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Everyday Miracles
An Investigation into How Charismatic Christians in Wales Talk about Their Experience of Healing Miracles

by

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ABSTRACT

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EVERYDAY MIRACLES

AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW CHARISMATIC CHRISTIANS IN WALES TALK ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE OF HEALING MIRACLES

By Chloe Louise Swart

There is anecdotal evidence that charismatic Christians across Wales are reporting that they have been physically healed following prayer. Although healing as a phenomenon is acknowledged to be a key part of charismatics theology and practice, it is significantly understudied in the context of Wales. Moreover, little is known about what the ordinary individual believes or talks about when they experience a healing miracle. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate what charismatics in Wales say when they talk about a healing miracle. Through the distribution of questionnaires across Wales, 605 healing narratives were collected. The main finding from this research is that many individuals talk about their healing experience in an everyday way. This means some report that they have been healed in an everyday location outside of a Church context, prayed for by someone other than a church minister, for a common, non-life-threatening condition, using normal and colloquial language to describe the experience. To discuss the implications of these findings, this thesis engages with the debate on secularism to examine how these reports of everyday miracles can be understood today. I begin with a brief overview of the secularisation thesis within the sociology debate. I then move on to introduce Charles Taylor's definition of what our secular age consists of, building upon his theory of disenchantment. The final section answers how these sacred encounters can be understood in our secular age. I propose that individuals have disenchanted their enchanting experiences in order to, as Anton Wessels argues, 'inculturate' into our secular age. I then offer a critique of this view, examining the theory that our modern times are re-enchanted with 'spiritualities of life'.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Chloe Louise Swart

declare that the thesis entitled

Everyday Miracles
An Investigation into How Charismatic Christians in Wales Talk about Their Experience of Healing Miracles

and the work presented in the thesis are both my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- none of this work has been published before submission.
- Signed: Chloe Swart……..

Date: 28/10/21…….

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Abbreviations

CoE	Church of England
CiW	Church in Wales
NWC	New Wine Cymru
SS	Snowball Sample
BMJ	British Medical Journal
MD	Mission Denmark

Introduction

The secularisation debate is one which has captivated theologians for decades. Jeffrey Cox suggests that despite 'the efforts of doubters, sceptics and adversaries, the most influential general account of religion in modern Europe, and in the modern world, remains the theory of secularization.'[1] Since the turn of the century, philosophers such as Charles Taylor have critiqued the idea that modernity has caused the decline in religion and suggested instead that it is a shift in mindset and belief which has led to 'A Secular Age'.[2] Taylor argues that one of the features of our secular age is that individuals in the West today live in a 'disenchanted' and 'secular' society.[3]

However, today, there are anecdotal reports that some charismatic Christians in Wales believe themselves to be physically healed following prayer, despite their secular surroundings. Thus, this research set out to investigate what people say when they talk about a healing miracle today. Through the distribution of questionnaires across Wales, 605 narratives were collected from those claiming to experience healing, offering an insight into people's lived religiosity in Wales today. The major finding from this research is that individuals in Wales talk about their healing experience in what I discuss as an 'everyday' way.[4] Moreover, these findings have wider implications for how we view our society because some people are claiming to engage with God in what might be

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[1] Jeffrey Cox, 'Master Narratives of Long-Term Religious Change', in *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe 1750– 2000,* ed.by Hugh McLeod, and Werner Ustorf (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.201

[2] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p.1

[3] Taylor, p.33-38

[4] The reason 'individuals' is used frequently, as well 'charismatic Christians' to describe the results is because some people who completed questionnaires did not state their denomination or Christians affiliation. Moreover, some describe themselves as 'non-Christians'. Therefore, when it is clear it is charismatic Christians, this term will be used, otherwise 'individual' will be used throughout.

considered supernatural or enchanted ways, despite living in a secular age, where these experiences would not necessarily be expected to take place. Working within the framework of Taylor's argument that we are disenchanted, the healing miracles found in Wales raise implications for how these sacred encounters are understood in our secular age. I suggest the answer is that individuals have disenchanted their enchanting experiences in order to inculturate into a secular age.

This research is an investigation into the contemporary reports of healing miracles in Wales. Although the research predominantly took place in South Wales, one third of the healing narratives collected were from other areas across Wales and thus, this research project investigates reports of healing miracles across charismatic churches in Wales. Wales was chosen as an area of research because it was the location that I was hearing anecdotally that people were reporting in seemingly large numbers that they were experiencing healing miracles. There is scope for further research to discover if this is occurring elsewhere in the UK. Moreover, Wales has over 200 charismatic churches affiliated to the charismatic movement, New Wine Cymru. I have chosen to research the specific context of charismatic churches because as my next chapter will argue, many scholars of the charismatic movement claim that charismatics value and prioritise the practice of healing.[5] Therefore, by researching churches within this network, I was able to gain access to a high volume of charismatic churches who believed in, taught on, and practised the ministry of healing. This ensured a large volume of healing narratives, which

[5] Scholars and work which cite this point of view include, Kay, William K., and Anne E Dyer., Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies: A Reader, (SCM Press, 2010), Scotland, Nigel., Charismatics and the New Millennium, (Eagle, 2000), Cartledge, Mark J., Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives (Wipf & Stock, 2003), Cox, Harvey, Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century (Da Capo Press, 2001). See pages 45-52, chapter 1 of this thesis for an overview of the charismatic and their intentional focus on healing.

allowed this research to investigate what the ordinary individual belonging to a charismatic church in Wales says when they talk about a healing miracle.

The aim of this research was not to prove nor disprove that healing miracles occur, but instead to understand what people say when they talk about their healing experience. The boundaries of the research were limited to studying physical healing, as opposed to emotional, mental, or spiritual healing. Moreover, the healing investigated was limited to a charismatic Christian context. This is different to studies which researched healing from within other religions or spiritual healing such as reiki or psychic healing.[6] Lastly, the research was restricted to collecting healing narratives from within Wales only. The research began in South Wales and then extended to cover the entirety of Wales.

