but not wanting it to be a performance, and it is a fine line – and a lot of it comes down to your attitudes and your heart.

Debra also considered the subject of performance a hard issue to define. The following interaction presents the discussion held between the interviewer and Debra as they searched for clear demarcations between acceptable and unacceptable performance in the worship setting.

> (Interviewer) *How do you feel about the word performance?*

[48] See Chapter 2: Literature Review (p. 53)

(Debra) Yeah. I think that's one of those grey things because I do think a lot of the time people look at a worship service as a bit of a performance. You know you strive not to make it a performance because really you're up there to guide people in worship, and not to perform to them but sing with them; guide with them but I do think it's hard to get that happy medium between it not being a performance and being a performance

(Interviewer) *So you're talking about a tension there between it being a performance but not being a performance?*

(Debra) Yeah I think it's hard to get that medium because at the end of the day as I said you're not wanting to perform to people; you're wanting to help them to worship to God. You know as more of a guidance in the leading of a song rather than performing to people as a song you know.

(Interviewer) *So is performance a dirty word to you?*

(Debra) No I don't think it's a dirty word but I think there's a time and place for a performance.

(Interviewer) *Where would that time and place be?*

(Debra) Well I think if you're specifically doing a service where you're performing like where you're just singing – like there's one coming up where they're doing a hymn service, a hymn, just hymns. They're just all going to sing hymns and there's going to be some performances of hymns during that time, I think that's when it's a performance.

(Interviewer) *An item?*

(Debra) It's not a service, yeah they're doing items.

(Interviewer) *The performance of hymns?*

(Debra) Items, you know, that's the time where it becomes a performance

(Interviewer) *Is it okay then, because obviously it's going to be a service where everyone is going to sing hymns is – and I'm just trying to qualify what you're saying here – is it okay then while the person's leading the congregation in singing a hymn…is it okay for that to be a performance?*

(Debra) I think to a degree if you're using that song as an item…

(Interviewer) *So okay, so if the song's an item and people might be singing along but really the idea is for me to sing it as a solo…*

(Debra) Yeah, yeah.

(Interviewer) *That's okay as a performance?*

(Debra) I think so yeah.

(Interviewer) *But if the congregation…*

(Debra) If you're using it as a congregational song I don't think it should be a performance because you need to guide that congregation into the worship rather than performing it to them, yeah, time and place (laughs).

Both Evelyn and Heather agreed with Debra in defining performance as acceptable when worship repertoire is presented as an item. Kristine drew the focus of the question back to the idea of the accessibility and inclusivity of worship:

> You're not there to perform for the people; you're there to lead them. Basically you have the vocals and the instruments to set…a mood or help…the people get into a space with God. I'd hate to think of it as a performance because it's not just us – it's everybody that's involved.

Overall the cohort was almost evenly divided with five participants (Evelyn; Margaret; Candice; Sharon; Kristine) perceiving performance to hold a negative connotation in worship while the remaining four (Helen; Heather; Debra; Carl) each approached the term from a more pragmatic view point. Helen's response acknowledges the tension but holds to the perceived value of performance. She commented,

> I think that's a, that's like a hot button isn't it? You know it's up there with that excellence concept… there actually is an element of performance in what we do because if there wasn't then we shouldn't; we wouldn't do what we do. For example we could sing from the front rows, if it was just about leading the tune or providing a platform for those people to sing for the congregation to sing off well then we could play a CD or we could play or we could sit in the front row and not be visible.

e) What significance does the term 'worship lifestyle' hold?

As a final query under the sub-question of identity formation, participants were asked to indicate whether the term 'worship lifestyle' held any significance to them individually. Further to this question was a second point which enquired as to what it means to be a 'real worshipper'.

Eight of the nine participants believed that the term 'worship lifestyle' held significance, but only five (Margaret; Heather; Debra; Sharon; Kristine) directed their response to defining the term as describing a holistic lifestyle beyond that of the task of singing in church. Margaret noted,

> To me a worship lifestyle means, that my Christian life and my walk with God isn't just reflected on a Sunday within these four walls. Every day in my walking and my waking and my sleeping and my eating can be lived in worship of God.

Carl responded to the question by emphasizing vocal gifting as a determining factor:

> It's often said about someone who has a vocal gift or a musical gift…they would tend to have a vocal gift or a musical gift because they have a heart that loves to worship, loves to express their love for God and as such will have honed that gift, honed that desire in them by taking lessons, or by practicing that gift regularly probably in the quiet of their own home.

The recognition of vocal talent was also attended to by Helen as she qualified the culturally applied phrase 'she's a really good worshipper'. "I think they probably are saying she's a great singer." Helen went on to ponder "wouldn't it be great if people would say that about the person whose just been at the local state school, teaching RE for five hours because you know I think God would say they're a great worshipper."

Darlene Zschech was raised as an example of someone befitting a 'real worshipper'. Heather offered "I guess she really gets into her songs, she really appears to come across focused in her songs and the way she looks when she's worshipping – yeah she really is a good worshipper!" Debra also commented on Zschech's example suggesting "they're really probably just connecting to how she sings and worships those songs; and sings the songs, I suppose, as she's leading the congregation and she's worshipping."

Both Evelyn and Sharon shied away from offering any response that might be deemed to be judgmental. When asked whether all Christians could be deemed 'worshippers' Sharon responded "I won't judge another's walk". Evelyn (who as the sole participant to not regard 'worship lifestyle' as holding significance) commented that she suspected that the reference might be applied to all Christians.

4) What gives distinction to the Contemporary Worship Singer as a unique identity within the wider community of singers?

Singers come in many shapes and sizes. Every grouping of singers has its own set of cultural, environmental, technical and vocal nuances. The fourth sub-question seeks to enquire as to the attributes that set the Contemporary Worship Singer apart from his and her community peers.

a) In your opinion is the Contemporary Worship Singer any different from the secular 'pop' singer who sings regularly at the local pub?

As revealed in the survey data, Contemporary Worship Singers seem ready to acknowledge their involvement in singing contemporary/pop styled repertoire. They are also eager to distance themselves from the title 'pop' singer. When asked whether they would refer to themselves as a 'pop' singer, the majority of survey respondents said 'no' (85.9%; *n*73/85). In order to obtain further clarification to this statistic, interview participants were asked to qualify the difference.

Firstly, it is interesting to note that the interview data aligns with those of the survey respondents. Eight out of nine interviewees believed there was a difference between a pop singer and a Contemporary Worship Singer. Many respondents centred their comments around the perceived differences of the performance orientation. Carl suggested that

> The object of a pop singer's expression of their gifting is to bring the attention to themselves; is to bring the fame to themselves (and) to bring the financial gain to themselves. Whereas we as worship singers have a completely different focus. Fundamentally the sound may be similar and the style of singing may be similar but it's the spirit behind it; it's the attitude behind it, it's the reason we do it that is diametrically opposed to the pop singer.

While many of the interviewees identified the differences, a few (Helen; Margaret; Candice) participants acknowledged some similarities. Margaret commented,

> Taking a crowd on your journey is probably the same because in theory someone at a pub gig is trying to connect with their audience. (They are) trying to take them or focus them on something – take them somewhere. And I think as a Contemporary Worship Singer and a worship leader you're trying to do the same thing you're trying to focus to capture all of these people's attention and focus them on something.

The vocal task was also stressed as being similar by Helen. Her comments noted

> In terms of the task and skill (it's) pretty equal potentially. Especially if you were to take you know a random pop song off the radio this morning (and a) random contemporary worship song that's been written in the last three years – I think the vocal task would be very similar.

The same reasoning (the similarity of vocal task and repertoire style) led Debra to state "I wouldn't mind being called a pop singer (laughs). I just think because it is, it is that style of music, its pop music, if people want to call it contemporary – call it contemporary – but it's still pop music!" Debra was the sole participant who did not feel the need to distance herself from the title 'pop' singer.

b) Why do Contemporary Worship Singers typically do very little singing outside their Church context?

An emerging statistic from the online survey revealed that the majority of survey participants (*n*56/78) did not sing outside their church context. Interview participants were invited to comment on this statistic in response to the following question by the Interviewer:

> Is the lack of singing conducted by survey participants outside the context of their worship team indicative of the need to distance themselves from the label of 'pop' singer or is the reasoning less remarkable? That is do church singers simply feel content in their expression of 'contemporary' singing as a 'worship' singer and therefore feel no need to pursue other opportunities to sing?

Only one interviewee (Carl) believed the survey data might suggest a need for Contemporary Worship Singers to distance themselves from the general persona of the 'pop' singer. In his response Carl personalised his observation to his own experience citing,

> I have probably particularly gone out of my way to avoid a lot of the previous styles of music and expressions of music that I had before I was a Christian because I don't want the focus to come onto me.

It is important to note that while Carl is reflecting on his own experience, his previous performance involvement was musical theatre and not 'pop' singing per se. Three of the interviewee's previous performance experience was in musical theatre (Evelyn; Debra; Carl) and two participants (Helen and Kristine) nominated general performance involvement, but none of the nine participants indicated a history of contemporary 'pop' singing.

Eight of the nine participants indicated that the survey data suggested either a combination (Evelyn; Margaret; Debra; Candice; Kristine) of the two offered reasoning or exclusively the latter (Helen; Heather; Sharon) reason. Similar to Carl's response, Heather also personalised her response in favouring the 'less remarkable' explanation stating, "I personally am quite happy with Sunday mornings, there is no desire to go anywhere or try out for anything. I feel really happy. I don't have time (laughs). I don't have time to do all that (laughs)."

c) Is the role of Contemporary Worship Singer a demanding one?

Both Hughes (2010) and Bartlett (2010) have identified the challenging aspects of the singer employed in the broader context of contemporary singing and Gulliksen (2011) provides further context to the all-encompassing role of worship in the Christian's life writing "worship is the complete and continual surrender of our whole person: body, soul (will, emotions, and intellect), and spirit. It's giving up the right to rule our lives" (p. 32). A final question was asked in relation to the identity of the Contemporary Worship Singer: Is the role a demanding one? The question was asked with three sub-categorisations: vocally, physically and personally.

Table 5 presents the general responses:

Interviewee	Vocally	Physically	Personally
Evelyn	No	No	Yes
Helen	Yes	Yes	Yes
Margaret	No	Yes	Yes
Heather	Yes	No	Yes
Debra	Yes	Yes	Yes
Carl	Yes	Yes	Yes
Candice	Sometimes	Yes	Yes
Sharon	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kristine	No	No	No

Table 5: *Is the role a demanding one?*

An initial peculiarity emerges when the data is displayed in this form. It can be concluded that the more contemporary the worship setting, the higher the demand

made. The two participants from the Uniting Church indicated that their role placed little if no demand on them vocally, physically or personally[49]. Four participants from the Evangelical denominations (Baptist Church and Church of Christ) expressed relatively high demands while the three interviewees from the Pentecostal churches (Worship Centre and Christian Outreach Centre) nominated an almost exclusively high demand.

Helen believes that the demands experienced in the role results mainly from the repertoire. She suggested,

> As we see the musical style and forms blend with pop contemporary music we're asking the voice to do a lot of things in songs often in terms of range; using things like twang to get that extension in parts. I think it is demanding for people to sort of keep on top of that whether everyone's really aware that a particular song is demanding that or not is a different question.

Margaret is aware of the physical demands that result from her role as Contemporary Worship Singer. Margaret stated "it is incredibly physically demanding and literally I feel like I've been hit by a bus at the end of the service." Debra also expressed a sense of exhaustion

> I'm stuffed after doing a service, but that's probably because I do put everything into the worshipping. I put everything into the songs and I think just standing there and you know that's a lot of songs that you're doing in a short period of time.

As shown in the survey analysis, Contemporary Worship Singers are not always standing still. Often their role will involve jumping, swaying and even running. Candice talked about her involvement with the youth service[50] which she found physically demanding.

> We move around a lot in our youth services, we jump around a lot singing and jumping and dancing it's a unique skill….to jump and do something requires a lot of oxygen and to sing at the same time. I used to do long distance running and you don't talk while you're running. You're not meant to talk while you're running – using that oxygen and

[49] Evelyn did express some demands in role personally identifying a raising of "nerves".

[50] A 'Youth Service' is generally a church service designed specifically for younger people using music and media which appeal to the younger demographic.

> sort of being able to have, you know, control (of) your diaphragm so that you can sing and hold notes and not get out of breath while you're using up so much energy.

The personal demand was widely acknowledged amongst the participants. A number of the participants identified the mid-week rehearsals as a challenge but none seemed to begrudge the cost to their diary. Sharon reflected on the personal demand stating

> There is a cost to count – there is time involved – you have to have the time to surrender (to) it. There's been times when my family's had to wait while I got thing(s) for (the) worship or the team or preparing for our practices – Wednesday nights. So there is a demand but it's one that you choose to take on and you can choose to not take on but there's a responsibility and you know I rise to that. I love it!

5) What modes of instruction will best serve to train the Contemporary Worship Singer?

As a final line of questioning, interview participants were asked a series of questions focused on the instruction of the Contemporary Worship Singer.

a) Have you ever received training specific to your role as a Contemporary Worship Singer?

As shown in the survey data analysis (Chapter 4), less than 25% of survey respondents had received formal training for their role as a Contemporary Worship Singer and nearly a quarter of respondents had received no training at all.

Two thirds of the interviewees indicated that they had received training specific to their role as a Contemporary Worship Singer. After further questioning, each of these respondents indicated that the training had been exclusively provided by their church in the form of workshops and weekend training seminars. Carl reflected,

> There have been times when we as a worship team have done workshops; we've had a guest vocalist in to work with us and largely that has been focusing on a particular style of music rather than focusing on technique.

Any training that the Contemporary Worship Singer undergoes (and it is important to note that three of the interviewees had not received any training in any form) seems to be restricted to delivery in keeping with in-house professional development. None of the participants indicated that they had undertaken any training that engaged a more formal delivery that ascertained their competency levels.

The apparent challenge is how the Contemporary Worship Singer obtains the skills necessary for the task. Participants where specifically asked "do you know why you do what you do, or have you simply gleaned the practical knowledge through watching others?" Four participants (Margaret; Debra; Candice; Kristine) believed that general skill acquisition for the Contemporary Worship Singer was gleaned by watching others. Margaret stated

> I think it's very much by osmosis, but certainly, good and bad osmosis. Seeing things that I like and seeing things that I don't like; so I would say a lot of it is things that I have picked up as opposed to have been formally imparted to me.

Citing her own formal music training, Helen joined Carl in nominating a combination of both 'gleaning practical knowledge' and holding the necessary understanding previous to commencing the role.

Stepping outside the nominated parameters of the question, Sharon suggested that the development of the Contemporary Worship Singer came about through a concept she referred to as 'the calling'. She remarked,

> I'll use the word calling but I just feel like there's a desire that became so strong that it had to be expressed – it just had to. It didn't matter whether it was in this context or another but there was this desire to sing to God.

b) Why are warm-ups such a poorly practiced discipline amongst Contemporary Worship Singers?

A significant statistic emerged from the survey data analysis revealing that the majority (78.2%) of Contemporary Worship Singers do not warm-up their voices for use prior to a worship service. When compared with the literature review which defined the pursuit of excellence as priority for the modern church singer, this statistic stands as a contrast to stated ideals.

Interview participants where offered the survey analysis results (78.2%) and asked why they thought that such disciplines might be so poorly practiced. Only two interviewees (Debra and Kristine) said that they regularly warm-up before they sing on stage at church. Both admitted that their warm-up was conducted in the car on the way to the worship team practice immediately prior to the service proper. Peckham (2000) states,

> It is one thing to sing along to the radio as you drive in a car, and quite another to practice there. Background noise makes you have to sing louder to hear yourself. Your posture is compromised by the car seat, so you are not as likely to support your voice adequately. It is more productive to practice in a place where you can really hear yourself and concentrate on what you are doing. (p. 96)

Of the six participants who warmed-up (either regularly or irregularly), five stated that their warm-ups were conducted in the car on the way to church. Evelyn stated that the timing of the church service early on a Sunday morning was a contributing factor; "we are so rushed on a Sunday morning. You just don't get that time unless I'm singing scales in the car on the way over or something like that."

For those participants who did nominate that their warm-ups where conducted in the car, the Interviewer suggested that the literature indicated that their practice did not constitute as a sufficient warm-up. Sharon nominated a lack of informed training as a leading contributor to the general misuse of warm-ups:

> Maybe they haven't got the knowledge and the understanding of why. Maybe they see oh my guitar's an instrument I can tune but hey my voice will just come out. Maybe it's just a knowledge thing; if they were given more knowledge maybe they would warm-up more?

Helen also warms-up irregularly in the car. She suggested a similar explanation stating: "It reflects a lack of the understanding of the voice and what it's been designed, how it's been designed to be used."

c) What are the primary skills required by a Contemporary Worship Singer?

Finally interview participants were asked to offer their opinion regarding what skills might best serve the Contemporary Worship Singer, and secondly, what skills might the Contemporary Worship Singer benefit from if offered specific training. Participants were asked to suggest three skills for both questions. Figure 67 (p. 191) displays the prominent responses to the first question:

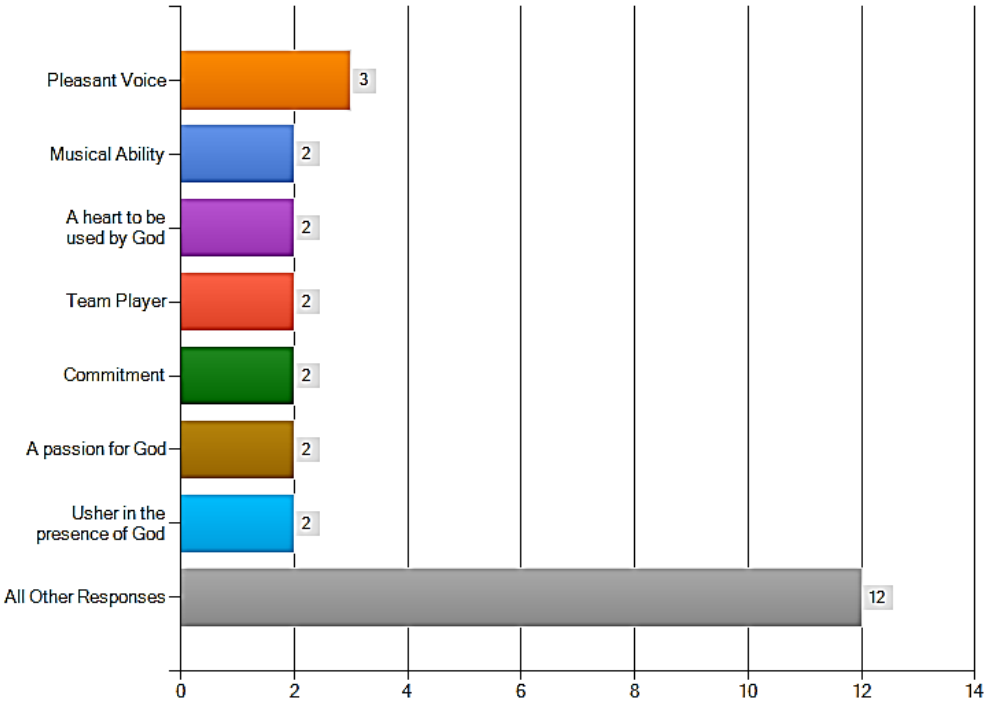


Figure 67: *Top nominated skills required by the Contemporary Worship Singer*

Figure 67 displays the seven responses that received two or more recommendations. Only three participants nominated the requirement of a pleasant voice as a primary requirement for the Contemporary Worship Singer.

When a cross tabulation of worship setting (Traditional; Evangelical and Pentecostal) is applied the following graphic is developed (Figure 68):

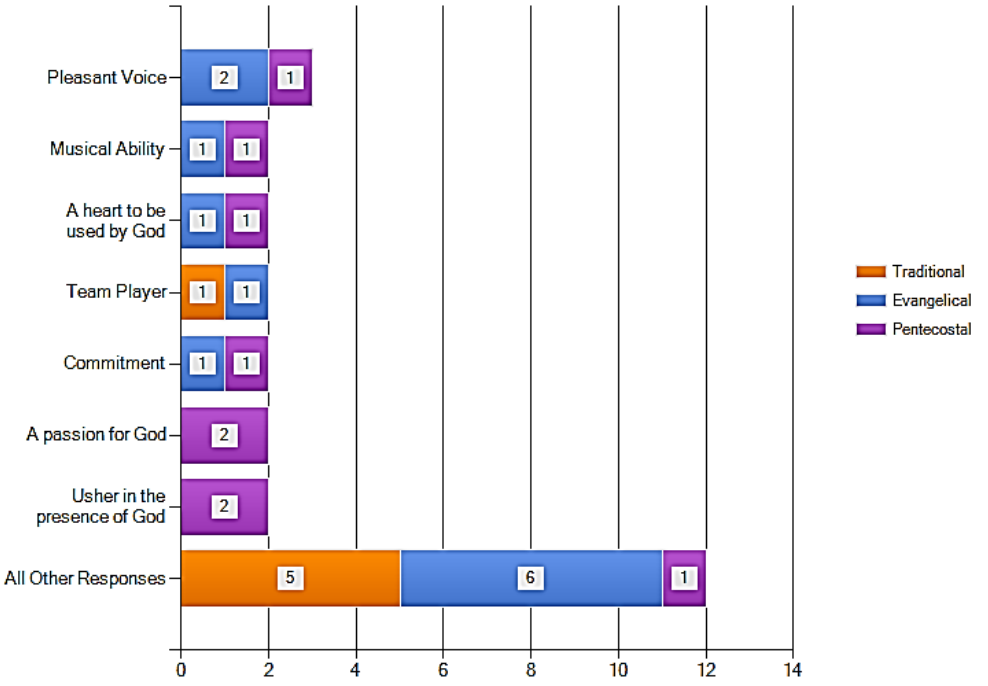


Figure 68: *Top nominated skills required by the Contemporary Worship Singer according to worship setting*

Significantly the attributes of ‘a passion for God’ and ‘Usher in the presence of God’ are only set as requirements for the Pentecostal setting. ‘All Other Responses’, which only received one nomination each, are as follows (Table 6):

Read Music	Sing in Tune	Presentation
Breath Management	Glottal Strokes	Twang
Enthusiasm	Being a Christian	A love for music
Ability to connect with people	Organisation Skills	General Confidence

Table 6: *All other responses as recommended by interviewees*

As a secondary level of enquiry, participants were asked to qualify which skills they believed a Contemporary Worship Singer requires training in. Figure 69 displays the results:

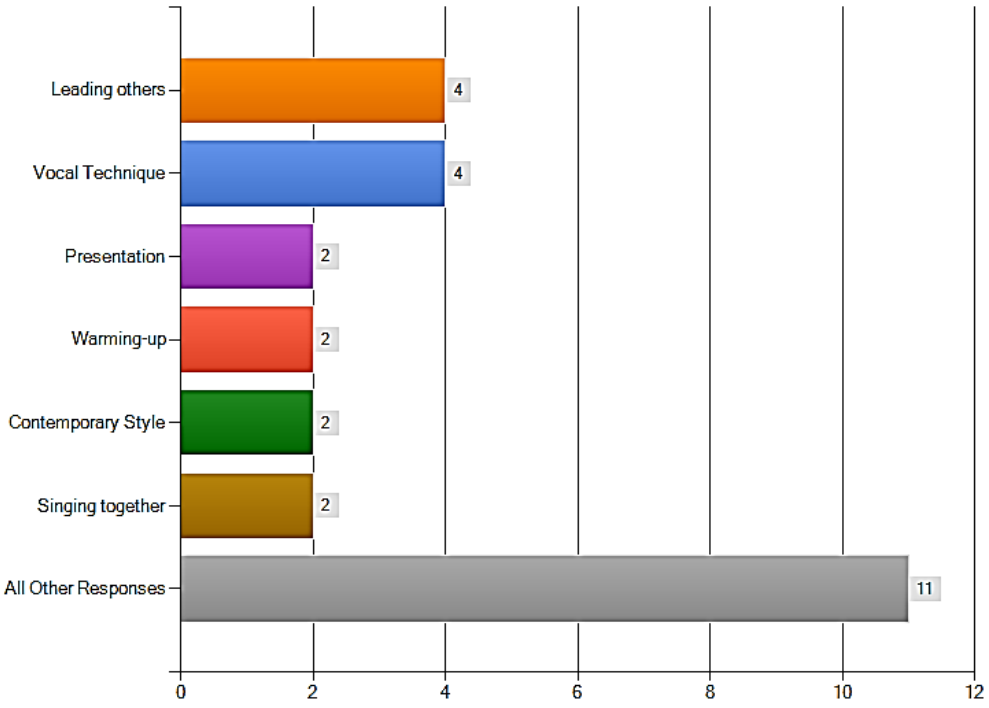


Figure 69: *Top nominated skills that the Contemporary Worship Singer requires training in*

Both the ability to ‘lead others’ in worship and ‘vocal technique’ received four votes each. Many of the nominations detailed in Figure 69 and those collated as ‘All Other Responses’ can be reasonably collected under the ‘vocal technique’ label. When

combining ‘vocal technique’ (4), ‘warming-up’ (2), ‘singing together’ (2), ‘diction’ (1), ‘breath management’ (1), ‘glottal strokes’ (1), ‘twang’ (1), and ‘harmonies’ (1) the resulting group has 13 recommendations making ‘vocal technique’ a dominant area requiring training.

The gathering of data is now complete. Presented at the close of Chapter 2 (p. 85), the four structural pillars (Context, Culture, Environment and Voice) were used throughout the ethnographic study and guided the enquiry through the online survey and semi-structured interviews. Also presented at the close of chapter 2 was the conceptual framework[51]. The conceptual framework states the research question and details five sub questions. These points of enquiry were formed from the questions arising out of the review of literature.

Figure 70 (below; p. 194) illustrates a broad overview of the research design, combining the conceptual framework and the structural pillars. What follows is the interpretation of the data, accounting for the review of literature as well as the analysis of survey and interview data. This is the final chapter of the study and is presented in two parts: Conclusions and Implications.

[51] See p. 86

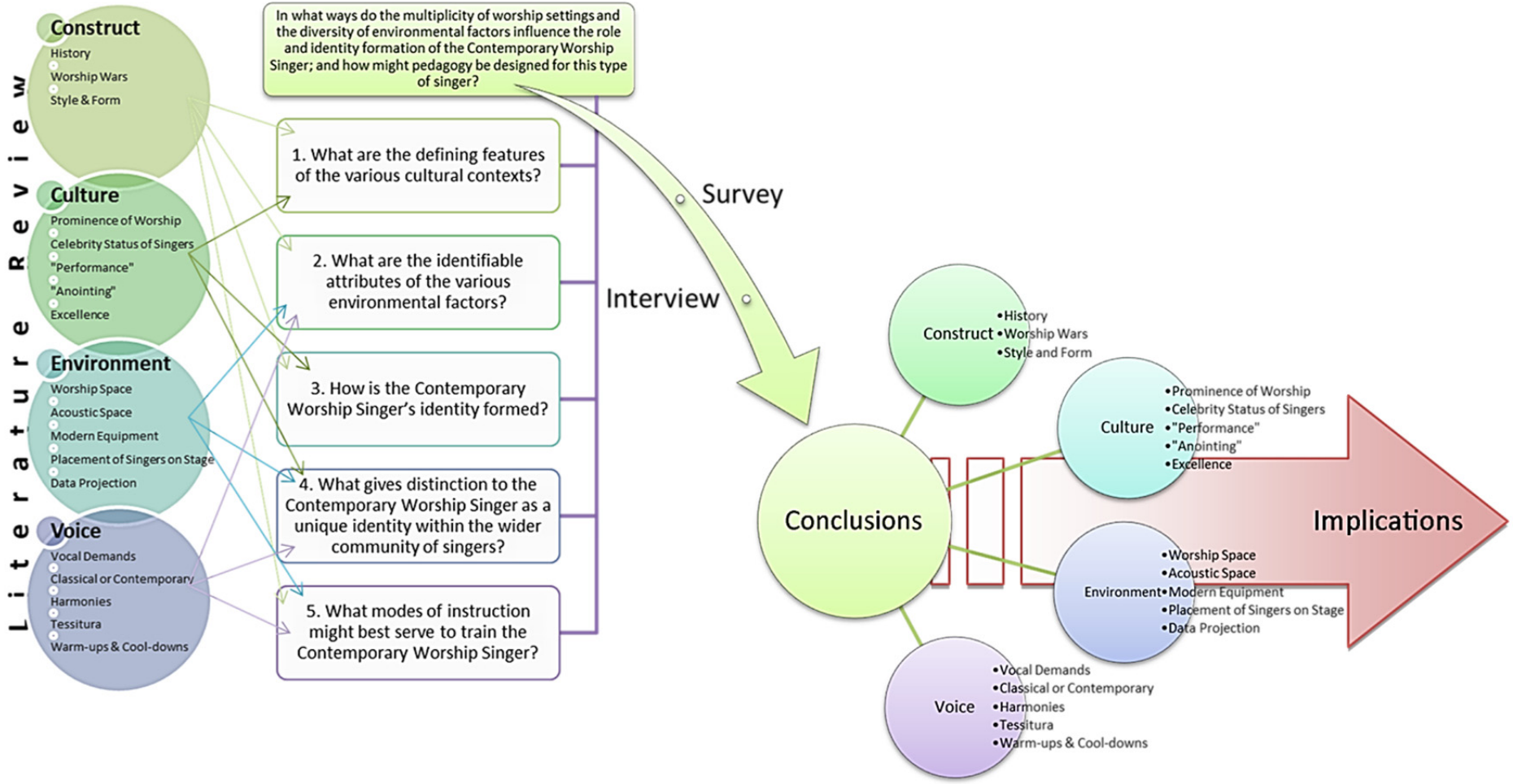
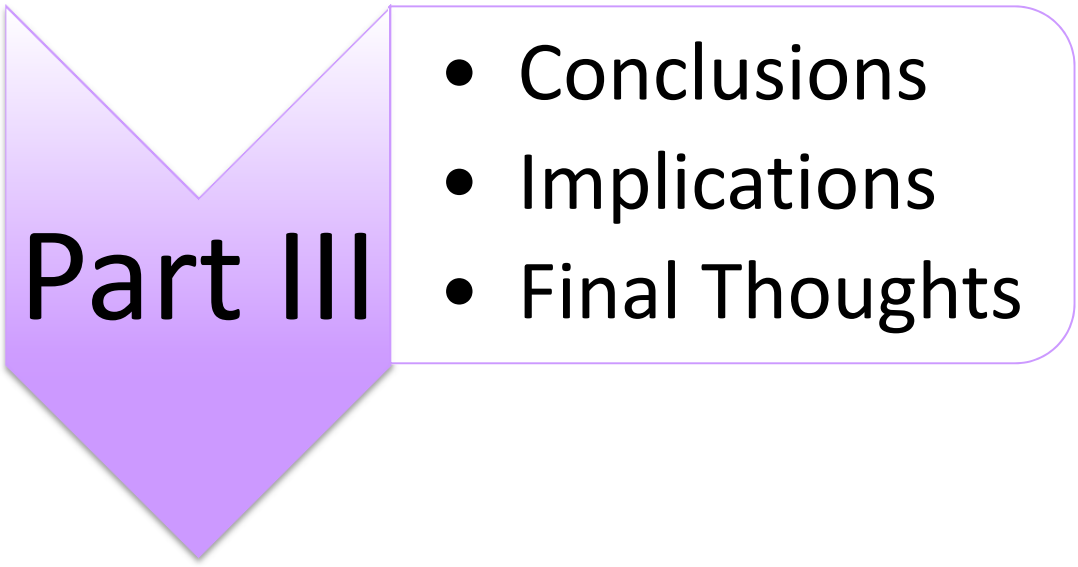


Figure 70: *Broad overview of research design (combination of conceptual framework and structural pillars)*



The final segment, Part III, completes the document with interpretative conclusions being drawn and recommendations offered.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications draw upon the analysis and findings of all modes of the data: literature review, survey and interview. In doing so an interpretative analysis of the topic is presented, distilling observations, figures and participants comments into a qualified assessment of the Contemporary Worship Singer's role and activity.

As a postscript to the research, **Final Thoughts** will return to the researcher's perspective; charting the journey travelled, with reflection on that which has been learnt and gained from the study at a personal level.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications

This study was designed to observe the Contemporary Worship Singer. To date the Contemporary Worship Singer has not received the same scrutiny as other creative practitioners in Australian music and worship contexts.

My desire to better understand the Contemporary Worship Singer commenced with the view that the uniqueness of the task could not be fully explained aside from the broader issues of identity and environment. This preconception arose from earlier enquiry into the group, ongoing participation as a church singer and observations made as a singing teacher. For these reasons I disclosed in the Introduction (p. 2) that I anticipated certain outcomes. Namely, I perceived that the variety of denominations a Contemporary Worship Singer might enact their role across could give rise to a diversity of theological positions in relation to worship practice. This presumption has found merit in each of the data sets (Literature Review, Survey and Interviews). However as the following presentation of conclusions will show, the levels of tension expressed by the Contemporary Worship Singer regarding many of the theological issues covered are generally low and culturally sustainable.

Secondly, I anticipated that church singers are typically untrained and vocally inexperienced. This conjecture has been scrutinised against the analysis of data and has been found to be too general in its rhetoric. While there was a high portion of the research participants that had not received adequate levels of instruction (according to the review of literature), there was a group of Contemporary Worship Singer's that had undertaken vocal tuition. The final chapter of this work will (in part) explore whether the lessons obtained are beneficial to the unique task of the Contemporary Worship Singer; concluding that while general singing lessons are helpful, instruction provided by singing teachers responsive to the unique task are best.

I noted a third anticipated outcome that arose from the second speculation: The Contemporary Worship Singers inexperience leads to a lack of practical understanding of their vocal task. During the Introduction I hypothesised that the "mostly untrained and consequently unskilled Contemporary Worship Singer is forced to develop skills for the task by copying other more experienced, but nonetheless untrained and unskilled fellow team members" (p.10). The contention that a culture of 'monkey see, monkey do' exists has been upheld as true, but the

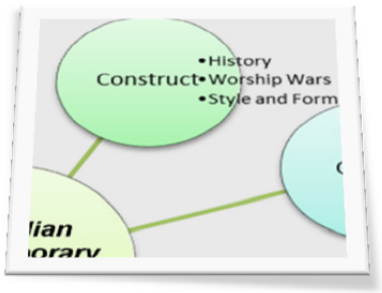
original view that this was limited to the practicalities of the task has been found to be short-sighted.

Explicitly, emerging from the collection of data has been an overarching perception that participants, for the most part, have a limited view of their role both practically and theoretically. First and foremost, as an active voice in the research I must declare that at the commencement of the study I held an underdeveloped view of the role. This declaration flies in the face of my yester-self of almost six years ago. I arrogantly believed that I had a suitable view of the group being researched and that while the investigation would unearth new understandings it almost certainly would not alter my existing thought. Having now completed the review of literature and the data analysis I can see the folly of my inexperience. I declare my own short-comings in order to appropriately frame the far more innocent, naïve position of my fellow church singers. My ignorance was fuelled by a little knowledge but the ordinary Contemporary Worship Singer actively shares in the joys of their role, often oblivious to the broader considerations of history, theology and vocal pedagogy. My original expectation was to observe unhealthy and unproductive singers who have been allowed to accept mediocrity as the norm. What I have found is a group of individuals seeking to do their best with a simple ignorance as to how to achieve their full potential.

What follows then is my interpretation of the data. The best understanding of the following conclusions and implications is contextualised by the narrow field of enquiry; by the size of the research participant cohort (survey – *n*85; interview – *n*9) and the geographical coverage (survey – *Australia only*; interview – *Brisbane only*). Also the conclusions I have drawn from my analysis cannot be separated from my bias regardless of its intent. I invite you to read through the list of conclusions and implications with an eye to better understanding the Contemporary Worship Singer and how their (our) role is enriched by considering the role's four structural pillars: Construct, Culture, Environment and Voice.

Conclusions

i) Construct



The Construct of the Contemporary Worship Singer is the worship setting in which the individual singer exists. Matters such as Christian worship history, worship wars and worship settings (Style and Form) are collectively reflected upon under the label of Construct.

One of the challenges facing the investigation of the Australian Contemporary Worship Singer was the variety of denominations apparent in the cohort[52]. The literature review and the survey revealed that nuances were evident in each worship setting. The blurring of denominational absolutes can be traced back to the shifts of the Protestant Reformation. It is clear that there are residual effects of decentralisation which in turn create a variety of choices for clergy and laity at the commencement of the 21st Century.

a) History

The study commenced with an overview of worship and singing throughout Christian history[53]. The breadth of time covered by Christian worship is vast, spanning more than two millennia. The literature review endeavoured to explore significant points in history where the construct of Christian worship underwent change while reviewing the evolution of singing and its use within the cultus.

Conclusively, singing has played a significant part in the history of the church. Singing has predominantly enjoyed use in the cultus as a means to forming a corporate voice as well as providing an effective vehicle for the delivery of theology. On occasion it has been singing alone that has engaged the laity, enabling them to participate in an otherwise 'clergy dominated' activity. In recognising the historical significance of singing in the church (and the development of the worship cultus itself) the survey and the interviews enquired as to the participant's depth of

[52] See Figure 26 (p. 103).

[53] See 'Brief History of Singing in the Church' (p. 14)

understanding and their appreciation of worship's developmental history; along with the place of singing in the cultus through the ages. In this area I conclude that the cohort of Contemporary Worship Singer's involved in the study largely had an underdeveloped understanding of the Christian church's worship history and the use of singing as an activity of the cultus preceding current times.

At this juncture I will be introducing some statements which will be labelled as 'Distinctive Feature'. Collectively these distinctions will form a broad (and purposefully general) role description of the Contemporary Worship Singer. The application of these distinguishing characteristics will be discussed later during 'Implications'. The first distinction of the Contemporary Worship Singer is:

> **Distinctive Feature #1:** The role of the Contemporary Worship Singer will be enriched by an understanding of Church worship history and the use of singing as a corporate activity by worshippers throughout the Christian age.

Any apparent disconnect from the historical footings of the Contemporary Worship Singer's task can give rise to bias because of an underdeveloped appreciation for the historical pillars which undergird the different worship settings. This bias may fuel the ongoing worship wars.

b) Worship Wars

Utilising the label 'Worship Wars', as it is often referred to in the literature, seems to over-extend the sentiment expressed by survey and interview participants. There are broad themes that evoke substantial debate in the literature. Topics such as 'God's presence' and 'intellectualism versus emotionalism' do enjoy considerable discussion among scholars, but survey and interview participants typically did not seem to connect their personal stance on such issues to scholarly debate; or any awareness thereof. It seems more likely that the Contemporary Worship Singer aligns their theological views to those held by their local church; that is there seems to be a ready acceptance and assimilation of the theological arguments as expressed by the individual's selected church and its local clergy[54].

[54] What is not apparent from this study is whether the specific church's stated theology forms the individual's doctrinal stance or whether the individual chooses to attend a specific denomination and church based upon the individual's already developed bias and preferences.

It may not be the Contemporary Worship Singer's responsibility to set the agenda for theological delivery within their local context, but they do participate in perpetuating both stated and unstated cultural doctrines. These cultural doctrines often pertain to the orientation of the worship participant. Whether motivated by the transcendence of God or His apparent immanence, whether engaged at the intellectual or emotional levels, the worship experience is facilitated (in part) by the Contemporary Worship Singer. The different approaches to the practical application of worship theology may be referred to as 'construct tensions'.

The topics generating the theological melee often polarise interested parties. For example, worship settings can often be distilled into two camps: traditional and contemporary. As stated earlier, ample evidence of these worship wars resides in the literature but there was little evidence to suggest that high levels of antagonism existed amongst research participants when considering matters of theology. The survey and interview data did however identify tensions within the greater construct of Christian worship; construct tensions which failed to exhibit the negative connotations implied by the label of 'Worship Wars'.