This thesis has four main chapters. The first is an overview of the relevant literature which discusses contemporary healing miracles. The topic of healing has always been a prominent feature within Christianity. This is certainly reflected in the large amount of historical literature, which while discussing the historical practices of healing miracles, documents what individuals have deemed important when discussing healing miracles. As my investigation is to research what people say when they talk about a healing miracle, the historical literature provides a framework by which contemporary studies of healing and what is spoken about today can be compared to other historical periods. Moreover, it contributes to my argument that healing practices are defined by their cultural context and thus will be different in different historical and cultural periods.

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[6] For titles which deal with this see, Dori-Michelle Beeler, *An Ethnographic Account of Reiki Practice in Britain*, (Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2016), Joan D. Koss-Chioino, and Philip J. Hefner, *Spiritual Transformation and Healing: Anthropological, Theological, Neuroscientific, and Clinical Perspectives*, (AltaMira Press 2006), and Matthew Engelke, *Sticky Subjects, Sticky Objects: The Substance of African Christian Healing, in Materiality*, ed.by Miller Daniel (Duke University Press, Durham, 2005)

The rest of the first chapter is devoted to investigating literature which examines contemporary healing miracles in Wales. In comparison to the historical literature, there is very little written on contemporary practices of healing in Wales. The literature which does discuss healing in Wales comes from advocacy literature written by church leaders teaching their church congregations how to pray for healing. Whilst these advocacy books discuss contemporary healing practices and provide examples of individuals reporting that they have been healed after prayer, they are highly biased studies based on personal experience, with little academic content or research. In addition, this section will draw upon denominational literature within the Anglican Church as well as charismatic literature because they provide contemporary material to survey the discussion and teaching on healing miracles.[7] As I will demonstrate, there is a gap between what this literature teaches and what Anglican reports say is happening when it comes to healing miracles within their church services. Thus, through the anecdotal literature, I note the lack of studies investigating healing miracles in Wales, which I address in part through this study, by providing an academic and contemporary study of healing miracles in Wales.

As the literature in Wales is limited, the rest of the literature review inspects contemporary sociological studies on healing miracles which were conducted further afield. Some sociological studies, such as those by Meredith McGuire and Robert Orsi, have referenced healing whilst researching individuals' lived religion.[8] Their studies

[7] A Time to Heal. *A Report for the House of Bishops on the Healing Ministry* (Church House Publishing, 2000), p.xviii

[8] Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950* (Yale University Press; 3 edition, 2010), p.lxi and Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford University Press, USA; 1st Edition, 2008), p.1

provide an insight into alternative healing practices of people who choose to practice healing in their own way, not necessarily within the boundaries of what the Christian Church would teach. These studies rarely provide an in-depth analysis of physical healing because their focus is on another aspect of these individuals' lived religion, and thus healing is just one element mentioned. In the case of some of the other sociological studies I examine, they investigate inner healing as opposed to physical healing or healing outside of Christianity.[9] Or, in some cases, their aim is simply to provide a case of evidence to prove the reliability of healing stories.[10] Therefore, the studies which I will discuss in more detail throughout the chapter are helpful because they reference healing and give an indication that 'something is happening'. However, they do not discuss the practices of contemporary healing miracles in significant depth. Thus, this study contributes to this academic field by investigating physical healing miracles within the boundaries of Christian teaching. Moreover, much of the literature on healing comes from studies conducted in America, Canada, and the Global South. Since these studies are in locations with entirely different contexts, religious beliefs, and values to the UK, they are difficult to compare.[11] By limiting my study to Wales, this research also contributes to this body of literature by providing an in-depth study of a particular location in the UK.

In the second chapter I outline my theoretical framework and methodology for the chapter. This research is one that builds upon and aligns itself with Meredith McGuire's

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[9] Nadya Pohran, *A Charismatic Healing: A Phenomenological Study of Spiritual Healing in Ottawa, Canada,* (Religious Studies Department of Classics and Religious Studies Faculty of Arts University of Ottawa, © Ottawa, Canada, 2015), p.4

[10] Ella Paldam, and Uffe Schjoedt, 'Miracles and Pain Relief: Experienced Health Effects of Charismatic Prayer Healing', *Archive for the Psychology of Religion,* Vol. 38, No. 2, (2016) 210-231 (Sage Publications 2016), p.210

[11] Gastón Espinosa, 'Latino Pentecostal Healing in the North American Borderlands' in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing,* ed.by Candy G. Brown (Oxford University Press, 2011), p.151

lived religion.[12] This is so I am able to take people's experience seriously in order to answer the question, 'how people talk about a healing miracle'. Lived religion is by now a commonly used term within sociological studies on religion, which take seriously the individual and their experiences to understand what their lived religion looks like to them, as opposed to solely studying official Church texts or religious traditions and theological doctrines.[13] My study, like those within other sociological studies, prioritises experience in order to investigate a particular phenomenon. Therefore, this research does not aim to critique an individual's healing experience against any external or objective markers. My question is not to assess if the healings are real, true or correct. Instead, the aim is to investigate what people say when they talk about their healing experience and how this affects their life, religiosity, and any wider implications for society. I liken my study to those conducted on 'coming-out narratives'.[14] A coming-out narrative does not aim to prove or disprove if an individual is gay or not. Instead, the aim of the research is to analyse the narratives to discover what is important to an individual who goes through the experience of coming-out.[15] Likewise, this investigation does not aim to prove nor disprove healing miracles, but instead analyses the narratives to discover what is important to charismatic Christians who claim to have this experience and what they talk about when they discuss a healing miracle.