Three positive construct tensions are expressed in the data:

i) Immanence and Transcendence

As observed in the literature review there has been an oscillation between an emphasis on the emotional status of the worshipper contrasted with the intellectual status of the worshipper[55]. The researcher has concluded that this in turn aligns with the doctrinal consideration of God's immanence (emotive) and His transcendence (intellectual).

Individual churches find themselves gravitating to one point of the balance or the other; and in doing so their worship participants follow. Typically those in the survey and interviews that registered an affiliation with the Liturgical, Traditional or Blended worship settings expressed a preference for the Transcendent and Theoretical while research participants whose worship settings were Contemporary showed a partiality towards a sense of God's Immanence and the Experimental. For example when asked to comment on God's Anointing in a particular church service

[55] See Chapter 2: Figure 5 (p. 26)

interview participant Helen stated that she considered herself 'underqualified' to recognise His Anointing. Helen qualified her view commenting,

> …why should I be able to tell? And is that based purely because I'm feeling great this morning or I really love those songs or I thought the preacher spoke really well…how much does our humanity play into whatever our recognition or our definition of whether God's Anointing has fallen?

The above statement by Helen (whose church displays a Blended worship style[56]) stands in contrast to the response of Sharon whose church practices a Contemporary worship style[57]. When asked to comment on God's Anointing, Sharon reflected on her experience recalling

> …you get a sense of the presence of God just falling. When I say falling it's just like in your heart you just feel it physically…so I'll feel sometimes a warmth either come up through my legs or some sort of lightness in my chest or head; or my heart will beat faster.

It is important to note that neither participant questioned the existence of God's presence in a meeting or His Anointing, but the manner in which they choose to involve themselves with God's presence is juxtaposed; Helen takes the transcendent and theoretical approach while Sharon relates empathy for feeling God's immanence with an experimental experience.

[56] See Helen's (IP2/BC) self-defined worship setting represented in Figure 87 (p. 308).

[57] See Sharon's (IP8/COC) self-defined worship setting represented in Figure 93 (p. 314).

ii) Hymnody and Choruses

A second tension lay with the use of the predominant music genres: hymns and choruses. While Cherry (2010, pp. 151–177) notes that hymns and choruses are among at least nine main musical genres in use by the modern church, it is worth noting that no research participant in this study nominated the use of a music genre in their worship construct other than hymns, choruses or a combination of both[58].

The comments by participants concerning the use of either genre (hymns or choruses) centred on musical preferences unrelated to the theological superiority of the preferred genre. It appears for the most part that the war waged in the literature over hymns versus choruses is reduced to a positive tension of musical preference by the modern worshipper.

Additionally, those worship constructs that predominantly use hymns seem to maintain a 'preacher' centric view. The worship constructs that primarily utilise choruses appear to give a higher status to the 'worship team'.

iii) Structured and Semi-structured

The third tension of note reveals the value placed upon spontaneity. Historically the church has sustained an organized and structured existence. The very nature of many individuals gathering in one place at a set time for a church service (regardless of worship style or form) indicates the orderly (structured) arrival of worship participants. The tension is found in the level of structure.

Historically Pentecostal and Charismatic worship services (now grouped under the Contemporary label) have pursued spontaneity (White, 2000) and the Emerging worship style has been eager to create a worship experience which is free from linear structure. These are contrasted with the highly structured Liturgical, Traditional and Blended environments.

[58] I acknowledge that many of the participants may be designating the term 'hymn' as a universal label covering all music which is not modern chorus. This may be similar to the use of the term 'classical music' which many would use to describe 'Renaissance', 'Baroque', 'Classical' and 'Romantic'.

The three construct tensions are illustrated in Figure 71:

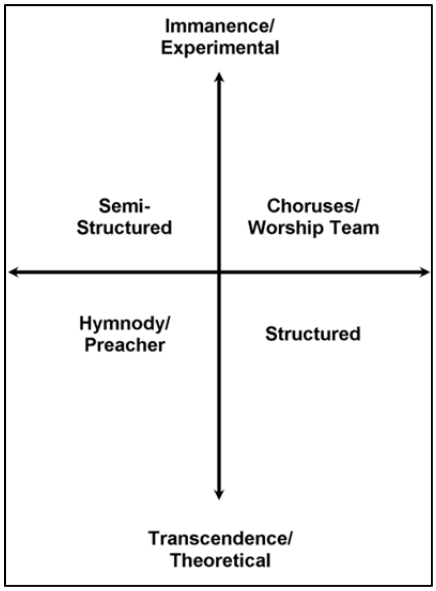


Figure 71: *Construct tensions*

Accordingly the Contemporary Worship Singer is participating, if not inadvertently so, on the contextual battle grounds that are maintained by scholarly frontlines. These theological worship wars (often expressed as positive constructual tensions by participants) give rise to a second distinction of the Contemporary Worship Singer and it is stated as:

> **Distinctive Feature #2:** The Contemporary Worship Singer participates in the delivery and facilitation of the local church's theological and cultural orientation to worship.

The second distinction in turn requires a defining of the 'local church' context. In the modern church era the construct of the local church setting cannot be understood without defining both worship style and worship form.

c) Style and Form

Perhaps the most difficult area to understand as a result of the decentralised nature of today's worship settings is the broader issue of worship styles and forms. As reviewed in the literature (Chapter 2; p. 37) many have attempted to present an illustrative model of the modern worship settings. The researcher settled on the

recent observations of both Pinson (2009) and Cherry (2010) as the most accurate representation of today's Australian worship styles. Neither Pinson nor Cherry presented their categorisation of worship styles as a graphic so I have developed a graphic to which further conclusions of the study will be attached.

The five Australian worship styles (Liturgical, Traditional, Contemporary, Blended and Emerging) are presented in Figure 72:

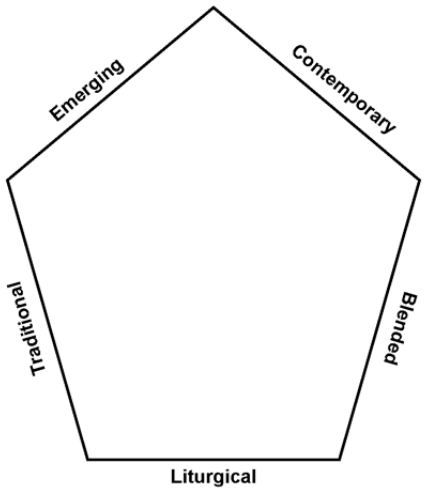


Figure 72: *The five worship styles*

Each of the worship styles is represented by a side-wall of the graphic. The researcher chose to place Liturgical at the base because it is the historical forerunner of the four other styles. The location of the four other styles has been considered and the reasons for their placement will become apparent as further points of conclusion are drawn and overlayed upon the graphic. A third distinction is presented at this point and reads:

> **Distinctive Feature #3:** Today's Contemporary Worship Singer is typically involved in one of five worship styles: Liturgical, Traditional, Contemporary, Blended or Emerging.

The review of the literature, combined with the analysis of the survey, revealed that the singular identifier of denomination (for example Baptist, Anglican or Assemblies of God) no longer gives observers or participants of modern worship an accurate means by which to converse. Similarly, worship setting by itself will not provide enough clarification as to the exact nature of a specific worship setting. It is therefore important to provide a second delimiter: worship form. In the discussion of worship setting, Liesch (1996) presented three terms for consideration: Liturgical, Thematic and Flow. When referencing worship style, Liesch's terms have become antiquated

in the modern worship era; however the researcher has adapted and modified these labels. The definitions as described by Liesch have been applied to the worship form.

The first of Liesch's labels, 'Liturgical', has been renamed and is referred to as *Modular* (Robinson, 2010b). This change to Liesch's original use of the label 'Liturgical' avoids confusion when applied against the first delimiter of worship setting which already uses the same term. The modular worship form was defined as moving "through distinct modules of worship with no one module regarded more highly than another, though the Eucharist (communion) is often seen as a climatic point" (Robinson, 2010b, p. 279). The worship settings most likely to employ the Modular form are Liturgical and Traditional.

'Thematic' is based on a central theme. For instance if the theme is 'God's Love', then all the service components (including songs, sermon and bible readings) will be governed by the overarching theme of God's love. Often the climatic point of this worship form is found in the sermon. The Thematic form is most often observed in Traditional, Blended and Emerging worship settings.

'Flow' derives its name from the flowing nature of the service components. Typically found in the Contemporary and Blended worship settings, a service using the Flow form will often have two distinct points of climax; one during a set of songs (typically known as the 'Worship Set') and a second during the sermon. It is important to note that these two points of climax can be independent occurrences: that is there needn't be a theme connecting the two climax events.

In considering worship form the fourth distinction states:

> **Distinctive Feature #4:** The Contemporary Worship Singer is required to vocally support the presentation of the local church's worship style (as stated in 'Distinctive Feature #3') using one of the three worship forms: Modular, Thematic and Flow. A clear understanding of a specific church's worship setting (style and form) will assist the singer in their role.

Because each worship form uses the same building blocks (music, sermon, communion etc.) it is important to recall Liesch's (1996) clarification which suggests that the three worship forms "are *not mutually exclusive*; they can be blended" (p. 72). Figure 73 therefore presents a rudimentary illustration correlating worship style with worship form. For instance, Blended settings often use a hybrid of both flow and thematic.

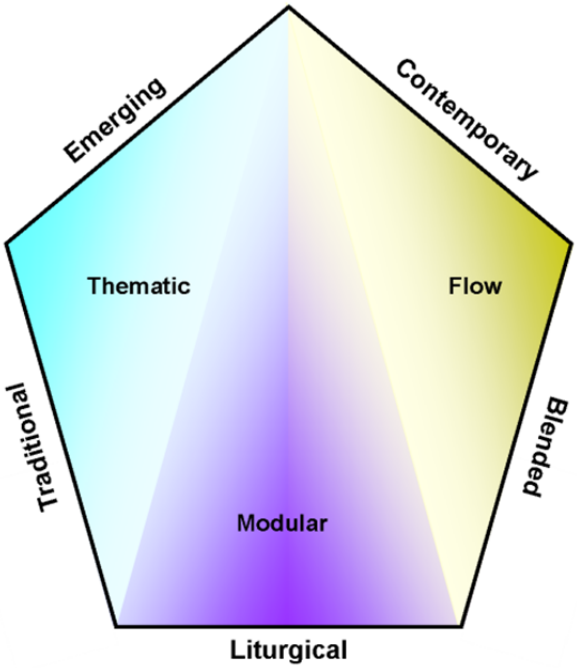


Figure 73: *Worship style and worship form*

It is now that the placement of the construct tensions (Figure 71) can be overlayed on the framework of Figure 73[59]. The resulting illustration (with the merging of worship style, form and construct tensions) is presented as Figure 74 (p. 207):

[59] Worship form will be henceforth represented by colour: Modular – Purple; Thematic – Blue; Flow – Gold)

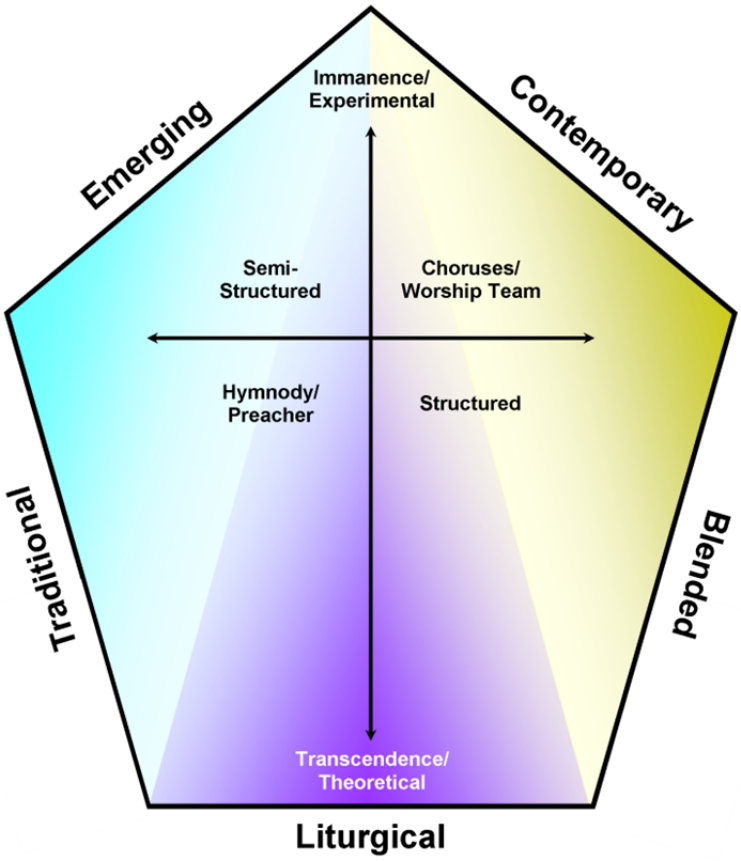
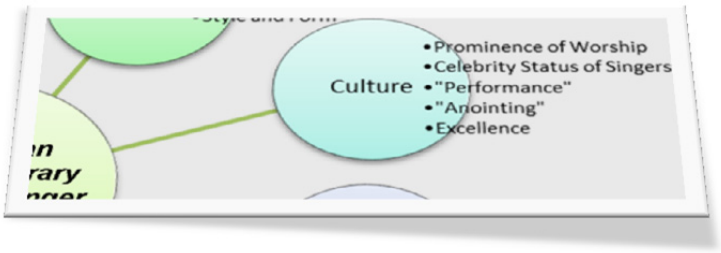


Figure 74: *Worship construct including construct tensions*

The framework of Figure 74 leads the presentation of conclusions to consider the next structural pillar of the Contemporary Worship Singer: Culture.

ii) Culture

When considering the Contemporary Worship Singer, the Construct gives meaning to the Culture which is a shared reality and common experience[60]. So what is the shared reality and common experience of the Contemporary Worship Singer?



a) Prominence of Worship

As discussed under the heading of 'Construct' (earlier in this chapter) the significance of Christian worship, its history and the importance of singing within the cultus has had a noteworthy impact on the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer. The postmodern era has not only played host to the codification of worship settings, but has also provided the necessary sociological shifts (within and without the church) required to lift Christian worship (and its music) to new heights of prominence.

There has been a shift in perception as to the importance of music and those who administer it within the cultus. Specifically (but not exclusively) in the Contemporary worship setting the prominence of both the worship team, the individuals who minister in that team (including the singers) and the material that they minister with (predominantly modern Choruses) has taken on a level of prominence never before observed throughout the history of Christian worship. That is not to say that music has not enjoyed significant notoriety through the ages, but even the works of J. S. Bach (1685–1750) did not draw significant (global) attention to the composer during his own lifetime (Sadie & Latham, 1993; Wilson-Dickson, 1992).

The development of this new found prominence has been enhanced and subsequently reinforced by the recent proliferation of technologies that carry and reproduce music. For example, Bach did not have access to the internet. He was

[60] Phillips (2001) has written that "a meta-narrative is an interpretive structure which gives meaning to reality and common experience" (p. 132).

unable to upload the performance of his new cantata to YouTube for viewing and propagation. Now in the 21st Century worship participants can access, review and download worship material (performances, chord charts and supporting materials) and in doing so develop highly tuned preferences for the materials that they do and do not like.

Furthermore, the use of worship music for devotion and entertainment on personal media devices (such as mp3 players) has in turn lifted worship music's importance in the lives of those who engage with it. As reviewed in the literature, and supported by the survey data, times of congregational singing now hold equal prominence with the preaching of God's word (sermon). The newly developed prominence of congregational singing situates the Contemporary Worship Singer as a key proprietor in the furthering of worship's prominence. Consequently another distinction arises due to the prominence of worship:

> **Distinctive Feature #5:** Contemporary Worship Singers are engaged in the modern global phenomena known as Christian worship. By virtue of their involvement individuals support and propagate the phenomena.

As suggested earlier the prominence of worship does not only lead to the proliferation of the cultus or the music used. The prominence of worship extends its effect to the Contemporary Worship Singer.

b) Celebrity Status of Singers

While not identified as a constructual tension the escalation of worship's prominence does give rise to a cultural tension: the celebrity status of the singers. This tension is exemplified in the labelling of the singer's namesake and the classification of musical genre that is used.

The data showed that the Contemporary Worship Singer generally seeks to distance itself from the general pop singer. Despite the modern chorus being identified as a genre in keeping with pop music idioms, church singers do not like being associated with or aligned with their secular contemporary music relatives. The most prominent reasoning for this anomaly in their identity is the perception that some pop singers have a reputation (correctly or otherwise) for being debaucherous and not holding to a personal character which might be deemed appropriate for Christian worship. This bias was revealed by a number of research respondents and is best summed up by

interview participant Candice who stated "…a lot of pop is so trashy (laughs)…I suppose with a lot of the image and the subculture involved with pop at the moment."

Additionally the Contemporary Worship Singer seemed eager to quarantine themselves from the notion that they sang 'pop' material because of the perception, rightly or wrongly, that commercial pop singers are famous. The synonymous application of the word 'celebrity' with the word 'fame' appears to conjure an avoidance of such labels lest the terms position the singer as one who seeks to rob God of the glory that is His due.

The attention generated by the celebrity status of the Contemporary Worship Singer results in a responsibility they carry beyond singing. Eight of the nine interviewees acknowledged significance in the term 'worship lifestyle'. Contemporary Worship Singers carry an awareness of their leadership responsibility into their everyday lives. This is a unique attribute of the role. The Contemporary Worship Singer is encouraged to lead an exemplary Christian life both in and out of the church setting.

The next distinction is an important reminder to Contemporary Worship Singers that labels alone cannot determine the worship orientation of the worship participant.

> **Distinctive Feature #6:** The Contemporary Worship Singer leads worship and in doing so may inadvertently draw attention to themselves and their skill. Acknowledgement of the individual while in the service of the church should be humbly received and privately submitted to God's glory.

It is important to note that some respondents in this study participated in both secular and sacred genres. Contemporary Worship Singers see their role as special and unique, requiring specific skills and an appreciation for the culture of worship. Research participants identified early morning starts, volunteer status and the generally low level of vocal expertise as also contributing to the distinction of the Contemporary Worship Singer; each of which will be considered in further detail later in the chapter.

The prominence of worship and the subsequent development of celebrity status for the singers naturally require an active reflection on the way the worship task is performed by those same celebrity vocalists.

c) "Performance"

The term 'Performance' received a mixed reception, with respondents polarised as to whether the term was positive or negative. According to most participants the Contemporary Worship Singer should not draw attention to themselves, but instead direct attention to God. Superficially this seems to be a legitimate position to hold in the context of Christian worship: God should be the focus of the worship event. But this same position becomes a cultural tripwire, hidden to the most observant of Contemporary Worship Singers. A number of the tasks fundamental to the Contemporary Worship Singer's role inadvertently reinforce the prominence and celebrity status of the Contemporary Worship Singer.

Firstly, as revealed by the analysis of the survey data, 76% of participants stated that they were positioned front of stage alongside the worship leader. Singing is not widely practiced outside the church in modern western culture, as Bourn (2002) has observed: "…people sing less spontaneously than in previous generations, except at football matches!" (p. 2). The modern professional football match is often supported with pre, mid and post-game entertainment. In these scenarios the musical performances by famous bands and professional guest vocalists is often performed on raised stages in the middle of the ground. When the Contemporary Worship Singer is placed at the front of a raised stage in front of people who are predominantly non-singers the (mostly) amateur singer is positioned as a professional. This in turn heightens the perception of the task and the people who fulfil the task.

Secondly, as revealed in the review of literature, many worship settings now have heavily carpeted surfaces (floor, walls and seating). In more conservative worship settings (Liturgical, Traditional, Blended) the voice of the congregant is often softened and dulled by the sound-absorbing surfaces, exposing the amplified voices of the Contemporary Worship Singers. In settings such as Contemporary worship where singing participation is high (Hall, 2006) the end result is the same; in order to achieve their leadership task, the Contemporary Worship Singer's voice is amplified in order to achieve audible exposure above the voice of the congregant. Regardless of the worship style, the Contemporary Worship Singer's voice is lifted and exposed, placing it in a position of prominence.

Finally, the survey analysis revealed that 70% of respondents believed that their church worship team was a dominant group within the life and general activity of their church. Furthermore, eight (of the nine) interviewees conceded that they received a sense of worth from their involvement in their worship team. Being a visually and audibly prominent member of a dominant group within the life of a church will most certainly lead to a tension for the Contemporary Worship Singer who has been instructed not to perform or draw attention to themselves.

This research leaves no doubt that the task of the Contemporary Worship Singer is performed. The performance of the vocal task is often presented in front of hundreds (sometimes thousands) of people. The challenge facing the individual singer is one of balance. When the singer presents a covert performance they run the risk of rendering the vocal presentation void of charisma which can suppress the involvement of worship participants. If the presentation is overt in its performance (beyond that which is appropriate to the worship setting) the singer might draw undue attention to themselves (Figure 75):

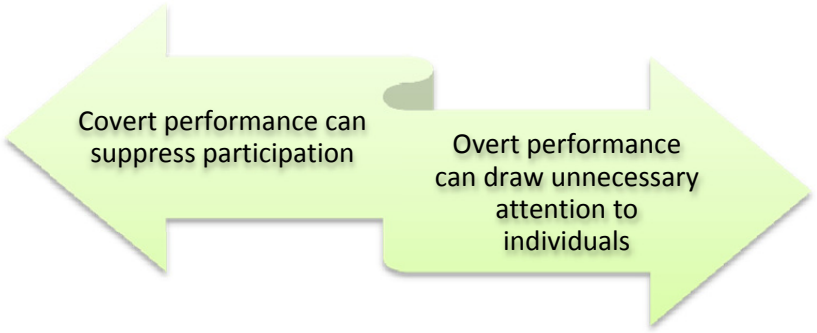


Figure 75: *Covert and overt performance*

This is a difficult balance to strike, but the level of the challenge should not deter individual singers (and the worship teams who they serve with) from pursuing a performance orientation that is pleasing to God. The seventh distinction of the Contemporary Worship Singer highlights the necessary pursuit of balance in performance:

> **Distinctive Feature #7:** The public nature of the task requires performance. The Contemporary Worship Singer should pursue a balanced presentation that motivates the worship participant to glorify God.

The importance of Distinctive Feature #7 is enhanced when reflected against Jesus' words as he instructed his followers in their public display of faith saying: "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 6:1).

The cultural matter of 'performance', while carrying corporate implications, is often addressed at the singular level by the individual. So it is with the next topic covered under the banner of culture.

d) "Anointing"

The theological notion of the Anointing has different meanings for different groups. For some it is the term given to God's immanent presence in a meeting of Christian worship. For others it is individualised in order to credit a person's value in any task within the service of the church. The subject of God's tangible presence has already been covered and reckoned a constructual tension so I will direct the conclusions here to consider the role 'Anointing' plays within the culture for the individual.

What seems clear from the data is that this has the potential to be a divisive issue. Some research participants expressed that God's Anointing is divine acknowledgement that an individual should be active in the role of Contemporary Worship Singer. Other contributors to the data were equally cautious about the idea of God's Anointing being applied to the role; with some concerns going as far as to suggest the potential for perversion and misappropriation of power.

The Anointing (whether for a group or an individual) has scriptural grounds and can be supported and argued from a range of denominational views. It is interesting however that out of almost 100 research participants no respondent offered a scriptural defence for their position regarding the Anointing. This observation led to the conclusion that while the Anointing is used as a significant point of reference by two thirds of survey and interview participants combined, the understanding of this concept is weak and open to personal distortion by virtue of subjective experiences and possible biases. I acknowledge that this conclusion gravitates towards the conservative (standing with the cautious minority) but it seems to be the safest position from which to comment.

Given the apparent lack of scriptural understanding amongst the research cohort I am drawn to derive a distinction that grounds the Contemporary Worship Singer firmly

in universal Christian orthodoxy (albeit conservative) but allows for cultural interpretation according to one's own worship setting. In doing so, I have chosen to design the eighth distinction around an encouragement found in the first of John's New Testament epistles. John writes "But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge" (1 John 2:20). John is conscious of the traditional Hebrew practice that used the anointing of oil to identify select individuals for specific tasks (Leviticus 8:1–36); but here John declares that all believers have been 'anointed'. This seems to be a good place to start; a point where all begin as equals in the service of Christ and the mission of His Church. I therefore humbly submit the following as a fundamental of the Contemporary Worship Singer's task:

> **Distinctive Feature #8:** Anointed by God to declare His grace and mercy, the Contemporary Worship Singer undertakes the responsibility of leading the corporate gathering as an equal participator in the worship event.

A key word in the above distinction is 'responsibility'. The weightiness of this word will be explored and further defined by the final cultural point.

e) Excellence

The term 'excellence' is given to mean attaining to the highest standards. The word 'excellence' is often coined in the adage 'Giving God your best!' This axiom presents some difficulties for the Contemporary Worship Singer and the responsibilities it infers. Analysis of the data would suggest that the standards adhered to by many Contemporary Worship Singers fall short of best practice as outlined in the literature.

With 42% of research participants having received no singing lessons, it is difficult to ascertain how a standard of vocal excellence can be achieved. Less than 25% of survey respondents received any formal instruction for their role as a Contemporary Worship Singer. The notion of excellence is therefore questionable. Furthermore seventy eight percent of survey respondents indicated that they do not warm-up their voices, either prior to the church services or before a worship team practice. While the methods may differ, the literature is unanimous in acknowledging the value of a disciplined warm-up regime. Warm-ups are essential for vocal excellence: without them the singer will only ever achieve a sub-standard performance.

Superficially, matters of vocal practice are an easy target when reviewing the standards of the Contemporary Worship Singer[61]. What requires more deliberate thought is the consideration of why such practices are not adhered to. This contemplation has led me to conclude that we (yes, I include myself in the assessment) have lost the sense of responsibility in the role. If the weight of the responsibility (as it is performed before God) was truly shouldered by Contemporary Worship Singers then a desire to acquire superior levels of skill through lessons would be accepted as mere convention. Why? Because nothing less than the best would do; the sense of responsibility would be too great.

Gaining a sense of responsibility without weighing the role down with excessive solemnity appears to be the challenge. It is this challenge that I seek to instil in the final cultural distinction:

> **Distinctive Feature #9:** The responsibility of the Contemporary Worship Singer drives a desire to honour God with an offering of service that is active in its pursuit of excellence.

iii) Environment

The third structural pillar of enquiry, Environment, explored the physical setting in which Contemporary Worship Singers function. Again, the multiplicity of worship styles and form presented the researcher with variables to consider.

a) Worship Space

As highlighted by the literature, the space in which Christians worship has almost always been intentionally designed. While eight of the interviewees acknowledged the importance of the worship space, they struggled to articulate its importance and impact on their task as Contemporary Worship Singers.

[61] Singing lessons and the care of the individual voice with habits including warm-ups are important and receive additional comment later in the chapter (see p. 223).

To consider worship space is to contemplate what makes a house a home. Every individual is drawn to different architectural designs for their homes. The choice of furnishings and array of colour displayed throughout the structure are what gives one house distinction from the next; so too with worship space. In seeking conclusions that benefit the Contemporary Worship Singer the analysis of data must look past the infinite array of variation in the design of worship space to those features which are considered elementary and consistent throughout. At the most rudimentary and practical level every Christian worship space is designed to allow the assembling of believers for fellowship, the declaring of God's word, and the encouragement of one another with various modes of devotion (including singing). As reviewed in the literature the design of every worship space is always a compromise between these three functions (Figure 76):

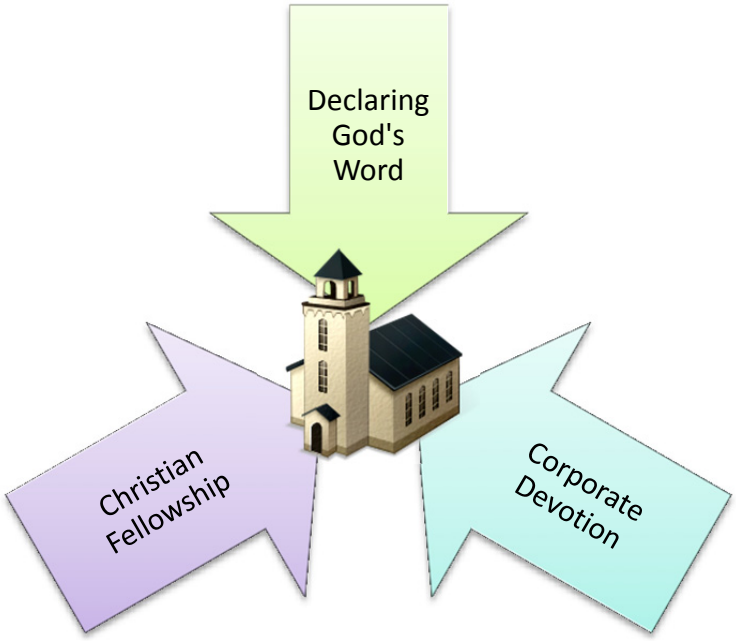


Figure 76: *The compromise of space*

After reviewing the data I believe that the subject of worship space and the way that the Contemporary Worship Singer practices their task within the space is not only misunderstood; it hardly rates consideration. I will address this omission of understanding here with the assumed premise that each worship setting will express and balance the worship space functions differently.

The functions of 'declaring God's word' and 'corporate devotion' are easily recognised in the roll of the Contemporary Worship Singer. Commonly the lyrical content of worship repertoire seeks to glorify God using quoted and paraphrased

scripture. The activity of congregational singing is one of the corporate devotional functions. By leading the congregational singing and giving voice to the lyric the Contemporary Worship Singer is automatically interacting with two of the functions of the worship space. The third function (Christian fellowship) is not so easily observed in the role, but it is facilitated nonetheless.

Christian fellowship is often a misrepresented notion. While socialisation is enjoyed by the gathering of individuals, Christian fellowship seeks to step beyond the bounds of our individualism. Wiersbe (1996) defines Christian fellowship as being "concerned about one another" (p. 17). Wiersbe goes on to state that,

> We are also commanded to submit to one another (Eph. 5:21), encourage one another (1 Thess. 4:18), care for one another (1 Cor. 12:25), forgive one another (Eph. 4:32), and edify one another (Rom. 14:19; 15:2), to name but a few. Fellowship involves sharing ourselves with others. (pp. 17–18)

Specifically, it is the encouraging of one another and the sharing of one's self that sees the Contemporary Worship Singer actively engaged in the service of his and her brethren; participating in Christian fellowship.

The first distinction of the environment attempts to encapsulate the manner with which the Contemporary Worship Singer should seek to involve themselves with the worship space and its three primary functions:

> **Distinctive Feature #10:** The Contemporary Worship Singer plays an integral role in the Christian worship space by giving voice to God's Word, facilitating corporate devotion and encouraging Christian fellowship.

The conclusion drawn from the study of worship space has necessarily been directed towards the sociological sinews observed in the modern church. The next deduction accounted for under the structural pillar of Environment assesses the Contemporary Worship Singers' contribution to the audial landscape of the worship space.

b) Acoustic Space

One of the issues pertaining to the acoustic space of the modern church environment has already been discussed: the modern worship space is often treated with soft surfaces. Carpeted floors and walls, along with cushioned seating, combine to absorb live acoustics.

What has not been explored in detail yet is the manner in which these environments quell the live acoustic created by the human voice, dampening the auditory feedback necessary for good singing. Consequently, both the congregant and the Contemporary Worship Singer are challenged to lift their vocal output to a point of discomfort and at times, vocal distress. McCoy (2004) explains that our "speech [and singing] must be at least 20dB louder than the ambient noise for easy intelligibility. This helps explain why voices become easily fatigued in noisy environments such as a party or dance" (p. 20). Therefore, one aim of the Contemporary Worship Singer is to monitor the acoustic space for levels which mitigate healthy and sustainable involvement. Seemingly juxtaposed to this aim is the leadership role of the Contemporary Worship Singer which instinctively seeks to embolden the congregant to give voice to their collective praise. The difficulty is that people sing when they are confident that their own voice will join with the voices around them in way that does not overly expose their own singing. Balance must be obtained (Figure 77). Too much volume and the worship participant will cease participating due to physical discomfort. Too little volume and the worship participant will cease participating due to social discomfort.

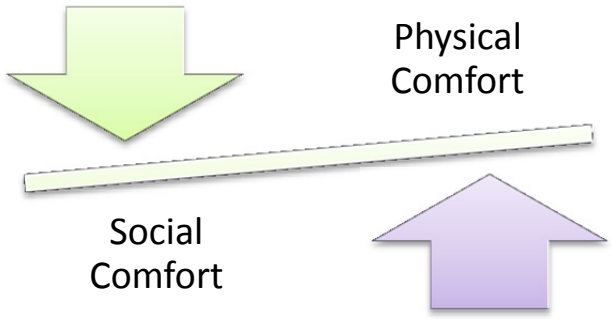


Figure 77: *Acoustic space balance*

The distinction arising from the unique acoustical space occupied by the Contemporary Worship Singer seeks to strike the balance required for comfortable participation:

> **Distinctive Feature #11:** The Contemporary Worship Singer seeks to enhance the worship experience of the congregant by providing vocal leadership that does not compete with the corporate voice or the acoustic space.

Many of the issues pertaining to the acoustics of a worship space have been mitigated by amplification, but this amplification can present its own set of

challenges for the Contemporary Worship Singer. Given that many Contemporary Worship Singers are untrained for the role, it is difficult to expect that their use of the amplification equipment will be optimal.

c) Modern Equipment

Today's worship spaces have been enhanced by technologies designed to assist the audio visual experience of the worship participant. The Contemporary Worship Singer will find themselves using these technologies in their role. Specifically, two technical tools are used by the Contemporary Worship Singer: microphones and foldback monitors.

Almost all research participants use a microphone when they perform their duties as a Contemporary Worship Singer. Firstly, the Contemporary Worship Singer is confronted with the challenge of how to use the microphone[62]. Secondly, only two survey respondents used their own microphone at church. This raises the concern of general physical health for the Contemporary Worship Singer. The close proximity of the microphone to the mouth allows transmission of virus and bacteria from one vocalist to the next as they share the church microphones.

The Contemporary Worship Singer should be instructed on how to request a good monitor mix. Most (88%) of the survey respondents enjoyed the facility of foldback through either floor monitors or in-ear monitors. The majority of survey participants indicated that they could generally hear themselves through the monitor system. The 30%[63] of survey respondents who are unable to hear themselves clearly through the foldback system might benefit from instruction in what to request in the monitor mix. Further enhancement of foldback might also be gained with an upgrade in the churches audio system to include multiple foldback sends and pre-fader auxiliary sends with equalisation[64].

[62] No enquiry was made to evaluate the microphone technique of the research participants, and this provides a valuable source of further research.

[63] This figure (30%) includes the nine survey participants who registered that they did not have any foldback.

[64] For more information on auxiliary sends see *The Yamaha Guide to Sound Systems for Worship* (Eiche, 1990).

The technical aspect of the environment directly affects the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer. Whether by enhancing or detracting from the vocal presentation, microphones and foldback monitors are two tools that should be understood by the individual singer. Another distinction can be derived from this environmental consideration:

> **Distinctive Feature #12:** Contemporary Worship Singers use microphones which are generally relayed back to the vocalist via a foldback monitor. Accordingly, individual singers should possess a microphone that is best suited to their unique vocal characteristics.

d) Placement of Singers on Stage

The everyday practice of the Contemporary Worship Singer is generally conducted on raised platform (in front of the musicians) in direct view of the congregation. This place of prominence exposes all that the singer does to scrutiny. Where the acoustical amplification highlights the singer's vocal prowess (or lack thereof), the platform draws attention to matters such as gesture, clothing and individual weight (body mass). It is therefore the placement of the singers on stage (front and centre) that completes the cultural reinforcement of the celebrity status; environment shaping culture.

Another impact of the environment on the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer is the placement of the stage in relation to the congregation. In three of the churches in which the interviews were conducted, the stage was some distance from the congregation (Figure 78; p. 221):

Christian Outreach Centre

Worship Centre

Baptist Church

Figure 78: *Three worship spaces*
(Photos used by Permission)

The Baptist Church showed the greatest distance between the stage and the front of the congregation measuring in excess of 5 meters. Both the Christian Outreach Centre and the Worship Centre also provided a sizeable area between the stage and the congregation for ministries such as prayer. The Contemporary Worship Singer must cater for this distance in their capacity as worship leaders. This distance can leave the singer feeling like they should push the voice beyond the 'void' which separates them from the congregation. This exertion might be visible to the congregation and draw attention to the singer. This may in turn also reinforce the prominent position of the Contemporary Worship Singer.

When considering environmental factors the thirteenth distinction of the Contemporary Worship Singer cautions individuals to be conscious of the exposure afforded by the physical position while embracing the opportunity to influence the congregation to worship God:

Distinctive Feature #13: First and foremost on stage, the Contemporary Worship Singer holds a visually prominent place on the worship platform whereby active encouragement of worship participants can be conveyed in a manner befitting the worship setting.

It is not only with the naked eye that the Contemporary Worship Singer might be viewed while conducting their task.

e) Data Projection

The use of live video projection is still not widely used. Churches use data projection systems for the display of lyrics (for hymns and choruses) to assist congregational singing. The impact of these systems on the vocal task of the Contemporary Worship Singer will be discussed in the next section. It is important to highlight that where the survey respondent was displayed live on a video projection screen during the service, the data revealed that all were involved in a Pentecostal (Contemporary worship style) setting. The exclusive use of this technology by the Contemporary worship style heightens the opportunity for the celebrity status to be a greater challenge to Contemporary Worship Singers in these settings. The resulting cycle of confused ideals is presented in the following illustration (Figure 79):

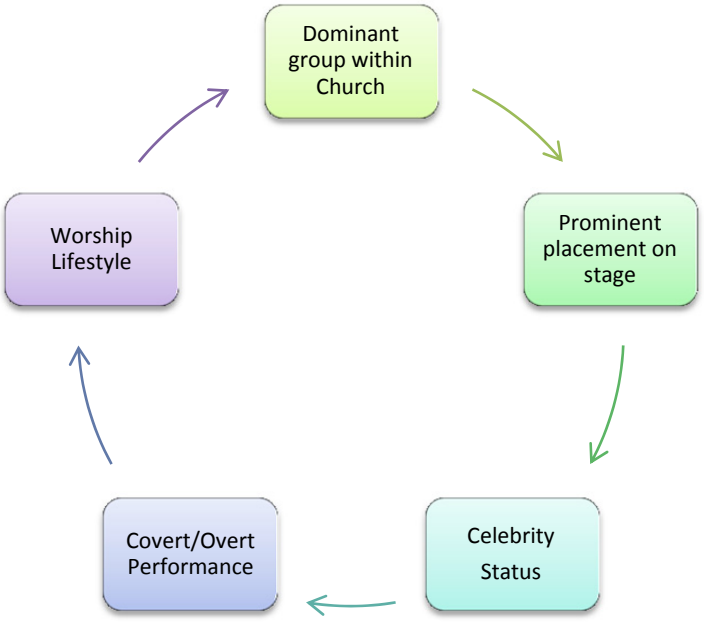


Figure 79: *Cycle of confusion*

This cycle of confusion gives rise to contradictory statements as observed in some of the interviews when discussing topics such as 'performance', and 'excellence' (p. 180). Eight out of the nine interviewees also indicated that the demand of the role is personally high; that is they felt the pressure of the role beyond the stage.

Visual projection of singers on to large screens gives rise to the final environmental distinction; and though the use of live video projection is not widely used outside the Contemporary worship setting each individual singer should consider the potential implications for the role:

> **Distinctive Feature #14:** The Contemporary Worship Singer may be presented to the congregation on visually prominent screens via live video. The technological enhancement of the individual's presence should be considered and accounted for in the stage presentation of the vocal performance task.