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[12] Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford University Press, USA; 1st Edition, 2008),
[13] McGuire, p.13
[14] Marni A. Brown, *Coming Out Narratives: Realities of Intersectionality* (Georgia State University 2011), Glenn T. Mason, *'Coming Out' Stories: A Narrative Study into 'Coming Out' as Lesbian and Gay to the Family*, A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology (DCounsPsych) in the Faculty of Humanities 2016, <https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/files/57430848/FULL_TEXT.PDF>[accessed 18/11/18]
[15] Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory, An Introduction* (Melbourne University Press, 1996), p.38

In order to answer the question regarding how people talk about their healing experience, this research collected narratives in the form of questionnaires, as well as conducting face to face interviews. From the selected sample and the snowball sample, I collected 605 healing narratives as well as data from the 14 church leader interviews. To analyse the data, I chose a structural analysis method. I chose specific coding which allowed a common structure to emerge from the data. Moreover, the structural analysis led to methodological innovation as it used the key elements found in the data to construct three categories of healing miracles.

The third chapter presents my findings from this research. The first finding is that the narratives all contained a four-part structure. This four-part structure consisted of pain, prayer, healing event and response. The second major finding was that the narratives showed that most people spoke about their healing experience in an everyday way. This meant that they described themselves getting healed in locations outside of a Church context, prayed for - for healing - by someone other than an official Church minister, healed of an ordinary and common ailment and using common and ordinary language to describe the healing experience.

I categorised the healing narratives into three categories: traditional healing narratives, everyday healing narratives and mixed healing narratives. Across all three categories were four components commonly found within the narratives. The four components are categorised as: nature of the ailment, location of the healing event, who performed the healing, and descriptive language. It is these four components within the narratives which will be compared across the three different categories of healing narratives to show how people talk about their experience of a healing miracle. As will be explained in more detail throughout the chapter, the four components devised within

the traditional healing narratives consist of the individual reporting that they have been physically healed of a serious ailment, within a church context, prayed for by an official Church minister, using religious language to describe the experience. Likewise, the four components within the everyday healing narratives consist of the individual reporting that they have been physically healed of a non-serious ailment, outside of a Church context, prayed for by someone who does not hold an official Church position and uses colloquial and informal language to describe the experience. Lastly, the four components within the mixed healing narratives include three everyday components and one traditional component.

78% of the healing narratives collected had an element that reflected everyday life. I use the term, 'everyday' to describe these narratives.[16] 33% were entirely everyday across all four components and 45% were mostly everyday, as three out of four components were everyday. Thus, they were categorised as mixed narratives but were mostly everyday in description. Therefore, it can be concluded that many charismatic Christians in Wales talk about their healing experience in an everyday way. They describe being healed in their local coffee shop or gym or in locations which are familiar and normal to them in their day-to-day lives. This is different to having to go to a Church or specific location to access a healing miracle. They describe being prayed for (for healing) by a spouse, a friend or even a stranger as opposed to an official Church minister. They talk about being healed from everyday illnesses such as a food intolerance, arthritis, or a painful back. These could be described as everyday conditions, which can be very painful

[16] The term 'everyday' and its definition within the context of this study will be discussed later.

and life limiting for the individual but are not life threatening or require urgent medical assistance. Lastly, they describe their healing experience in an everyday way using informal and colloquial language, comparing their healing to common household appliances, or including humour or sarcasm within their description. This is instead of describing their experience in a traditional manner which might include descriptions of a biblical nature or discussing physical and spiritual reactions. These findings are important because they suggest that some individuals in Wales today believe themselves to be engaging with God in a down to earth, informal, and colloquial way – that reflects both their religious faith and a secular context.

The last chapter considers the significant implications from discovering that some people in Wales are reporting that they have been physically healed following prayer today. It raises the question, how are these sacred encounters to be understood in our secular age? I begin by describing the secularisation thesis within the sociology of religion debate before moving on to define secularism by engaging with Charles Taylor's important publication, *A Secular Age,* and in particular, his notion of disenchantment.[17] Building upon Taylor's terminology, that we are disenchanted, I move on to examine the implications of finding everyday healing miracles in a secular Wales. I use Anton Wessel's theory of inculturation to suggest that Christianity has continued to mould and adapt to inculturate into its current context.[18] I thus argue that individuals have disenchanted their enchantment in order to inculturate into a secular society, which has led to an 'everyday enchantment'. The everyday enchantment found in the description of

[17] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p.1
[18] Anton Wessels, *Europe: Was it Ever Really Christian*? (SCM Press Ltd, 1994), p.8

individuals' everyday healing miracles is an indication that we are seeping out of our secular mould into a post-secular society.

Moreover, as a result of inculturating into a secular age, the notion of an everyday enchantment can be seen when reflecting upon the charismatic literature. When considering the religious context of the individuals, the finding of these reported healing experiences may not be surprising because, the participants describe themselves as charismatic Christians affiliated with charismatic churches. Thus, charismatic literature suggests that God's intervention through healing is a prominent value and strong held belief of charismatics. My research supports the charismatic literature as the healing narratives collected in Wales indeed show that individuals do believe and report God's daily intervention in their life. However, my research further builds upon the literature by providing an additional layer of information which includes the way in which people describe their healing experience. That description is an everyday description which is different to how the charismatic literature tends to portray healing miracles.

Lastly, I evaluate the concept of disenchanted enchantment by examining two alternative critiques, including, the myth of disenchantment and re-enchantment. I build upon Josephson-Storm's argument that we have never been disenchanted to show that the healing narratives can be explained as a continuation of an enchanted West. Secondly, I engage with the theory for 're-enchantment', spearheaded by scholars such as Linda Woodhead, Paul Heelas, Christopher Partridge, and Abby Day to argue that there are other 'spiritualties of life' in our modern times.[19] Outside of the church and chapel context there are also individuals reporting healing and sacred encounters through Goddess

[19] Heelas, 111

worship, contemporary paganism, and New Age movements. This prompts an answer to the question that sacred encounters can be understood in our 'secular age' in broader terms that many people are experiencing supernatural or paranormal activity because our age has been re-enchanted. I conclude by explaining that I find the notion of 'disenchanted enchantment' the most convincing as individuals have lived in a secular Wales and this can be seen through the way they talk about their healing experiences. They have disenchanted their enchantment resulting in an 'everyday enchantment' description of their sacred encounter.