The final environmental distinction recognises the task as a vocal performance. I will now complete the presentation of conclusions by presenting the vocal task of the Contemporary Worship Singer under the heading 'Voice'.

iv) Voice

The subject of Voice is the fourth pillar of enquiry. The main role of the Contemporary Worship Singer is to lead the congregation in community singing and the primary tool for this task is obviously their voice.

a) Vocal Demands

The review of literature revealed that church singers undertake a demanding vocal load. The exact demands placed on the Contemporary Worship Singer's voice are not readily identified in the analysis, with many of the survey respondents indicating that they find the vocal work load easy and energising. The perception of vocal load is heightened according to the singing undertaken according to the worship setting.

Thirty percent of survey respondents indicated some form of vocal duress. This figure is reinforced by the researcher's post-interview discussions with three of the interviewees whose voices exhibited symptoms of vocal dysphonia[65].

The vocal demands on the Contemporary Worship Singer have been displayed in Figure 80 and run low to high (left to right).

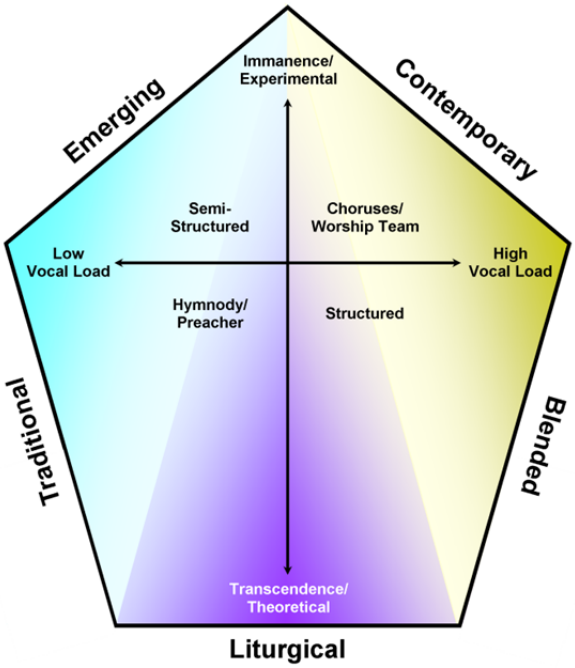


Figure 80: *The structural framework of the Contemporary Worship Singer*

This graphic (Figure 80) recognises that vocal load is often increased where the voice receives little rest. For instance, in the Contemporary worship setting, the flowing design of the worship set can require a singer to be constantly singing for 30 to 40 minutes[66]. Length of worship set is not the only point to be considered when assessing vocal load. For example, a singer involved with the Emerging worship setting may need to sing through a 30minute vocal set; however the worship set design in the Emerging setting will intentionally minimalize any single voice dominating the congregational singing. This in turn lowers the vocal load experienced by the Contemporary Worship Singer in the Emerging setting. The vocal

[65] *Vocal dysphonia* can be defined as a "difficulty in speaking due to a physical disorder of the mouth, tongue, throat, or vocal cord" (Soanes & Stevenson, 2008, p. 448). Vocal dysphonia is recognised by the sound of the voice; that is a raspy, hoarse or intermittent voice is said to be *dysphonic.*

[66] There are times when the 'worship service' can extend beyond the average 30-40 minutes.

load, when considered along with the inadequate training of many Contemporary Worship Singers leads the researcher to surmise that many participants are being exposed to vocal wear and tear; which in turn can lead to vocal damage.

This vocal point relates back to the cultural pillar of excellence. You cannot give God your best as a singer with a voice that has suffered wear and tear due to excessive vocal loads. A clear distinction arises from the assessment of vocal loads:

> **Distinctive Feature #15:** The vocal loads experienced by the Contemporary Worship Singer may vary from low to high. Individual singers should be aware of the inherent vocal loads required by their worship setting.

Awareness of vocal load leads the presentation of conclusions to the appropriate preparation of voices for the specific worship setting: vocal load and vocal style.

b) Classical or Contemporary

The world of vocal pedagogy is commonly classified into two main disciplines: Classical and Contemporary[67]. The literature review surveyed the history of singing within the western Christian church, revealing the longstanding position of hymnody (a predominantly classical idiom) and the evolving status of the modern chorus (a predominantly contemporary idiom). The Contemporary Worship Singer is often required to sing both hymns and modern choruses, though most worship settings will use one genre (hymns or choruses) more than the other. As with many of the conclusions under the topic of Construct, the tension between a classically instructed voice (preferable for hymns) and a contemporary instructed voice (preferable for choruses) maintains the balance of task dictating the choice of either/or. The resulting tension can be displayed as a part of the framework below (Figure 81; p. 226):

[67] It is acknowledged that Music Theatre is an emerging discipline in its own right (Bourne, et al., 2010; Wilson, 2010).

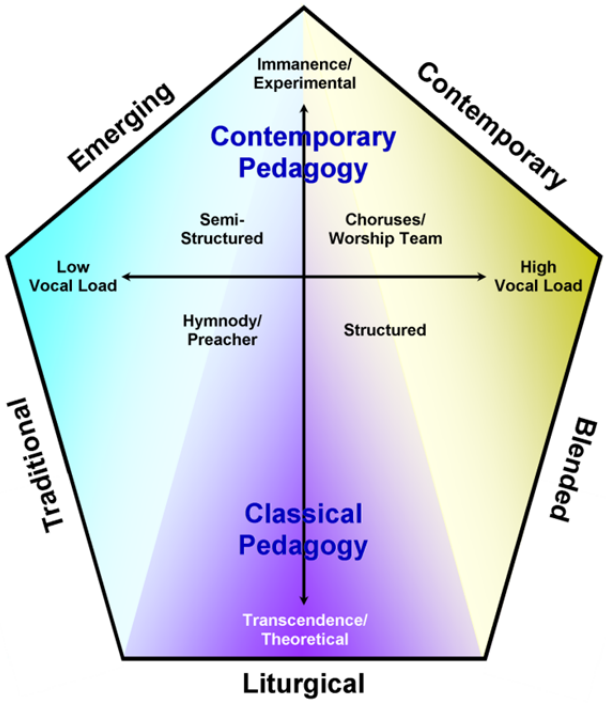


Figure 81: *The Contemporary Worship Singer and vocal pedagogy*

As shown in Figure 81, classical pedagogy is not rendered void when considering the full spectrum of worship style and form. The practical application of Figure 81 will be discussed further in the implications section of this chapter (p. 236). The immediate inferences of the illustration suggest that conservative worship settings (employing mostly hymns) require singers whose training is formed by a classical pedagogy while the singer engaged in worship settings (predominantly employing the use of modern choruses) will benefit from vocal instruction in contemporary pedagogy. Where the use of hymns and choruses is even, the individual singer is advised to pursue vocal instruction which will serve their choice of repertoire when singing outside their role as Contemporary Worship Singer. The second vocal distinction is therefore rendered:

> **Distinctive Feature #16:** When teaching the Contemporary Worship Singer the application of classical or contemporary vocal tuition should be directed by the worship setting and the predominance of classic hymns or modern worship choruses respectively.

Ultimately, the vocal development of the singer should be addressed on an individual basis. That is each singer is unique and pursues vocal development for a range of reasons. A higher level of appraisal by the professional singing teacher (whether

classical or contemporary) and the student of voice should allow for the variety of reasons individuals seek vocal tuition; one of which might be (but not necessarily restricted to) their role as a Contemporary Worship Singer. Exposure to task specific training will help to mitigate the potential for vocal damage. In addition, singing lessons specifically tailored to the vocal task and worship setting should lead to a development in vocal expertise for this group.

c) Harmonies

The ability to sing harmonies was found to be a beneficial but not an essential part of the role. Thirty six percent of the survey participants indicated that they occasionally needed to stop singing because the melodic range became uncomfortable. One vocal skill which might mitigate this statistic is the use of singing harmonies. The interview participants were asked how important they considered the use of harmonies in their role as Contemporary Worship Singer. All of the interviewees[68] believed that harmonies were beneficial to their role but only three utilised the facility.

The low use of harmonies, as exhibited by the research cohort, is partly due to the low levels of musicianship also apparent in the group; that is many Contemporary Worship Singers do not read music. Musical literacy is only part of the 'chicken and egg' puzzle when addressing the use of harmonies. While full transcriptions of four part harmony (Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass) do exist for worship repertoire the shorthand 'lead sheet' (melody, lyrics and chords) is generally preferred. Without transcribed vocal parts many Contemporary Worship Singers are required to develop harmony parts by ear.

The practice of singing harmonies by ear can be cumbersome and inaccurate. Firstly, even simple block chord compositions (modern worship choruses) can receive an infinite array of harmonic interpretation. Problems may arise where two singers, assigned to the alto harmony for example, sing conflicting but equally valid harmonic lines. The second issue of inaccuracy arises when underdeveloped singers seek to develop a harmonic line by ear. The 'hit and miss' nature of harmonic exploration can be a distraction to fellow singers and the congregation.

[68] With the exception of Helen who was not asked the question.

Conclusively, the Contemporary Worship Singer is benefitted by the ability to sing harmonies by ear and should therefore seek assistance in the development of this skill. This aside, worship teams (and those who lead them) are challenged by the modern practice of developing and singing harmonies by ear. All good measure should be taken to teach written vocal parts with the aid of transcriptions in either hard or softcopy (electronic). The third vocal distinction addresses the need for harmonies in the skill set of the Contemporary Worship Singer:

> **Distinctive Feature #17:** Singing harmonies will add to the vocal capacity of the Contemporary Worship Singer; enabling harmonic choices and aesthetic value to vocal ensembles. The ability to read harmonies from written music and sing harmonies from ear is mutually beneficial to the role.

d) Tessitura

Singing harmonies is not the only melodic alternative available to the Contemporary Worship Singer when the melody does not sit comfortably within their vocal range. The Contemporary Worship Singer can request that a song be transposed into a different key. Over half of the survey participants (*n*46/78) utilised this option when seeking a more comfortable key in which to sing. This in turn leads to the challenge: what is comfortable for one singer may not be comfortable for the next. This challenge would suggest that singing harmonies are the 'better' way; but given that only three of the nine interviewees' utilise harmonies the presentation of conclusions must turn to the matter of tessitura.

As reviewed in the literature[69] tessitura is the Italian term given to the mean average of the notes along a melodic line. A song might have a small number of extreme notes (high or low) but the true test of vocal ease is whether the tessitura of the melody remains in a comfortable range of the individual vocalist. Problems arise when songs are transposed for the lead vocalist (worship leader) and in so doing move the tessitura away from the comfortable range of one or more of the other singers. Moreover, corporate worship is an inclusive activity which seeks to involve every voice in the congregation. Unfortunately the human voice does not easily engage with the 'one size fits all' approach of modern congregational singing.

[69] See Literature Review: Tessitura (p. 81)

Specifically, the Contemporary Worship Singer is confronted with a task that requires a vocal range capable of sustaining tessitura; high and low. Again, the necessity of vocal instruction is highlighted by the requirement of this skill. The benefit of developing one's vocal range not only enables the individual to easily change musical keys (transposition) which might be altered to assist less capable singers. A developed vocal range will also allow the Contemporary Worship Singer to facilitate a choice of key which is best for the congregational voice; thereby satisfying the cultural distinctions which seek to encourage the involvement of the worship participant (Distinctive Feature #7 and #8).

The distinction specific to tessitura addresses the vocal capacity of the Contemporary Worship Singer highlighting that the skilful singer is better equipped to serve the congregant:

> **Distinctive Feature #18:** The development of vocal skills, including the enhancement of vocal range, empowers the Contemporary Worship Singer with versatility, flexibility and adaptability; all key attributes needed for the service of the congregant.

The development of vocal skills is obtained over the long-term. The Contemporary Worship Singer will also be advantaged by the short-term disciplines of warm-ups and cool-downs.

e) Warm-ups and Cool-downs

The final area that I will draw conclusions from is the practice of warm-ups and cool-downs. This is a poorly practiced discipline amongst Contemporary Worship Singers. Only 12.8% (*n*10/78) of survey respondents described their warm-ups as a rehearsed procedure in keeping with the literature's instruction for what constitutes as a vocal warm-up. While my anecdotal suspicions would suggest that this statistic is reflective of most singers in the Australian community my desire to see the Contemporary Worship Singer rise to their full potential emboldens me to conclude that we can do better; and must do better.

Clearly, warm-ups stretch the voice and prepare it for use. The literature[70] admonishes singers to warm the voice citing the reduction of vocal agility, tone and stamina in the voice that does not observe this practice. If the Contemporary Worship

[70] See Literature Review: Warm-ups and Cool Downs (p. 82)

Singer is committed to giving God their best then vocal warm-ups are a must. So too are vocal cool-downs.

The second practice of vocal cool-downs received almost universal neglect among the research cohort. Cool-downs have been accredited with the reduction of vocal fatigue and vocal wear over both the long and short term. The difficulty confronting the Contemporary Worship Singer seeking to practice cool-downs is found in the construct of many worship settings which require singers to sit amongst the congregation directly following their vocal presentation. Simply, vocal cool-downs cannot be conducted in the worship space so an alternative site (choir room, green room, car park, toilets etc.) is encouraged. Further recommendations are made later in 'Implications: Contemporary Worship Singer'.

The final distinction of the Contemporary Worship Singer under the structural pillar of 'Voice' commends the inherent values of vocal warm-ups and cool-downs, instructing the individual to discipline their voice with their regular practice:

> **Distinctive Feature #19:** The Contemporary Worship Singer is instructed to practice vocal warm-ups and cool-downs as a prerequisite to excellence.

The range of conclusions drawn from the study highlight many areas which the key stakeholders (church music directors, singing teachers and Contemporary Worship Singers) might implement specific knowledge and practical insights. These are now presented as 'implications' with acknowledgment of further research required.

Implications

The following implications are presented for: (1) Contemporary Worship Singers (2) Church music/vocal directors, (3) Singing Teachers, and (4) Further research.

i) Contemporary Worship Singers

A number of recommendations are offered for the Contemporary Worship Singer.

1. Singing Lessons

As discussed previously, Contemporary Worship Singers do not always support their role with singing lessons. Of the 85 participants involved in the survey only fourteen (16.5%) had received singing lessons for longer than 12months from a singing teacher who had an intimate knowledge of their church environment and associated repertoire. Earlier writing by this author indicated that "it is not enough for students of contemporary singing to simply sing contemporary repertoire – Pop, Rock, Jazz, etc. – on a classical technique" (Robinson, 2010a, p. 1). The Contemporary Worship Singer should be receiving training in the repertoire to which they are accustomed – worship songs; hymns, modern choruses or both.

The responsibility of singing in church goes beyond the vocal task or simply standing on stage and singing with the congregation. Using the voice to lead the congregation in the time honoured practice of Christian worship, regardless of the worship style and form, invokes a responsibility to develop the singer's instrument; the voice. It is therefore recommended that where possible, individuals who participate as Contemporary Worship Singers seek tuition with a singing teacher who is qualified to teach voice, preferably with an intimate knowledge of the variety of modern worship settings.

Where location[71] permits, it is ideal to obtain lessons from a task specific tutor; that is a classical singing teacher for churches that use mostly hymns and a contemporary singing teacher for churches that predominantly use modern choruses. Where a task specific tutor is not available, the Contemporary Worship Singer is advised to seek out lessons in order to cover all-purpose skills such as body alignment, tension management and vocal warm-ups.

[71] As acknowledged earlier, locations such as regional areas may not have a wide variety of qualified singing teachers to choose from. Therefore a number of lessons with a teacher qualified in the discipline alternate to the student's worship setting are still recommended as desirable.

2. General Technique

The vocal technique acquired by the Contemporary Worship Singer should be aligned with either a classical or contemporary pedagogy. With all types of singing matters such as body alignment, breath management and tension management should be covered. This is not to say that these mechanical matters of the voice should be addressed the same way by both disciplines (classical and contemporary). The manner in which a singer and their teacher address these subjects along with technical concerns including registration, timbre and vocal agility will ultimately be determined by their teacher's knowledge and technical approach.

Specific attention should be given to the 'Worship Posture' as outlined in the review of literature[72]. The worship posture is shown below in Figure 82:

Figure 82: *The worship posture*
(Photos used by Permission)

Pertaining to body alignment, the worship posture has been inadvertently brought about by the introduction of lyrics being projected onto screens above a level sight line. The result for singers is that the neck is out of alignment, evoking extrinsic laryngeal muscular tension. This negative and inefficient configuration places the

[72] See Literature Review: Requirements of Technique (p. 76)

larynx into a fatiguing position. It should be addressed as a matter of priority by both student and teacher; seeking alignment of head, neck and shoulders.

3. Warm-ups and Cool-downs

The importance of vocal warm-ups and cool-downs has already been addressed. It is important to note that the individual singer should take responsibility for their own voice. It is recommended that church music directors create a culture that encourages vocal warm-ups, but it is ultimately the obligation of the Contemporary Worship Singer to take control of their instrument. Where a culture of vocal warm-ups does not exist in the worship team, it remains the duty of the individual singer to prepare their voice for use; remembering that an under-prepared voice is less agile and prone to wear and tear.

It is recommended that the Contemporary Worship Singer regularly employ a 15-20 minute warm-up before singing. In keeping with best practice, as outlined in the literature review[73], this should be a collection of vocal exercises which gradually stretch and warm the voice. The run-through of worship songs should not be considered an adequate preparation for singing. The sound check (run-through of songs) should be considered the climax of the vocal warm-up period.

Preparation of the Contemporary Worship Singer's voice should also cater to the contextual nuance of early morning starts. The literature encourages singers to be awake for 2 to 3hrs before vocal use. The observance of this suggestion is difficult for Contemporary Worship Singers who might start singing as early as 7am on a Sunday morning. This does not excuse the Contemporary Worship Singer from the practice of vocal warm-ups, but only heightens the necessity for a strict warm-up and cool down regime.

4. General Considerations

The care of the voice is of paramount importance. The following comment by a survey participant (SP3) denotes the view that voice care cannot coexist with the ulterior motives of the Construct: that is the evangelising of new Christian members holds more importance than the Contemporary Worship Singers voice. SP3 stated

[73] See Literature Review: Warm-ups and Cool Downs (p. 76)

"my vocal health is a small price to pay for other's salvation" but he fails to recognise that his (or any other Contemporary Worship Singer's) vocal health is integral to the role. Simply, without a healthy voice they cannot perform the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer.

A second consideration for all Contemporary Worship Singers is the purchase of their own microphone. Unlike instrumentalists, who often spend considerable amounts of money purchasing their own equipment, singers are known to spend only time on their role. A seemingly rudimentary consideration, the purchase of a microphone has two important benefits: improvement of sound quality and mitigation of community infection.

Not every microphone is suitable for the task. Churches often have constrained budgets which can lead to the purchase of cheap microphones and cheap microphones are prone to creating cheap results. Choosing a microphone is an individual thing and it is recommended the Contemporary Worship Singer search for professional assistance either from a pro-audio store or their church's sound technician.

Additionally, the Contemporary Worship Singer should be aware of the risk of virus and bacteria transmission when using communal microphones. The protective wind guard (generally made of porous foam, which sits directly underneath the metal mesh of the microphone) may harbour contagions which can cause upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) and oral herpes; also known as cold sores. Where it is not possible for singers to own their own microphones, it is advised that the microphone windscreens should be cleaned with a disinfectant spray after each use.

ii) Church music/vocal directors

As leaders of Contemporary Worship Singers, church music directors and vocal directors stand in a position of influence; both over the individual singers and the culture in which they exist.

1. Equipping for the task

The first recommendation for church music directors is geared towards education in worship. Significantly only a few of the research participants exhibited a clear understanding of Christian worship outside their immediate practice. The education should be delivered on a regular basis to the whole worship team. It is also suggested

that the education be part of an introductory course to the worship team; similar to those courses run by churches for new members. The short course could cover such topics as theology of Christian worship, history of Christian worship and expectations including excellence and performance. Teaching on matters such as the Anointing (immanence and transcendence) will help to position the Contemporary Worship Singers within their church's specific culture.