All in all, my research contributes to scholarship by providing an academic study of contemporary, Christian, physical healing miracles in Wales. Furthermore, the study is unique in its boundaries, scope and perspective. Throughout, I also propose questions for further investigation on the topic of contemporary Christian healing miracles in Wales. Overall, this study aimed to investigate the anecdotal reports of physical healing miracles in Wales, and what people say when they talk about a healing miracle. The data collected answered the research question that some charismatic Christians in Wales talk about their healing experience in an everyday way.

Chapter 1. An Examination of the Literature on Contemporary Christian Practices of Physical Healing Miracles Found in Wales

Introduction

From antiquity to the present, healing has been a significant part of Christianity. Gary Ferngren contends, 'it has been widely maintained that an emphasis on physical healing was, from the beginning, a major aspect of early Christianity.'[20] Furthermore, referencing Christian practices of healing amongst others, Meredith McGuire notes that, 'in the last decades of the twentieth century […] it became apparent that many people in Europe and the Americas were turning to nonmedical approaches to address some of their health-related needs.'[21] Likewise, in Christian contexts in Wales, people have been reporting experiences of physical healing in recent decades. These have been noted anecdotally, with passing reference, in a single research paper into Christian practices in Wales and feature more prominently in advocacy literature emerging from local churches. However, these accounts are yet to be seriously studied, with research investigating contemporary practices of healing within Wales being a neglected area of study. Indeed, very little has been researched on contemporary Christianity in Wales in general. Therefore, this chapter will examine the academic literature on physical healing miracles specifically within Christianity. The literature discussed in this chapter is driven by the research question,

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[20] Gary B. Ferngren, 'Early Christianity as a Religion of Healing', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 66, No.1, (1992) 1-15 (The Johns Hopkins University Press Stable, 1992), p.1
[21] Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford University Press, USA; 1st Edition, 2008), p.120

'how charismatics in Wales talk about their experience of healing miracles?' Thus, the literature will review what research has already been undertaken on contemporary Christian healing practices. In doing so, this chapter highlights the neglected area of investigative academic theological analysis into the apparent practice and reporting of physical healing in Wales. This will provide the rationale for why an investigation into the contemporary practices of healing miracles within Wales is required.

I have divided the relevant literature into three sections. The first section will give an overview of the historical literature on healing miracles within Christianity. I have started with this body of literature because most of the debate on healing has been within historical literature. Although my research is a contemporary investigation, the historical literature describes the foundations from which contemporary practices have evolved and will thus provide a useful point of comparison for assessing what people say when they talk about a healing miracle today compared to what was discussed in the historical literature. This section will examine key turning points within the history of Christianity, primarily European Christianity, and its practices and theology of healing miracles. Beginning with biblical literature, here I will briefly survey perspectives on the practice of healing given within early Christianity, Medieval Christianity, the Reformation and Modernity, before bringing us into the twentieth century with the rise of Pentecostalism. As my research in Wales is a contemporary study this section will draw out broad perspectives on healing within Christianity, as opposed to an in-depth study on each of these historical eras. The literature shows that healing practices within Christianity have been somewhat malleable, adapting to culture and context. This contributes to my argument in the final chapter that the manner in which healing miracles are practiced and reported in Wales are adaptable and have adapted to individuals' secular surroundings.

The second section will discuss the available literature on contemporary healing practices in Wales. At present, academic studies which research contemporary healing miracles in Wales is a neglected area of study, and therefore this section will include advocacy literature written by local church leaders with the purpose of teaching their congregations about Christian healing. The advocacy literature represents a primary source indicative of the beliefs, practices and lived religion of contemporary Christian churches in Wales. This literature is included because it contains narratives from individuals who claim to experience healing miracles today. Therefore, whilst these narratives have not been academically documented, they give an insight into the way in which reports of healing miracles are communicated and understood in Welsh Christian contexts today. Moreover, this section includes Anglican denominational literature, as well as charismatic literature. In contrast to the advocacy literature, the Anglican denominational literature focuses upon providing liturgy, prayers and instructions for how to perform healing services, rather than including actual stories and illustrations of healing miracles. Whereas the charismatic literature tends to focus on commonly held beliefs, as well as style and performance of healing miracles. Both these forms of literature, however, derive from central bodies. Yet, as I will discuss, the House of Bishops report shows the denominational literature is not necessarily reflective of the wider experience of the lived religion of those within the Church.[22] Likewise, whilst including stories of numerous individuals participating in healing, the advocacy literature nonetheless primarily derives from church ministers advocating the ministry of healing. Therefore, there is room for further research. As noted above, this survey of the literature

[22] Although the House of Bishops report is directed at CoE Churches it is reflective of broader Anglican churches including Church in Wales.

exposes a gap between the claims of contemporary advocacy literature and subsequent investigative academic theological analysis.

Lastly, contemporary studies on healing miracles will be examined. As there are few contemporary studies on healing in Wales, I will highlight studies that have been conducted elsewhere, but nonetheless within Christian contexts. These studies are primarily sociological studies which research particular communities or denominations. It is within these studies that contemporary practices of healing miracles are discussed. Therefore, although these studies are outside of the context of my own research, they also give an indication of what is spoken about when people discuss healing miracles within Christianity today. They further show the relevance and interest in this topic of healing within Christianity. Where studies in this field have taken place abroad, I hope to provide a further point of reference with an analysis of lived religion in Wales.

Thus, whilst offering a brief survey of perspectives on healing within Christian contexts, this chapter will highlight the opportunities for further research and analysis which this study aims to fulfil. Ultimately, the survey of literature in this chapter illustrates that there is a gap in the literature on contemporary healing miracles in Wales; therefore, an investigation into the contemporary practices of healing miracles within Wales is required.

Historical Literature

Healing has always been a prominent feature throughout the history of Christianity. Amanda Porterfield, in her *Healing in the History of Christianity*, argues that 'healing has persisted over time and across cultural spaces as a defining element of Christianity and a

major contributor to Christianity's endurance, expansion, and success.'[23] This chapter starts with the historical literature because the majority of literature featuring the topic of healing is historical. My question is to investigate what people talk about when they discuss a healing miracle and therefore, the historical literature provides a point of reference for comparison and future reflection, to consider the evolution of approaches to healing throughout Christianity. The historical literature supports my argument that healing is culturally defined and will differ throughout different historical periods and cultural contexts. However, because my investigation is a contemporary one, with the aim to investigate what people say when they talk about a healing miracle, I will only provide a very broad overview of healing throughout the historical literature and draw out the prominent points which are relevant to my contemporary study on physical healing miracles in Wales. This is because the main aim is not to fit my findings into Church history, but to touch upon some of the broad perspectives of healing within Christianity as over the course of history, this literature has shaped contemporary practices of healing.

This section will begin by giving a brief overview of biblical references to healing. Next, the historical literature will be examined through investigating broad eras in the history of Christian healing miracles. It will begin with healing in early Christianity by examining the practices of the early Church Fathers, moving on to healing within Medieval Christianity, the change in theology of healing miracles throughout the Reformation, Modernity and lastly in the emergence of Pentecostalism. The biblical references to healing show that healing practices are mouldable and adaptable within different historical periods. It shows that healing remains a prominent feature of

[23] Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford University Press, 2005), p.19

Christianity, despite the changes in its theology and practices. Thus, the way in which I discuss healing miracles in Wales also belongs to a particular historical period. It is therefore expected that the way in which healing practises are described in a modern context will be different to the description of those practices within the historical literature, because the healing practises have been adapted to the surrounding culture through the years.

Biblical Literature

The category 'biblical literature' here refers to the field of study investigating healing miracles as recorded within the Bible, in particular the life of Jesus and the 'early Church' as documented in the New Testament. [24] On the one hand this literature may not appear to be immediately relevant to my research, which seeks to investigate contemporary reports of healing miracles in Wales. However, as will be shown later, the practices of healing within the New Testament are frequently appealed to within contemporary advocacy literature to describe and justify methods of healing practice within local Churches today. A brief survey of the biblical literature will therefore prove useful for understanding what is apparently underpinning contemporary practices of healing and may serve as a point of comparison for further study.

Morton Kelsey, in his *Healing and Christianity*, draws upon a historical reading of healing within the New Testament in order to offer a theological foundation for

[24] For more on healing within the Bible see, Frederick J. Gaiser, *Healing in the Bible: Theological Insight for Christian Ministry* (Baker Academic, 2010), and John Meggitt, "The Historical Jesus and Healing: Jesus' Miracles in Psychological Context" in *Spiritual Healing: Scientific and Religious Perspectives*, (Cambridge University Press, 2011)

pursuing the practice of healing within Christian congregations today. Morton looks 'intelligently at the healing described in the New Testament, so as to assess it critically together with the practises that followed.'[25] He begins with 'the unique healing ministry of Jesus Christ of Nazareth' and argues that 'the interests Jesus showed in the physical and mental health of men was greater than that of any other leader or religious system from Confucius through Buddha to Zen and Islam.'[26] He argues that, 'nearly one-fifth of the entire Gospels is devoted to Jesus' healing and the discussions occasioned by it,' concluding that 'everywhere Jesus went he functioned as a religious healer.'[27] Kelsey goes beyond an examination of Jesus as a unique 'religious healer' to consider 'the first organized group of Christians to see what they actually did about all this.'[28] Kelsey highlights that the early Christian apostles also reported healing the lame, raising the dead and casting out demons.[29] Kelsey concludes that this 'affirms that the ministry carried out by Jesus was continued among his followers. They did not go out of their way to make a point of the matter. It just *was*.'[30] The view that Jesus performed miracles so that his followers would continue the healing ministry of Jesus is held by many biblical scholars. However, the reasons why, differ from scholar to scholar. For example, Brandon Walker suggests that Jesus' miracles were less about the performance of healing itself and more to do with the purpose of effective discipleship.[31] Walker says,

> Most, if not all, of his miracles were performed in the presence of his disciples or other witnesses. The fact that Jesus' miracles were not performed in complete

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[25] Morton Kelsey, *Healing and Christianity* (Augsburg Books, 1995), p.33
[26] Kelsey, p.53
[27] Kelsey, p.54
[28] Kelsey, p.104
[29] Kelsey, p.117-122
[30] Kelsey, p.123
[31] Brandon Walker, 'Performing Miracles', *Transformation*, 33 (2016) 85-98 (p.92)

> secrecy seems to indicate that he was intending to make a statement concerning his identity or character as well as give instruction to his followers.[32]

Similarly, Jack Dean Kingsbury in his, 'Observations on the "Miracle Chapters" of Matthew 8-9' argues that Jesus' healing miracles were also for the purpose of discipleship. Kingsbury goes further than Walker however and suggests that the purpose of Jesus' miracles were also to highlight pertinent themes of the day such as 'matters of Christology (8:1-17), discipleship (8:18-34), questions pertaining to the separation of Jesus and his followers from Israel (9:1-17), and faith (9:18-34).'[33] Kingsbury suggests that as we interpret healing miracles through the eyes of the writer Matthew, we begin to understand the purpose of documenting the healing miracles in a particular way. For example, Kingsbury argues that Matthew wrote the healing miracles in a way that we might 'see Jesus as, '"plundering" the kingdom, or "house," of the "strong man" Satan (12:29), i.e., as releasing both persons and the forces of nature from the sphere of his rule (8:26, 28:32; 12:28).'[34] Kingsbury thus argues that in this sense, the healing miracles were written to show that Jesus was fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies.[35] On the other hand, Albert Thomas Steele writes that Jesus's attitude toward healing and other events of his life differed from what was documented and represented by the gospel writers.[36] Steele argues that Jesus was in fact 'apparently anxious to avoid […] being known as a wonder worker.'[37] Instead, it was the evangelists who, 'intoxicated' by the popularity of Jesus' miracles who 'more or less consciously have left their impress on our records […]

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[32] Walker, p.86
[33] Jack Dean Kingsbridge, 'Observations on the "Miracle Chapters" of Matthew 8-9', *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 40, (1978) 559-573 (p.562)
[34] Kingsbury, p.571
[35] Kingsbury, p.571
[36] Albert Thomas Steele, 'Jesus' Attitude toward His Miracles', *The Biblical World*, 51, (1918) 195-203 (p.195)
[37] Steele, p.197

of Jesus attitude toward his miracles.'[38] This analysis of biblical literature on healing is interesting because it suggests that external contexts, as well as doctrinal influences or personal motives can affect how one writes and talks about a healing miracle. This is important when considering the contemporary perspective of how an individual in the secular nation of Wales might talk about their experience of a healing miracle.