As a guide the church music/vocal director is encouraged to use the 'Role Description of the Contemporary Worship Singer' (Appendix 4; p. 303). The role description is the collection of distinctions as presented in the 'Conclusions' and has been developed according to the findings and analysis of literature and the collective cohort of survey and interview participants. The distinctive features present under the four main headings: Construct, Culture, Environment and Voice.

2. New Contemporary Worship Singers

Given the multiplicity of worship styles, forms and theological views, it is recommended that church music directors require new worship team members, specifically Contemporary Worship Singers, to observe a period of probation before actively participating in the worship team roster. It cannot be presumed that the new worship team member, despite active participation in their previous church, is aligned with the construct, culture or environment of the new setting. Each worship team should arrive at their own term of probation, but a period of six months is recommended. This period enables the new member to learn the church repertoire list and solidify their general engagement in the local church. It is thought that a new member could attend the mid-week worship team meetings during this period of probation.

3. Develop a singer friendly environment

It is the responsibility of the individual singer to obtain singing lessons and practice warm-ups and cool-downs. The church music director can intentionally develop an environment that is 'singer friendly'. The encouragement of singing lessons from the team leadership, whether by example or sponsorship programs, invests vocal standards into the teams. Additionally, developing a culture that requires singers to commence their warm-ups while musicians conduct sound checks is also advised.

Technically, it is important to invest in quality microphones (preferably super-cardioid) and an amplification system that has multiple foldback sends. This allows the singers to hear themselves better through the foldback system and it will also improve their overall vocal stamina and health.

It is recommended that singers have time to request and set suitable foldback levels. Most sound-checks should commence with the instruments and finish with the voices, so ensure that enough time is allowed for the voices to gain adequate adjustment of their levels.

Finally, church music/vocal directors are encouraged to transpose music to ensure that the melodic tessitura of the song sits comfortably for as many singers as possible. This research has concluded that many Contemporary Worship Singers do not have the skills required to spontaneously develop or maintain a harmonic line; exposing the voice to fatigue and reduced engagement with the melody. Transposition of the melodic line into a more singable key will help to mitigate the potential for vocal wear and tear; allowing for a more active and engaged singer. Additionally, teaching the Contemporary Worship Singer to develop harmonies instinctively by ear can reduce vocal distress while providing a richer harmonic palette. Where possible this practice should be complimented by the supply of written vocal parts accompanied with some instruction on how to read/follow written music.

iii) Singing Teachers

The singing teacher holds a number of responsibilities when teaching the Contemporary Worship Singer.

1. Setting Limits

As already reviewed[74], the Contemporary Worship Singer will require either classical or contemporary instruction. With the recent advent of academic enquiry into the discipline of contemporary voice pedagogy, it is no longer acceptable to maintain personally held biases when teaching singing. The challenge is identifying which discipline the singing teacher employs, and in establishing appropriate limitations around where one should and should not teach. It is acknowledged that in some

[74] See p. 223

regional parts of Australia qualified singing teachers are a rare commodity. If a contemporary singing teacher is the only available tutor in a locality then that teacher should endeavour to provide instruction with full disclosure of their pedagogical limits with classical technique and repertoire. The opposite is also applicable.

There are singing teachers who are able to teach both pedagogical disciplines. Regardless, the singing teacher should be prepared to acquire a broad knowledge of Christian worship repertoire including hymns and modern choruses. This knowledge should be articulated to the singing student in a practical and theoretical manner: for example the singer engaged in the Contemporary worship setting should be singing modern choruses as a part of their lessons, with instruction in reading lead sheets and singing harmonies by ear.

Microphone technique is required of every Contemporary Worship Singer. For some classical singing teachers (and some contemporary singing teachers) this may require some professional development in the correct use of amplification systems including microphones.

2. Teach Warm-ups and Cool Downs

As revealed by the analysis of data, it cannot be presumed that singers who undertake singing lessons will naturally integrate the practice of warm-ups and cool-downs into their everyday activity. It is therefore recommended that singing teachers address this area by nominating a range of vocal exercises which will warm and stretch the voice. Contemporary Worship Singers will be assisted by the knowledge that vocal warm-ups enable them to execute their task with excellence.

3. Use the Contemporary Worship Singer Assessment Tool

The Contemporary Worship Singer Assessment Tool (presented for convenient reference again below as Figure 83; p. 238) can be used in consultation with the Contemporary Worship Singer to identify worship setting and form, along with the mode of instruction which might best suit the singer.

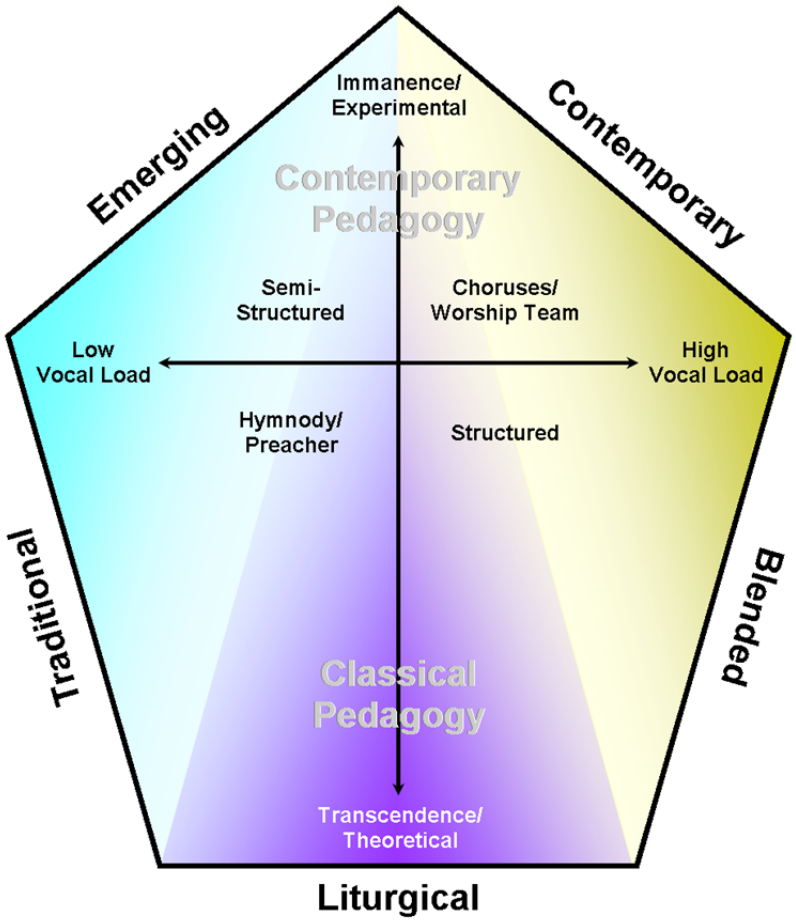


Figure 83: *Contemporary worship singer assessment tool*

Using the 'indicator tabs' below (Figure 84), the singer is asked to choose one of the shapes to place on the Contemporary Worship Singer Assessment Tool indicating their perception of the worship setting in which they sing.

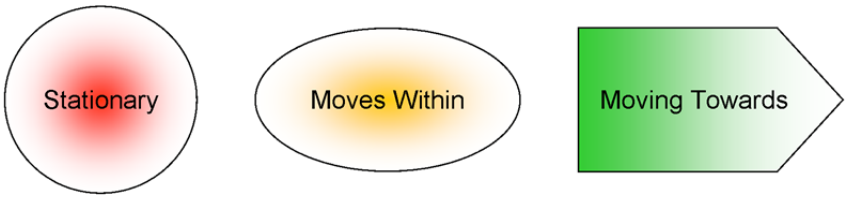


Figure 84: *Contemporary worship singer assessment tool indicator tabs*

The researcher conducted pilot studies of this process at the end of each interview with the nine participants. The full results of the pilot study are presented in Appendix 5. The practical use of the Contemporary Worship Singer Assessment tool in the singing studio is demonstrated in the results presented in Figure 85 below, two from the Baptist Church and two from Christian Outreach Centre.

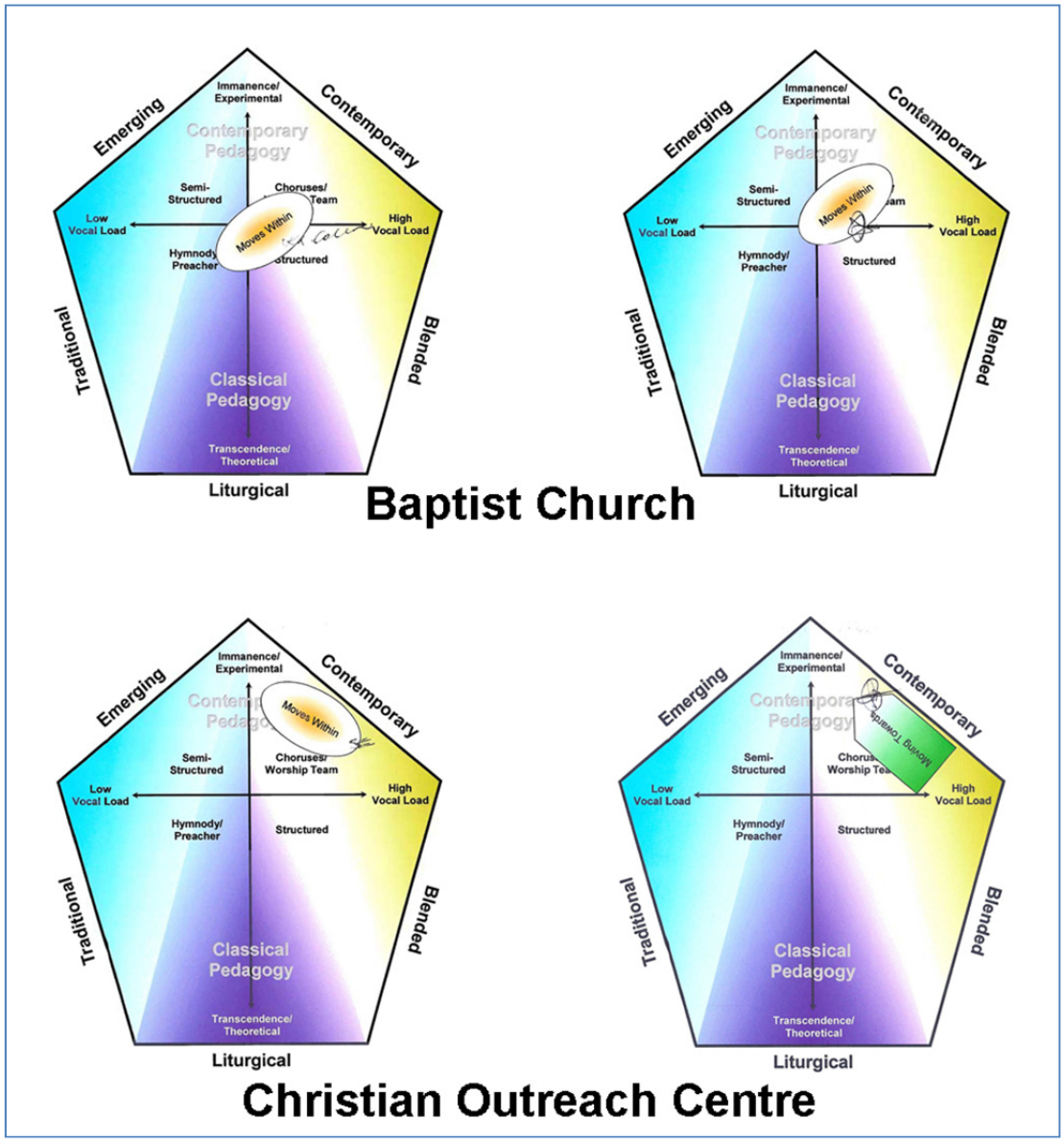


Figure 85: *Display of contemporary worship singer assessment tool pilot study comparing two different worship settings*

Participants did not have any chance to confer on their placement of the indicator tabs. There is, however, a strong correlation between singers and the perception of their worship setting.

The Contemporary Worship Singer Assessment Tool is proposed by the researcher as a reliable tool for accurately determining the appropriate vocal instruction for individual singers.

4. **Attend and Observe**

Whilst the Contemporary Worship Singer Assessment Tool will assist the singing teacher in gaining a defined understanding of the individual singers (construct, culture, and environment, along with the most beneficial mode of instruction; classical or contemporary), the insight gained by attending and observing the singer in their natural habitat would prove valuable. Earlier writings by this researcher suggests that "even singing teachers who regularly attend their own local church will profit from visiting, viewing and experiencing the broad range of worship styles" (Robinson, 2010b, p. 289). Robinson challenges his readers to not allow personal bias and religious persuasion to "undermine the value of triangulating informed reading, student perception and personal experience" (p. 290).

iv) Further research

One of the intentions of this study has been to codify the identity of the Australian Contemporary Worship Singer. Early in the review of literature it became obvious that little had been written specifically about the group. Accordingly, the scope of this study was refined in order to form the foundation for further work in the field. This current project has been developed in order for future researchers to build upon and develop these initial observations.

The following suggestions may provide a starting point for researchers seeking to continue the study into the Contemporary Worship Singer.

1. **Broader Study**

Firstly, the data sample of survey (*n*85) and interview (*n*9) provides a limited view of this group. A broader study which includes an increased data sample might reveal finer levels of nuance including geographical discrepancies, age associated gradations and sex orientated perceptions.

2. Narrower Study

Each of the structural pillars (Context, Culture, Environment and Voice) would benefit from more direct enquiry. Likewise each of the individual areas within the four pillars might yield new and interesting data if a study focused solely on that narrow topic. Furthermore the issues highlighted by each of the pillars might yield substantial knowledge with additional research.

3. International based studies

As outlined in the methodology chapter[75], the geographical scope was intentionally limited to Contemporary Worship Singers from Australian churches[76]. Many of the observations made, along with most of the recommendations given, can be applied to Contemporary Worship Singers in other countries, but this must be tested with further research.

4. Scientific review of vocal loads

Many quantitative studies have been conducted on vocal fold pathologies in singers from both the classical and contemporary disciplines. This research has found that a significant portion (approximately 30%) of Contemporary Worship Singers endure some form of vocal distress in the undertaking of their vocal roles. The field would benefit from further research into laryngeal activity and vocal pathologies which may arise as a result of the vocal loads experienced by the Contemporary Worship Singer.

5. The Singer in each of the Worship Settings

As recognised earlier, the scope of this work placed the Contemporary Worship Singer in the broad context of five worship settings. As a result, it was not possible to focus the study to review the Contemporary Worship Singer with any clear detail in relation to a particular worship setting. Using a range of qualitative methodologies, future research may gain a more nuanced picture of the role. In particular what has not been considered in this study is the value that aesthetics play in each worship setting, and the manner in which these aesthetics (and the individual's intuitive interpretation of same) interplay upon the role of the Contemporary Worship Singer.

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[75] See Chapter 3 (p. 88)

[76] It is noted that the interviews came from Brisbane (Queensland) churches only.

Final Thoughts…

When I commenced the journey of discovering the identity of the Contemporary Worship Singer I held experiential bias which had been informed, in part, due to my personal involvement and previous levels of enquiry into the modern church singer. The student researcher that commenced the study has developed, and I now hold these same biases more loosely. Perhaps this area of growth is best observed in my original view of the modern church singer, perceiving that individuals were culturally informed as they approached their roles. That is, Contemporary Worship Singers, while vocally untrained per se, engage in their leadership task with an understanding of the cultural responsibility that accompanies the activity. Having reviewed the literature and worked with the data, I now understand that many Contemporary Worship Singers are relatively uninformed of their uniqueness and that of their role. Of course, these singers are attuned to the functional characteristics of the activity (repertoire, acceptable stage persona etc.) but deeper understanding of 'why we do what we do' was almost non-existent in the cohort under investigation. I humbly suggest that the Contemporary Worship Singer and the congregations that they lead will be better served with attentiveness to the 'why' as well as the 'how'.

At the close of this work I am encouraged by the higher levels of understanding that have emerged from the data and the analysis thereof. It is my hope that, as outlined in the conclusions and implications, key stakeholders will enact the new found knowledge in a proactive sense; facilitating higher levels of vocal standard and cultural practice. Herein lies a formidable challenge by cause of the previously observed 'blissful ignorance' of the Contemporary Worship Singer. Many modern church singers are not in active pursuit of attaining higher levels of skill. This, it would seem from the results presented in this work, is not due to any arrogance; but perhaps to innocence. That is, 'you don't know what you don't know.' It is therefore a worthy cause to pursue a cultural awakening by virtue of awareness through education. This awareness of skill acquisition will probably take place one singer at a time, one worship team at a time.

Having closely observed the Contemporary Worship Singer in the past five years I have become conscious, through the research and collegial conversation, that many worship singers consider themselves outside the boundaries of vocal tuition; either formally or informally. This can be observed at both ends of the spectrum, with some

believing themselves to have achieved cultural notoriety without training (so who needs it) and others deeming it beyond their scope of personal attribute (I'll never improve dramatically anyway). Both positions are foolhardy and reduce the role to either a 'fame game 'or 'roster filler' respectively. I encourage all modern church singers, regardless of current skill level or the size of their church, to pursue excellence; not merely for self-improvement, but because God is worthy of our best practice. I assure my readers, our best cannot be realised through personal instruction. Our best is only attained by virtue of the guidance found in another who holds the knowledge and wisdom for voice improvement; and more often than not this person will be a local professional singing teacher.

Personally, I hope to continue my active engagement with the Contemporary Worship Singer both as observer and participant. It is my intention to share this new found knowledge and in doing so play my part to support the ever evolving role.

The Contemporary Worship Singer is an active, vibrant and highly populated demographic in the wider community of singers. Some of these singers practice their craft in traditional worship settings while others participate in worship that is by name and practise, emerging. Generally offering their time and talents voluntarily, this passionate group of singers requires considerable education and informed leadership in order to realise the group's full and unbridled potential.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 ~ Ethics

Ethical Clearance Material

Information Sheet and Informed Consent Package

Contemporary Worship Singers: Identity and Environment

Researcher: Daniel Robinson
Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University
***Senior Investigator*: Scott Harrrison (supervisor)**
Contact email: scott.harrison@griffith.edu.au
Contact Phone: 0411649096; 38756159

Why is the research being conducted?

The intention of this project is to investigate approaches to Contemporary Worship Singers and their environments, through survey and interviews. The aim of the research is to identity the collective and develop strategies for instruction in contemporary worship singing. This project forms part of the researcher's program of study for a Doctor of Musical Arts.

Participation and Involvement

Participation: The research requires to Contemporary Worship Singers to reflect on their environments reflect on how they negotiate aspects of their role within their specific context.

Involvement in this research will include
Responding to a survey regarding their role and the environment in which their role is conducted.

Interviews with Contemporary Worship Singers. Interviews will be audio-taped and the audio tapes will erased after transcription. It is anticapted the interviews will last aprroximately 60 minutes.

Confidentiality of records and reporting of results (Privacy)

In accordance with The Commonwealth *Privacy Act* 1988 and the *Privacy Amendment (Private Sector)* Act 2000 this research will protect the information gathered for the purposes of analysis. The confidentiality of records will be maintained througgh the secure storage of data in a locked cabinet at Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre. The data will be stripped of identifiers prior to full analysis. To ensure a direct flow of benefits back to the communities in which the research has been conducted, the research findings will be presented in academic forums (conferencences and journals) and the participants will not be identifiable in any publication or reporting resulting from the research.

Voluntary and confidential participation

All participation is entirely voluntary and all responses will be treated in the strictest confidence. All responses will be treated as anonymous and you may obtain feedback on the results of the study at its completion. You would not be mentioned by name in the reporting of the research, nor would anything that could identify you. All responses will be destroyed at the completion of the study.