John Pilch also encourages contemporary readers to re-examine the New Testament in his *Healing in the New Testament,* by embarking upon an anthropological reading.[39] Pilch examines the healing stories within the New Testament Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John: and the subsequent Acts of the Apostles. In doing so, he highlights differences in the accounting of healing stories by the different New Testament authors, offering explanations for their existence. For example, Pilch contends that the author of the Gospel of Luke writes from a 'doctor's perspective' portraying Jesus as 'an anointed, spirit-filled, exorcising-and-healing prophet.'[40] He puts forward the view that, 'the community's general acknowledgment and acceptance of him as such, sets Jesus clearly in the folk sector of the healthcare system reflected in Luke-Acts.'[41] Pilch contrasts this with the author of Mark, stating that Mark is inclined to present Jesus as 'teacher-as-healer'.[42] Pilch explains that,

> Jesus and all the people of his culture dealt with sickness as illness and not as disease. Mark's taxonomy clusters illness, not diseases. Jesus and all healers of

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[38] Steele, p.196-197
[39] John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (1517 Media; Fortress Press; 1st edition, 2000), p.12
Pilch maintains that readers should 'imagine and learn the viewpoints and values of those of another culture that they would study.' Thus, 'the modern interpreter who would like to respect Jesus as a first-century Mediterranean person who seemed to help sick people will benefit from turning to medical anthropology for assistance.', p.12-15
[40] Pilch, p.102
[41] Pilch, p.102
[42] Pilch, p.71

> that period could only perceive illnesses, not diseases. Since illness concerns the sociocultural meaning of a sickness experience, it makes good sense to view a teacher as a healer. Notice in each healing instance the almost total disregard of symptoms (something essential to disease). Instead there is constant concern for meaning. The context of Jesus' healing activity is frequently during his teaching activity- in the synagogue.[43]

To illustrate his point, Pilch compares the same healing stories across the different accounts. For example, he uses the story of Peter's mother-in-law getting healed from a fever. He notes, 'In Mark (1:29-31) Peter's mother-in-law suffers from a fever, but in Luke (4:38-39) she seems to be possessed by a demon named Fever.'[44] He concludes the comparison by explaining that 'the same event (the illness of Peter's mother-in-law) could have been viewed quite differently by two evangelists and by the respective audiences for whom they wrote. Culture rather than theology guides interpretation.'[45] Pilch here then suggests that the different Christian communities in which the gospel authors were embedded or witing to, approached the topic of healing in different ways.[46] Although each centred-on Jesus, there was a variety in their understanding of Christian healing. This is a feature of the evolution of healing practises within Christianity which some of the historical authors note. It is this point which will be highlighted throughout the literature review which is important for the investigation of how people in Wales talk about a healing miracle. Building upon Pilch's anthropological insights, it will be expected to see some differences in the ways in which people describe their healing

[43] Pilch, p.71
[44] Pilch, p.72
[45] Pilch, p.72
[46] Pilch also goes on to suggest we differentiate what it means to 'cure' from claims of 'healing'. For Pilch, 'cure' or 'curing' means to 'restore to health, soundness or normalcy' whereas healing as 'the restorations of meaning to life.' Using these distinct definitions, Pilch claims medical anthropology suggests that Jesus was not 'curing' people, but instead, only healing them. He uses leprosy as an example of this. p.141-142

miracles in Wales today compared to how a healing miracle was described in first century Palestine.

On the other hand, whilst also seeking to exegete the New Testament 'through first-century and Mediterranean eyes', in his *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*, Craig Keener seeks to critique what he considers to be 'the prejudice of Western anti-supernaturalist readings of the Gospels and Acts.'[47] Keener researches miracle accounts from within early Christian sources and other contemporary ancient documents, stating that 'understanding how miracle workers were viewed in the first century helps us appreciate the context of miracles in early Christianity.'[48] Subsequently, Keener concludes that 'Jesus was viewed as a miracle worker' and therefore asks, 'is it plausible in principle for specific claims about miracles to derive from eyewitness?'[49] By comparing historical accounts of healing miracles, Keener concludes that,

> the sorts of healings through particular human agents such as we observe in the Gospels and Acts, however, are much less commonly attested in this period, and when they do occur usually they reflect a much longer period of transmission than what we find in the Gospels and Acts. This common difference suggest that we should generally expect less legendry accretion in these first-century Christian sources than in any of the documents to which scholars have often compared them. Thus, without ruling out paranormal phenomena outside early Christian circles, we may also emphasize the dramatic and distinctive emphasis on miracles in the early Christian community.[50]

Keener therefore summarises his argument that, 'the central thrust of this book is that eyewitnesses do offer miracle reports, whatever the claims' actual explanation.'[51] He attempts to establish that the New Testament records are based upon eyewitness accounts

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[47] Craig S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* (Baker Publishing Group, 2011), p.92
[48] Keener, p.134
[49] Keener, p.107-133
[50] Keener, p.148
[51] Keener, p.166

and subsequently argues that supernatural healing miracles are 'a legitimate explanatory option.' Yet, even if supernatural explanations cannot be established, at a minimum he proposed that we must acknowledge that the miracle reports are eyewitness accounts and must be approached as such. Keener's research is relevant for this study because it is one that prioritises the study of eye-witness testimony. Likewise, my research investigates those who are reporting that they are witnessing healing miracles in Wales today. Thus, adopting a focus on the individual testimony would be in line with scholars such as sociologists within lived religion. Lived religion analyses people's experiences in order to understand what a particular phenomenon means to them (as will be discussed in the next chapter). This is not to prove the phenomenon true or false, but instead to understand it from the individual's perspective. However, this is where my research also differs to Keener's. One of Keener's aims is to use a historical reading of healing miracles to persuade the reader that healing miracles were occurring. However, this is not the aim of my research. My study does not seek to prove or disprove healing miracles but instead the focus is on what people say when they talk about a healing miracle. As we will see below, it is Keener's understanding of healing miracles which seems to be reflected in the contemporary advocacy literature sampled in Wales, where church leaders draw upon a face value reading of the New Testament in their teaching on contemporary practices of healing miracles today.

Overall, the biblical literature is helpful because it highlights the debate within biblical studies concerning how we approach the New Testament's descriptions of healing miracles. As we will see when discussing the advocacy and denominational literature in the second section, these different debates are also reflected in the various practical theologies of local churches. Before turning to this, however, I will briefly

explore some key historical examinations of healing within Christianity, from the 'early-Church' to the Twentieth century.

Healing in the History of Christianity

Healing miracles are described and recorded in numerous different ways throughout the history of Christianity. From the first to the twenty-first century, the way that Christian healing is practised and described has been adapted to the contemporary culture and context. This is important for my present study on healing because it supports my argument that healing practices evolve within different historical periods. The historical literature thus shows that healing has remained a prominent, yet mouldable, feature of Christianity. This next section will thus provide a broad overview of some of the ways healing has been discussed throughout Christianity's history in order to offer a framework for which my study might fit into. The exploration of historical literature will largely be confined to this section however, as the focus of my study is contemporary healing testimonies.

Healing within the Early Church is a historical period frequently discussed within the historical literature. Evelyn Frost's, *Christian Healing*, represents an influential study of the earliest records of healing practices within Christianity from approximately 100-250 CE. Frost's work begins with seeking 'to examine the historical practice of healing in the Early Church' and 'attempts to show that such healing work formed a normal part of the activity of the Early Church.'[52] She argues, 'The evidence of the healing work of

[52] Evelyn Frost, *Christian Healing* (A R Mowbray & Co Limited, London, 1949), p.8

Christ through the Christian body begins in the New Testament and is still present in the twentieth century.'[53]

A major part of Frost's work is examining healing within the doctrine and practices forwarded by the Ante-Nicene Fathers such as Origen, Cyprian, Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandra. Frost concludes that the types of healing practices described in the New Testament continued without interruption for the next two centuries.[54] For example, Frost highlights Irenaeus' appeal to miracles in his treatise, *Against Heresies,* in dealing with the Gnostics. Frost summarises Irenaeus' argument that, whilst the Gnostics might be able to produce some miraculous effects, there 'is no evidence for their being able to perform such works of healing as there is abundant evidence that the Christians perform.'[55] Irenaeus said,

> For they can neither confer sight on the blind, nor hearing on the deaf, nor chase away all sorts of demons- none indeed, except those that are sent into others by themselves, if they can even do so much as this. Nor can they cure the weak, or the lame, or the paralytic, or those who are distressed in any other part of the body, as has often been done in regard to bodily infirmity. Nor can they furnish effective remedies for those external accidents which may occur. And so far are they from being able to raise the dead, as the Lord raised them, and the Apostles did by means of prayer, and *as has been frequently done in the brotherhood on account of some necessity- the entire Church in that particular locality entreating the boon with much fasting and prayer,* the spirit of the dead man has returned, and he has been bestowed in answer to the prayers of the saints- that they do not even believe this can possible be done, and hold that the resurrection from the dead is simply and acquaintance with that truth which they proclaim.'[56]

Here then, Irenaeus demonstrates the reporting of healing miracles within the Christian community beyond the New Testament. Frost contends that this is just one of many

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[53] Frost, p.63
[54] Frost, p.15-47
[55] Frost, p.65
[56] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103.htm> [accessed 20.06.21] p. ixlviii

examples and concludes that the practices of the New Testament continued in the life of the church in the succeeding century.

Likewise, in *Healing in the History of Christianity* Amanda Porterfield examines a broad sweep of Christian history, stretching from early-Christianity through to the Early-Modern period, arguing that healing remained a prominent feature of Christianity throughout these historical periods. Concerning healing, Porterfield argues that 'attention to healing reveals remarkable similarities among different cultural expressions of Christianity and that healing has been a driving force in the construction of Christianity as an ongoing historical tradition.'[57] Porterfield therefore furthers Frost's argument for seeing a continuity in the practice of healing from the earliest days of Christianity. Reflecting on her research, Porterfield stated, 'I did not anticipate the extent to which I would come to see Christianity as a religion of healing.'[58]

Offering a broad assessment of Christian healing throughout the centuries, Porterfield notes that, even where means and methods differ, its practice has remained consistently centred on the figure of Jesus. Porterfield puts forward the view that, 'Christian healing can be distinguished from other forms of religious healing in its appeal to Christ as the transcendent source of healing and prime symbol of personal and social integration.'[59] She goes on to describe religious practice. Christian healing has involved many diverse actions, including prayer, pilgrimage, penance, laying on of hands, participating in sacraments, and venerating saints, relics, and icons. In the context of this diversity, the basic dynamic that begins to explain how Christianity has actually worked

[57] Porterfield, p.3-4
[58] Porterfield, p.3
[59] Porterfield, p.9

to make people feel stronger and find relief and comfort is the personal relationship that believers experience with Christ.[60] This is significant because it shows that Christian theology sees Jesus as the source of healing during this historical period. Despite differing locations and contexts this concept remained central to the theology of healing throughout the next couple of centuries. Porterfield notes,