Benefits: The aim of the research is to identity the collective and develop strategies for instruction in contemporary worship singing.

Risks

Participants may be uncomfortable reflect on their environments reflect on how they negotiate aspects of their role within their specific context. All participants have the right to debrief with the researcher involved if required and may withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

Interviews will be conducted with a view to managing the confidentiality and risk issues associated with the activity. While there is considerable pressure in this situation, participation will be voluntary and the content of discussions confidential. The reflections of this group of participants is highly significant, as they have immediate knoweldge of the issues involved.

Mechanism for distribution and return of information

Interviews will take place a space that has been mutually acceptable space between the researcher or the participant. Transripts will be made available to the participants prior to analysis. Interviews will be audio-taped and the audio tapes will erased after transcription.

Questions / further information

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans . If you* have any concerns or complaints concerning the manner in which the research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher or if an independent person is preferred they should contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 5585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au .
Feedback to participants

Results will be provided through conferences presentations, publications and feedback to the participants on request. No participant will be indentified in the reporting process. Debriefing will take place through focus group sessions where required.

Consent

If, after reading the information above you agree to participate in this project, completion of the interview will indcate your consent to their participate in the research:

I understand that my involvement in this research will include survey and interviews

I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;

I understand the risks involved;

I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary (This decision will in no way impacting upon the service they receive from the researcher or marks awarded)

I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team;

I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;

I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3875 5585 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and

I agree to participate in the project.

Please detach this sheet and retain it for later reference.

Appendix 2 ~ Survey Data

The survey questions and a summary of results follows.

Contemporary Worship Singers Survey: Identity, Culture and Environment

SurveyMonkey

1. Have you read the "Information Sheet and Informed Consent Package", understanding and accepting all that is contained within the document? Please note you should not proceed until you have read and understood the "Information Sheet and Informed Consent Package".

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	**100.0%**	**85**
answered question		**85**
skipped question		**0**

2. Age:

	Response Percent	Response Count
1-17	0.0%	0
18-25	**35.3%**	**30**
26-30	16.5%	14
31-40	17.6%	15
41-50	18.8%	16
51-60	7.1%	6
61 or older	4.7%	4
answered question		**85**
skipped question		**0**

3. Are you currently a worship singer in your church worship/music team?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		**100.0%**	**85**
No		0.0%	0
		answered question	**85**
		skipped question	**0**

4. How many people attend your church?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 60		0.0%	0
60 to 250		**49.4%**	**42**
251 to 500		28.2%	24
501 to 750		7.1%	6
751 to 1000		10.6%	9
1001 to 1500		4.7%	4
More than 1500		0.0%	0
		answered question	**85**
		skipped question	**0**

5. In which Australian State or Teritory is your church located?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
ACT		0.0%	0
NSW		15.3%	13
QLD		**40.0%**	**34**
VIC		25.9%	22
NT		10.6%	9
TAS		2.4%	2
SA		0.0%	0
WA		5.9%	5
Outside Australia		0.0%	0
		answered question	**85**
		skipped question	**0**

6. With which Denomination does your Church affiliate?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Assemblies of God		21.2%	18
Christian Outreach Centre		12.9%	11
Anglican		0.0%	0
Catholic		0.0%	0
Presbyterian		0.0%	0
Uniting		4.7%	4
Baptist		**35.3%**	**30**
Wesleyan		0.0%	0
Christian City Church		5.9%	5
Christian Revival Centre		0.0%	0
Independant		0.0%	0
Metro Church		0.0%	0
Planet Shakers Church		0.0%	0
Churches of Christ		17.6%	15
Other (please specify)		2.4%	2
		answered question	**85**
		skipped question	**0**

7. How would you describe your churches worship expression?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Pentecostal		**40.0%**	**34**
Charismatic		10.6%	9
Liturgical		0.0%	0
Evangelical		28.2%	24
Conservative		12.9%	11
Traditional		1.2%	1
Other (please specify)		7.1%	6
		answered question	**85**
		skipped question	**0**

8. How would you classify the type of singing you do?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Contemporary		**88.2%**	**75**
Pop		3.5%	3
Sacred		2.4%	2
Classical		0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		5.9%	5
		answered question	**85**
		skipped question	**0**

9. Would you refer to yourself as a 'pop' singer?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		14.1%	12
No		**85.9%**	**73**
		answered question	**85**
		skipped question	**0**

10. What title would you give your role?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Church Singer		8.2%	7
Contemporary Worship Singer		28.2%	24
Worship Singer		**40.0%**	**34**
Minister		4.7%	4
Other (please specify)		18.8%	16
		answered question	**85**
		skipped question	**0**

11. In your opinion what role does your singing take in the worship service?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Proclamation of the Word	8.3%	7
Preparation for the preaching of the Word	25.0%	21
Emotional Engagement of the Believer	21.4%	18
Opportunity for affirmation of theologies held by church	1.2%	1
Other (please specify)	**44.0%**	**37**
	answered question	**84**
	skipped question	**1**

12. What level of importance does your role as a singer play in the overall church service?

	Response Percent	Response Count
High	**42.9%**	**36**
Medium	**42.9%**	**36**
Low	13.1%	11
No Importance	1.2%	1
	answered question	**84**
	skipped question	**1**

13. What level of importance does your role as a singer play in the worship (congregational singing) service?

	Response Percent	Response Count
High	**57.1%**	**48**
Medium	35.7%	30
Low	6.0%	5
No Importance	1.2%	1
	answered question	**84**
	skipped question	**1**

14. How would you rate the importance of the worship service (congregational singing) in relation to the preaching of the Word (sermon)?

	Response Percent	Response Count
More Important	2.4%	2
Of Equal Importance	**82.1%**	**69**
Less Importance	15.5%	13
	Add comments here:	40
	answered question	**84**
	skipped question	**1**

15. In your opinion, how important is a singer's 'talent' when fulfilling the role of church singer? In 50 words or less please explain your answer.

	Response Percent	Response Count
High	23.8%	20
Medium	**63.1%**	**53**
Low	10.7%	9
No Importance	2.4%	2
Please explain:		80
answered question		**84**
skipped question		**1**

16. How important is your vocal 'talent' when fulfilling your role as a church singer? In 50 words or less please explain your answer.

	Response Percent	Response Count
High	31.0%	26
Medium	**59.5%**	**50**
Low	9.5%	8
No Importance	0.0%	0
Please explain:		76
answered question		**84**
skipped question		**1**

17. Have you ever received training for your role as a church singer?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes - role description & formal training	13.1%	11
Yes - formal training only	8.3%	7
Yes - role description & informal training	**27.4%**	**23**
Yes - informal training only	**27.4%**	**23**
No	23.8%	20
	answered question	**84**
	skipped question	**1**

18. How much recorded worship music do you listen to in your own time in comparison to other styles of music?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Only worship music	3.6%	3
Mostly worship music	**47.6%**	**40**
Some worship music	44.0%	37
No worship music	4.8%	4
	answered question	**84**
	skipped question	**1**

19. In your opinion, is your church worship team a dominant group within the life and general activity of your church?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	**69.9%**	**58**
No	30.1%	25
answered question		**83**
skipped question		**2**

20. What style of worship music does your worship team generally play?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Only Hymns	0.0%	0
Only Worship Choruses	18.1%	15
Mostly Hymns with some Worship Choruses	0.0%	0
Mostly Worship Choruses with some Hymns	**72.3%**	**60**
Even mix of Hymns and Worship Choruses	9.6%	8
answered question		**83**
skipped question		**2**

21. If your church employs both Hymns and Choruses, which of the two musical styles do you find the more vocally demanding?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Hymns	**41.0%**	**34**
Choruses	30.1%	25
N/A	28.9%	24
	answered question	**83**
	skipped question	**2**

22. Please tick the publishers of worship songs that your church utilisers during the worship service: (You can choose more than one)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Hillsong	**97.6%**	**81**
Christian City Church (CCC)	37.3%	31
Planet Shakers	68.7%	57
Emu Music	13.3%	11
Scripture in Song	33.7%	28
Australian Hymnal	12.0%	10
Integrity	59.0%	49
Mercy/Vineyard	49.4%	41
Psalms of Praise	7.2%	6
Other (please specify)	28.9%	24
	answered question	**83**
	skipped question	**2**

23. Does your worship team use songs written by its own members?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		**66.3%**	**55**
No		33.7%	28
		answered question	**83**
		skipped question	**2**

24. Does your worship team transpose worship songs to make them more accessible vocally?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Always		25.3%	21
Sometimes		**63.9%**	**53**
Rarely		10.8%	9
Never		0.0%	0
		answered question	**83**
		skipped question	**2**

25. In your opinion, which of the following statements 'best' describes your worship team's presentation of the corporate worship service?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Humble presentation	3.6%	3
Driven leadership of the congregation	2.4%	2
Activity of willing volunteers	19.3%	16
A corporate call to worship	**62.7%**	**52**
Energetic Performance	10.8%	9
A display of excellence	1.2%	1
	answered question	**83**
	skipped question	**2**

26. Does each individual singer in your worship team use a microphone?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	**97.6%**	**81**
Only some of the singers have a microphone	2.4%	2
Singers are grouped around a single/multiple microphone(s)	0.0%	0
No	0.0%	0
	answered question	**83**
	skipped question	**2**

27. Do the singers in your worship team hold their microphones or are the microphones on a mic stand?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Hand Held		**54.2%**	**45**
Combination of Hand Held and Mic Stands		45.8%	38
Mic Stands		0.0%	0
No Microphones		0.0%	0
		answered question	**83**
		skipped question	**2**

28. Do you use your own microphone at Church? I.e. A microphone that you have purchased.			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		2.4%	2
Sometimes		2.4%	2
No		**54.2%**	**45**
I don't own a microphone		41.0%	34
		answered question	**83**
		skipped question	**2**

29. What kind of Foldback does your church sound system have? (You can choose more than one)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Floor Wedges/Monitors/Foldback	**74.7%**	**62**
In Ear Monitors	8.4%	7
Combination of Floor Wedges/Monitors/Foldback & In Ear Monitors	8.4%	7
Side Fill	1.2%	1
None	12.0%	10
	answered question	**83**
	skipped question	**2**

30. Does your church sound system have dedicated fold back sends for the singers? I.e. can the singers request a specific mix in their fold backs?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	**77.1%**	**64**
No	22.9%	19
	answered question	**83**
	skipped question	**2**

31. Can you hear yourself clearly in the foldback system?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Always		19.3%	16
Mostly		**50.6%**	**42**
Sometimes		14.5%	12
Rarely		1.2%	1
Never		3.6%	3
No Foldback		10.8%	9
		answered question	**83**
		skipped question	**2**

32. Does your worship team expect the singers to sing harmonies?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
No		41.0%	34
Yes - all singers are required to sing harmonies		3.6%	3
Yes - if a singer can't hold a harmony they sing the melody		**55.4%**	**46**
		answered question	**83**
		skipped question	**2**

33. Where are the singers in your church currently placed on stage?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Front of stage along side the worship leader	**75.9%**	**63**
Front of stage behind the worship leader	6.0%	5
To one side of the stage	13.3%	11
Next to Drummer	0.0%	0
Next to Bass Guitar	0.0%	0
Next to Guitarist	0.0%	0
Next to Piano/Keyboard	0.0%	0
Next to Brass	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	4.8%	4
answered question		**83**
skipped question		**2**

34. Does your church employ live video as a part of the worship service?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes (go to Question 35)	15.7%	13
No (go to Question 36)	**84.3%**	**70**
answered question		**83**
skipped question		**2**

35. Are the worship team members displayed on Projector Screens as a part of the 'live video' presentation at the front of the Church for the congregation to view?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	17.9%	5
No	82.1%	23
answered question		28
skipped question		57

36. Can the congregation purchase copies of the worship service on DVD or view the service online after the live event?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	8.4%	7
No	91.6%	76
answered question		83
skipped question		2

37. In 100 words or less what role does the worship/music in your church play in the overall theology/philosophy of the local church?

	Response Count
	78
answered question	78
skipped question	7

38. In 100 words or less, how does your role as a singer contribute to the expression of this theology/philosophy of the local church?	
	Response Count
	78
answered question	78
skipped question	7

39. Does the term 'Anointed' hold any significance for you in relation to the role of a Contemporary Worship Singer? In 100 words or less please explain.			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		71.8%	56
No		28.2%	22
		Please explain	67
		answered question	78
		skipped question	7

40. In your opinion, are you anointed for the role of Contemporary Worship Singer?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		73.1%	57
No		26.9%	21
		answered question	78
		skipped question	7

41. To what degree do you think your worship team feels an expectation to emulate a 'worship experience' similar to that created and displayed by prominent worship teams such as Hillsong and PlanetShakers?

	Response Percent	Response Count
No Pressure	**34.6%**	**27**
Little Pressure	32.1%	25
Some Pressure	29.5%	23
Intense Pressure	3.8%	3
answered question		**78**
skipped question		**7**

42. Do you regularly sing anywhere outside your worship/music team context? If so, where? (You can choose more than one)

	Response Percent	Response Count
No	**71.8%**	**56**
Pubs/Clubs	3.8%	3
Secular Corporate Market	2.6%	2
Amateur Music Theatre	3.8%	3
Independent Artist	9.0%	7
Student Recitals	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	20.5%	16
answered question		**78**
skipped question		**7**

43. Do you have any formal musical qualifications? If so please list: (You can choose more than one)

	Response Percent	Response Count
No	**65.4%**	**51**
AMEB/Trinity Certification	23.1%	18
TAFE/Vocational Education	0.0%	0
Undergraduate Qualification	7.7%	6
Post Graduate Qualification	1.3%	1
Other (please specify)	9.0%	7
answered question		**78**
skipped question		**7**

44. Does your Worship/Music Director verbally encourage individual vocal tuition?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	43.6%	34
No	**56.4%**	**44**
answered question		**78**
skipped question		**7**

45. Have you received any vocal lessons from a qualified singing teacher(s)?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes (go to Question 46)	**57.7%**	**45**
No (go to Questions 48)	42.3%	33
answered question		**78**
skipped question		**7**

46. How long have you been receiving or for how long did you receive voice lessons from the qualified singing teacher(s)?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 12months	33.3%	15
1-2 Years	24.4%	11
More than 2 Years	**42.2%**	**19**
	answered question	**45**
	skipped question	**40**

47. In your opinion, does/or did your singing teacher have intimate knowledge of your church environment and the type of songs you are singing?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	**53.3%**	**24**
No	46.7%	21
	answered question	**45**
	skipped question	**40**

48. Which of the following words best describes the vocal work load required by your role as a worship singer?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Tiring	2.6%	2
Damaging	2.6%	2
Easy	26.9%	21
Demanding	19.2%	15
Energising	**35.9%**	**28**
Other (please specify)	12.8%	10
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

49. Does your worship/music team meet for a weekly practice? Please list all practice times. Only tick applicable times. (You can choose more than one)

	AM	PM	Response Count
No Worship Team Rehearsal	**66.7% (4)**	**66.7% (4)**	6
Monday	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0
Tuesday	0.0% (0)	**100.0% (13)**	13
Wednesday	12.5% (2)	**100.0% (16)**	16
Thursday	6.3% (1)	**93.8% (15)**	16
Friday	50.0% (1)	**100.0% (2)**	2
Saturday	0.0% (0)	**100.0% (1)**	1
Sunday	**81.7% (49)**	65.0% (39)	60
		answered question	**78**
		skipped question	**7**

50. How many mid week practices do you attend over a 4 week month?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
None		33.3%	26
1-2		**41.0%**	**32**
3-4		21.8%	17
4-6		3.8%	3
More than 6		0.0%	0
		answered question	**78**
		skipped question	**7**

51. Does the mid week practice involve separate practice time specifically for the singers?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		26.9%	21
No		**73.1%**	**57**
		answered question	**78**
		skipped question	**7**

52. Is there a worship team roster? If so how many times are you rostered on to sing over a 4 week month? Please note that each service is counted separately i.e. the 7.30am service and the 10am service on a single Sunday should be countered as two separate services.

	Response Percent	Response Count
No Roster	1.3%	1
1-2	**42.3%**	**33**
2-4	34.6%	27
5-8	21.8%	17
9-12	0.0%	0
13-16	0.0%	0
More than 16	0.0%	0
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

53. By adding your mid week attendance and rostered service commitments how many times are you singing over a 4 week month? (E.g. Sally attends 3 of 4 mid week practices and is rostered to sing 7 times over the month. Therefore Sally is singing 8-12 times a month).

	Response Percent	Response Count
1-4	**46.2%**	**36**
5-8	34.6%	27
8-12	17.9%	14
12-16	1.3%	1
17-20	0.0%	0
More than 20	0.0%	0
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

54. How often do the worship choruses/hymns sit comfortably within your vocal range?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Always	12.8%	10
Mostly	**71.8%**	**56**
Sometimes	15.4%	12
Rarely	0.0%	0
Never	0.0%	0
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

55. Do you ever stop singing while on stage because a song is uncomfortable?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	34.6%	27
No	**65.4%**	**51**
	Comment:	37
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

56. Do you regularly request that the musical key of songs be transposed up or down to make them more vocally accessible?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Always	3.8%	3
Mostly	6.4%	5
Sometimes	24.4%	19
Rarely	**37.2%**	**29**
Never	28.2%	22
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

57. If you do regularly request that songs be transposed up or down are your requests acknowledged and implemented?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Not Applicable	**35.9%**	**28**
Always	14.1%	11
Mostly	23.1%	18
Sometimes	17.9%	14
Rarely	3.8%	3
Never	5.1%	4
	Please comment:	20
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

58. Are you standing still when you sing on stage at Church or is there movement involved? List all applicable actions that you might do over a one month period.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Standing Still	73.1%	57
Jumping	32.1%	25
Swaying	71.8%	56
Running	2.6%	2
Lying Face Down	0.0%	0
Lying on my back	0.0%	0
Kneeling	9.0%	7
Falling Down	0.0%	0
Shivering	0.0%	0
Clapping	**74.4%**	**58**
Dancing	34.6%	27
	Other:	8
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

59. Is time allocated for singers to warm-up their voices prior to commencing the worship service? If time is allocated for warm-ups before singing through the songs with the Instrumentalists how long is allocated? Please note: This does not include 'running through the songs' with the muso's prior to the service.

	Response Percent	Response Count
No Allocated Time	**79.5%**	**62**
5mins	10.3%	8
5-15mins	5.1%	4
15-25mins	2.6%	2
Greater than 25mins	2.6%	2
answered question		**78**
skipped question		**7**

60. Is the allocated time run as a group or are individuals responsible for their own warm-up time?

	Response Percent	Response Count
No Allocated Time	47.4%	37
Group Vocal Warm-up	3.8%	3
Individual Responsibility	**48.7%**	**38**
answered question		**78**
skipped question		**7**

61. How disciplined are you in the regularity of your vocal warm-ups?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Always	6.4%	5
Most times before I sing	15.4%	12
Sometimes	23.1%	18
Hardly ever	**33.3%**	**26**
Never	21.8%	17
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

62. Which of the following best describes the content of the warm-up:

	Response Percent	Response Count
I don't warm up	17.9%	14
Singing through the service with the musicians prior to the church service proper	**44.9%**	**35**
Singing a few scales and then joining the musicians	14.1%	11
Rehearsed warm-up procedure covering light vocal engagement which gradually builds to 'full voice'; utilising scales, lip rolls etc.	12.8%	10
Other (please specify)	10.3%	8
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

63. Do you ever employ vocal warm-downs?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Always	0.0%	0
Most times after I sing	0.0%	0
Sometimes	3.8%	3
Hardly ever	15.4%	12
Never	**80.8%**	**63**
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

64. Have you received instruction from within your music team on the importance of vocal warm-ups and warm-downs along with training on how to conduct a personal vocal warm-up?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	35.9%	28
No	**64.1%**	**50**
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

65. How would you describe your 'current' vocal range?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Extensive (more than 2½ octaves)	14.1%	11
Standard (more than 1½ and less than 2½ octaves)	**65.4%**	**51**
Limited (less than 1½ octaves)	7.7%	6
I do not know my vocal range	12.8%	10
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

66. How would you describe your 'current' vocal condition?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Healthy		**55.1%**	**43**
Unhealthy		1.3%	1
Tired		9.0%	7
Stressed		0.0%	0
Conditioned		7.7%	6
Lacking Stamina		9.0%	7
Constricted		5.1%	4
Other:		12.8%	10
		answered question	**78**
		skipped question	**7**

67. Which of the following 'best' describes your vocal condition directly following the close of a church service in which you have been a singer for the worship team?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Great	19.2%	15
Tired	19.2%	15
Constricted	5.1%	4
Raspy	1.3%	1
Breathy	0.0%	0
Reduced Capacity	10.3%	8
Healthy	**35.9%**	**28**
I often have no voice after a worship service	0.0%	0
Limited in Range	2.6%	2
Other (please specify)	6.4%	5
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

68. Which of the following 'best' describes your vocal condition 24hrs following the close of a church service in which you have been a singer for the worship team?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Great	32.1%	25
Tired	7.7%	6
Constricted	1.3%	1
Raspy	0.0%	0
Breathy	0.0%	0
Reduced Capacity	2.6%	2
Healthy	**52.6%**	**41**
I often have no voice the next day	0.0%	0
Limited in Range	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	3.8%	3
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

69. Have you ever visited an 'Ears Nose and Throat Doctor' (ENT) as a result (directly or indirectly) of your worship singing?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	6.4%	5
No	**93.6%**	**73**
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

70. Have you ever visited Speech Therapist/Pathologist' as a result (directly or indirectly) of your worship singing?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	5.1%	4
No	**94.9%**	**74**
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

71. Have you sustained any of the following vocal conditions/pathologies as a result (directly or indirectly) of your worship singing.

	Response Percent	Response Count
No vocal damage sustained	**93.6%**	**73**
Nodules/Nodes	0.0%	0
Vocal Fold Cysts	0.0%	0
Vocal Fold Paralysis	0.0%	0
Granuloma	0.0%	0
Vocal Fold Bowing	0.0%	0
Vocal Fold Hemorrhage	0.0%	0
Vocal Fold Polyp	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	6.4%	5
	answered question	**78**
	skipped question	**7**

72. Please use the following box to add any further comments:	
	Response Count
	16
answered question	16
skipped question	69

73. How long did it take to complete the survey?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 15 minutes		21.1%	16
15-20 minutes		**34.2%**	**26**
21-25 minutes		18.4%	14
26-30 minutes		11.8%	9
31-35 minutes		5.3%	4
36-40 minutes		3.9%	3
Longer than 41 minutes		5.3%	4
		answered question	76
		skipped question	9

74. Contact Information

	Response Percent	Response Count
Name:	**93.7%**	**59**
Address:	79.4%	50
Address 2:	9.5%	6
City/Town:	87.3%	55
State:	90.5%	57
ZIP/Postal Code:	85.7%	54
Country:	87.3%	55
Email Address:	92.1%	58
Phone Number:	68.3%	43
	answered question	**63**
	skipped question	**22**

75. Gender:

	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	33.3%	25
Female	**66.7%**	**50**
	answered question	**75**
	skipped question	**10**

76. What is your voice type?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Soprano	15.8%	12
Mezzo-soprano	**22.4%**	**17**
Alto	19.7%	15
Tenor	19.7%	15
Baritone	9.2%	7
Bass	1.3%	1
I don't know	11.8%	9
answered question		**76**
skipped question		**9**

Appendix 3 ~ Interview Questions

The interview questions follow. Recordings and transcripts can be provided on request.

Interviewee Particulars

1. Name
2. How long have you been on your worship team?
3. Church
4. How long have you been a Christian

What are the defining factors of the various cultural contexts?

1. **How would you describe the worship style of your church?**
    a. Why have you chosen to use those words to identify the worship style?
2. **Singing has played an important role throughout the history of the Christian Church (Kauflin, 2008; Russell, 1997; Webber, 1994; Wilson-Dickson, 1992).**
    a. Why do you think that is?
    b. Do you think that music/singing is regarded any more highly now than in the past? Why?
3. **How important is it to you to be a part of the church worship team?**
    a. Do you think you obtain any sense of self-worth from your involvement?
    b. Do you think some singers are more favoured than other singers in the team?
    c. Do you think we have a celebrity culture in our worship teams?
        i. Is this a good or bad thing?
4. **82.1% (*n*69) of survey respondents think that the worship service (congregational singing) is of equal importance to the preaching of the Word (sermon).**
    a. Why do you think this figure is so high?
5. **Bob Kauflin in his book *Worship Matters* says, "Songs are de facto theology...'We are what we sing'" (2008, p. 92).**
    a. What do you think about this statement?
    b. Is theology something that you are concerned about when you are a Contemporary Worship Singer?
6. **In your own words can you explain your understanding of "the Anointing"?**
    a. Is it important? If so why; if not, why not?

b. Do you think some singers are more anointed than other singers? If so, how can you tell?

7. **Have always been happy in your role as a Contemporary Worship Singer?**

What are the identifiable attributes of the various environmental factors?

1. **How important is your worship space to your role as a Contemporary Worship Singer?**
2. **What do you prefer; Hymns or Choruses? Why?**
3. **Do you ever find it difficult to sing any of the songs?**
    a. Out of 10, how many songs would sit comfortably in your vocal range?
    b. What do you do when the song doesn't sit comfortably?
4. **Contemporary Worship Singers are predominantly female (66.7%; *n*50/75). Why do you think that is?**
5. **How important is it to be able to sing harmonies?**
6. **How important are singing lessons for the Contemporary Worship Singer?**
    a. Do you have, or have you had singing lessons?
    b. In your opinion, which best serves the Contemporary Worship Singer; contemporary or classical singing technique? Please explain.

How is the Contemporary Worship Singer's identity formed?

1. **Contemporary Worship Singers are predominantly young in age with over 50% under the age of 30yrs.**
    a. Why do you think that is?
    b. Do you think that worship teams, in general, are obsessed with youth?
2. **Is skill/talent important as Contemporary Worship Singer?**
3. **How do you feel about the word 'Performance'?**
4. **What does the term 'worship lifestyle' mean to you?**
    a. What does it mean to be a 'real worshipper'?

What gives distinction to the Contemporary Worship Singer as a unique identity within the wider community of singers?

1. **In your opinion is the Contemporary Worship Singer any different from the secular 'pop' singer who sings regularly at the local club?**
2. **When asked whether they would refer to themselves as a 'pop' singer, the majority of survey respondents said no (85.9%; *n*73/85). The contemporary worship singer seems to be accepting of the term 'contemporary' to designate musical style, but is quite eager to distance themselves from the title of 'pop' singer. Why?**

3. **The majority of survey participants said that they do no other singing outside of their church involvement. Is the lack of singing conducted by survey participants outside the context of their worship team indicative of this need to distance themselves from the label of 'pop' singer or is the reasoning less remarkable. I.e. do church singers simply feel content in their expression of 'contemporary' singing as a 'worship' singer and therefore feel no need to pursue other opportunities to sing?**
4. **Is the role of Contemporary Worship Singing a demanding role:**
    a. Vocally?
    b. Physically?
    c. Personally/Privately?

What modes of instruction will best serve to train the CWS?

1. **Have you ever received training specific to your role as a Contemporary Worship Singer?**
2. **Do you know why you do what you do, or have you simply gleaned the practical knowledge through watching others etc?**
3. **Why do you think disciplines such as warm-ups and cool-downs are so poorly practiced in our worship teams (78.2%; *n*61/78)?**
4. **In your opinion, what do you think the top three required skills are for a Contemporary Worship Singer?**
5. **In your opinion, what are the top three things that the Contemporary Worship Singer needs training in?**
    a. Is this answer different to Q5.4? If so, why?

Appendix 4 ~ Role Description of the Contemporary Worship Singer

Role description of the Contemporary Worship Singer

The following range of distinctions has been developed according to the findings and analysis of literature and the collective cohort of survey and interview participants. The distinctive features present under four main headings: Construct, Culture, Environment and Voice.

Construct

Distinctive Feature #1: The role of the Contemporary Worship Singer will be enriched by an understanding of Church worship history and the use of singing as a corporate activity by worshippers throughout the Christian age.

Distinctive Feature #2: The Contemporary Worship Singer participates in the delivery and facilitation of the local church's theological and cultural orientation to worship.

Distinctive Feature #3: Today's Contemporary Worship Singer is typically involved in one of five worship styles: Liturgical, Traditional, Contemporary, Blended or Emerging.

Distinctive Feature #4: The Contemporary Worship Singer is required to vocally support the presentation of the local church's worship style (as stated in 'Distinctive Feature #3') using one of the three worship forms (Modular, Thematic and Flow). A clear understanding of a specific church's worship setting (style and form) will assist the singer in their role.

Culture

Distinctive Feature #5: Contemporary Worship Singers are engaged in the modern global phenomena known as Christian worship. By virtue of their involvement individuals support and propagate the phenomena.

Distinctive Feature #6: The Contemporary Worship Singer leads worship and in doing so may inadvertently draw attention to themselves and their skill. Acknowledgement of the individual while in the service of the church should be humbly received and privately submitted to God's glory.

Distinctive Feature #7: The public nature of the task requires performance. The Contemporary Worship Singer should pursue a balanced presentation that motivates the worship participant to glorify God.

Distinctive Feature #8: Anointed by God to declare His grace and mercy, the Contemporary Worship Singer undertakes the responsibility of leading the corporate gathering as an equal participator in the worship event.

Distinctive Feature #9: The responsibility of the Contemporary Worship Singer drives a desire to honour God with an offering of service that is active in its pursuit of excellence.

Environment

Distinctive Feature #10: The Contemporary Worship Singer plays an integral role in the Christian worship space by giving voice to God's Word, facilitating corporate devotion and encouraging Christian fellowship.

Distinctive Feature #11: The Contemporary Worship Singer seeks to enhance the worship experience of the congregant by providing vocal leadership that does not compete with the corporate voice or the acoustic space.

Distinctive Feature #12: Contemporary Worship Singers use microphones which are generally relayed back to the vocalist via a foldback monitor. Accordingly, individual singers should possess a microphone that is best suited to their unique vocal characteristics.

Distinctive Feature #13: First and foremost on stage, the Contemporary Worship Singer holds a visually prominent place on the worship platform whereby active encouragement of worship participants can be conveyed in a manner befitting the worship setting.

Distinctive Feature #14: The Contemporary Worship Singer may be presented to the congregation on visually prominent screens via live video. The technological enhancement of the individual's presence should be considered and accounted for in the stage presentation of the vocal performance task.

Voice

Distinctive Feature #15: The vocal loads experienced by the Contemporary Worship Singer may vary from low to high. Individual singers should be aware of the inherent vocal loads required by their worship setting.

Distinctive Feature #16: When teaching the Contemporary Worship Singer the application of classical or contemporary vocal tuition should be directed by the worship setting and the predominance of classic hymns or modern worship choruses respectively.

Distinctive Feature #17: Singing harmonies will add to the vocal capacity of the Contemporary Worship Singer; enabling harmonic choices and aesthetic value to vocal ensembles. The ability to read harmonies from written music and sing harmonies from ear is mutually beneficial to the role.

Distinctive Feature #18: The development of vocal skills, including the enhancement of vocal range, empowers the Contemporary Worship Singer with versatility, flexibility and adaptability; all key attributes needed for the service of the congregant.

Distinctive Feature #19: The Contemporary Worship Singer is instructed to practice vocal warm-ups and cool-downs as a prerequisite to excellence.

Appendix 5 ~ Pilot Assessment Tool Results

The following graphics present the Pilot Assessment Tool Sheets: IP01 through to IP09

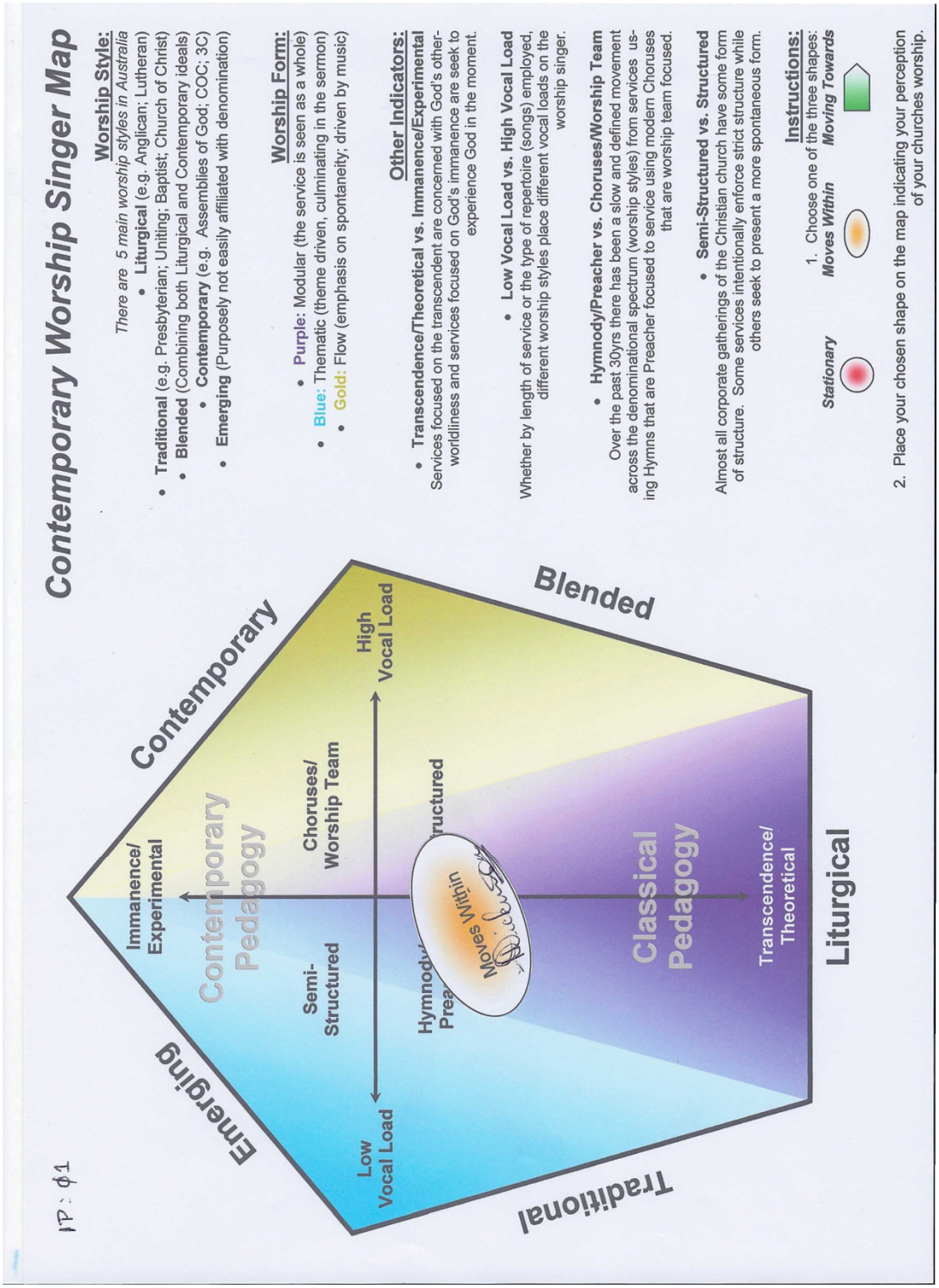


Figure 86: *Pilot Assessment Tool IP01*

Figure 87: *Pilot Assessment Tool IP02*

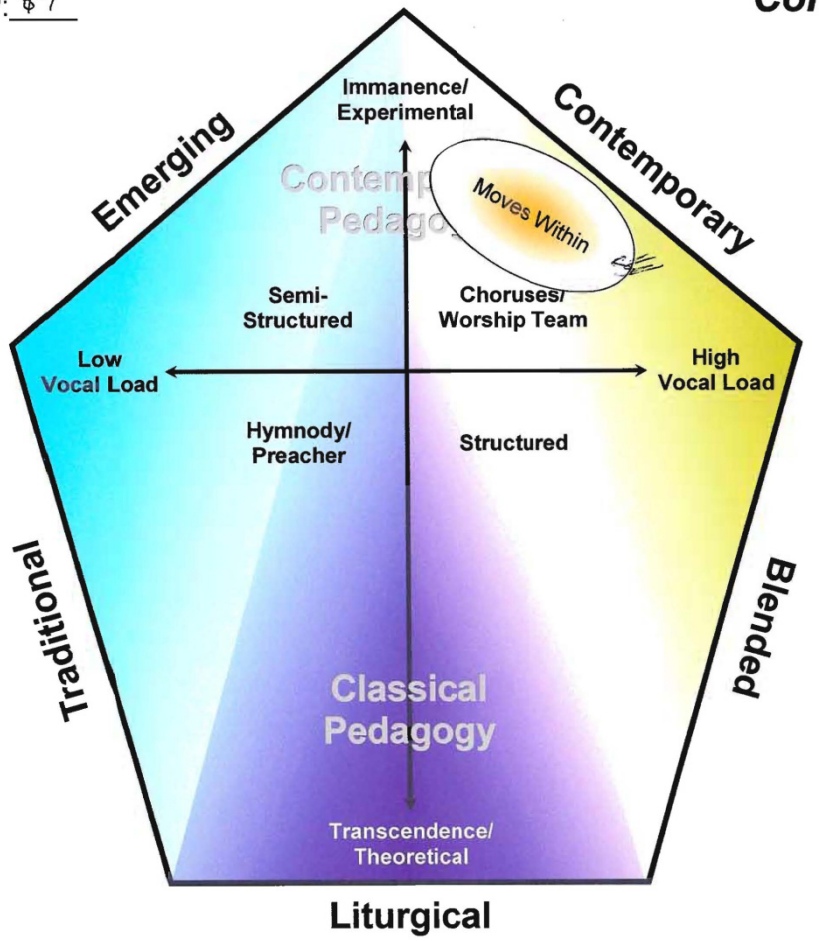
Figure 88: *Pilot Assessment Tool IP03*

Figure 89: *Pilot Assessment Tool IP04*

Figure 90: *Pilot Assessment Tool IP05*

Figure 91: *Pilot Assessment Tool IP06*

IP: 07



Contemporary Worship Singer Map

Worship Style:

There are 5 main worship styles in Australia

- **Liturgical** (e.g. Anglican; Lutheran)
- **Traditional** (e.g. Presbyterian; Uniting; Baptist; Church of Christ)
- **Blended** (Combining both Liturgical and Contemporary ideals)
- **Contemporary** (e.g. Assemblies of God; COC; 3C)
- **Emerging** (Purposely not easily affiliated with denomination)

Worship Form:

- **Purple:** Modular (the service is seen as a whole)
- **Blue:** Thematic (theme driven, culminating in the sermon)
- **Gold:** Flow (emphasis on spontaneity; driven by music)

Other Indicators:

- **Transcendence/Theoretical vs. Immanence/Experimental**

Services focused on the transcendent are concerned with God's other-worldliness and services focused on God's immanence are seek to experience God in the moment.

- **Low Vocal Load vs. High Vocal Load**

Whether by length of service or the type of repertoire (songs) employed, different worship styles place different vocal loads on the worship singer.

- **Hymnody/Preacher vs. Choruses/Worship Team**

Over the past 30yrs there has been a slow and defined movement across the denominational spectrum (worship styles) from services using Hymns that are Preacher focused to service using modern Choruses that are worship team focused.

- **Semi-Structured vs. Structured**

Almost all corporate gatherings of the Christian church have some form of structure. Some services intentionally enforce strict structure while others seek to present a more spontaneous form.

Instructions:

1. Choose one of the three shapes:

Stationary ***Moves Within*** ***Moving Towards***

2. Place your chosen shape on the map indicating your perception of your churches worship.

Figure 92: *Pilot Assessment Tool IP07*

Figure 93: *Pilot Assessment Tool IP08*

Figure 94: *Pilot Assessment Tool IP09*