> As Christianity spread into different parts of the ancient world, belief in the healing power of Christ came to expression in numerous ways. In Syria and Egypt, holy men withdrew from society to fight demons and prepare their bodies for Christ and attracted streams of visitors to their outposts eager to be cleansed and healed. In urban environments, Christians banded together for worship services that incorporated exorcism and healing along with other practices that strengthened individuals through union with Christ and with one another as members of his collective body in this world. Urban Christians exercised their faith through missionary outreach, often to the sick and poor, as did Christian traders traveling across the seas and along the roads and rivers of the ancient world. Especially around Constantinople, but in other cities as well, this outreach led to the emergence of a holistic system of religiously based health care, in which churches and monastic communities provided nursing care and medical services as well as religious rituals through which people found repentance for their sins and absorbed the protective, cleansing, and transforming vitality of Christ.[61]

However, there are differing arguments over the extent to which Christian healing miracles continued in the first few centuries. Ferngren asserts,

> An additional argument for the lack of a continuing tradition of super- natural healing in the church in the second century (and the third as well) is the failure of Christian writers to exploit for apologetic purposes specific cases of Christians who claimed to have been miraculously healed. The desire for physical health and healing was widespread in the second century. Diseases of the body and the mind, real and imagined, abounded, and with them the demand for supernatural cures, a demand that centred on the many healing cults throughout the Mediterranean world.[62]

It seems hard to reconcile Ferngren's conclusions with the apparent reports of healing throughout Christian history, such as in Irenaues' treatise, already mentioned. However,

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[60] Porterfield, p.9
[61] Porterfield, p.44-45
[62] Ferngren, p.7

perhaps Ferngren's expectations of the frequency of healing accounts are simply higher than Frost's and Porterfield's. Indeed, when one considers the proportion dedicated to accounts of healing within the Gospel narratives, in comparison to the Ante-Nicene Fathers' writings, it appears to have somewhat moved into the background. From these two differing opinions, it is clear that the practices of healing have adapted to the culture of the time. The literature portrays that healings' focus has somewhat shifted from physical healing to missionary outreach and nursing care as the ancient world overran with disease. The way people talk about healing had clearly changed and this was due to external circumstances, contributing to my wider argument that the way in which people talk about healing miracles can adapt and change with its cultural context. Despite these differences in opinion, the subject of healing remained prominent within the historical literature and its practices adapted to the culture, as can be seen throughout Medieval Christianity.

Porterfield argues that healing continued to remain a key feature within Christianity throughout the Medieval period. She distinguishes healing within Medieval Christianity with two distinctive features. The first is its 'devotion to the miraculous powers of the saints and their relics.'[63] Porterfield maintains that within this era, 'many Christians revered the bones and even the dust of saints because of the healing miracles attributed to them.'[64] This focus on shrines and relics had a knock-on effect and contributed to other aspects of medieval life. For example, Porterfield recognises that,

> Shrines dedicated to the bones of saints became centres of community life, and local religious authorities built, rebuilt, or redesigned churches and altars to house them. Monks imported relics for their monasteries, refurbished chapels for them,

[63] Porterfield, p.69
[64] Porterfield, p.69

> and, under the auspices of the saints, expanded the facilities of their monasteries to include pharmacies and health care clinics for pilgrims.[65]

This leads us to a further distinguishing feature of healing within medieval Christianity. That is that Christianity continued to become a hub for healthcare through medicine as well as healing through 'the power of Jesus.' Healthcare as a priority for Christians emerged in the early period as Porterfield explains,

> As a number of primary documents attest, care for the sick was a distinctive and remarkable characteristic of early Christian mission outreach. Early Christians nursed the sick to emulate the healing ministry of Jesus, to express their faith in the ongoing healing power of Christ, and to distinguish Christian heroism in the face of sickness and death from pagan fear.[66]

However, Porterfield makes a point of showing how healthcare as a medical service by Christians continued and gained in reputation throughout the Medieval period. She contends,

> Monastic commitment to charity allowed monks and nuns to pursue medical knowledge and skill, and commitment to the superior power of Christ and his saints worked to confine this pursuit within the framework of religious life.[67]

Therefore,

> the pragmatic and empirical aspects of medieval Christianity contributed to the development of hospitals and other health care facilities and to the growth of religious groups committed to care of the sick who continued to advance expectations of Christianity as a religion of healing.[68]

Thus, within the Medieval period, Christianity gained in its reputation as a religion of healing through the development of 'health care' in addition to methods of miraculous healing.

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[65] Porterfield, p.70
[66] Porterfield, p.47
[67] Porterfield, p.80
[68] Porterfield, p.91

Otto Gecser presented similar findings in his article, 'Doctors and Preachers against the Plague: Attitudes toward Disease in Late Medieval Plague Tracts and Plague Sermons.' He researched preachers and sermons from the Middle Ages, stating that they 'inform us about the religious interpretations of the plague in a form that was both elaborate and accessible to lay contemporaries', as well as 'the religious beliefs of doctors who gave expert advice on the disease or tried to explain it in scientific terms.'[69] Gescer found that whilst discussing the Black Plague, God's intervention was frequently mentioned alongside disclaimers concerning human medicine.[70] For example, one sermon says,

> Finally, we do not want to overlook the fact, that in those cases when plague proceeds from divine will, there is no other advice than having humble recourse to God without, however, disregarding the advice of the doctors. For *the Lord created medicine from the earth;* whence it is only God who cures the sick, he who in his generosity fashioned medicine from the feeble soil. Blessed be the glorious and most high God, who not ceasing to help us, revealed some of the principles of healing to those who fear him.[71]

Therefore, Gescer notes that 'even in those cases when plague is divine punishment for human sins - and when the main form of prevention and healing must be confession and repentance - the advice of the doctors should not be disregarded.'[72] Thus, as the historical literature indicates, 'medicine from the earth' became an increasingly prominent feature within the healing practices of Medieval Christianity. Healing became a 'both-and' approach of divine healing as well as healing through medicine. This is an important distinction in order to investigate how people talk about a healing miracle with the

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[69] Otto Gecser, 'Doctors and Preachers against the Plague: Attitudes Toward Disease in Late Medieval Plague Tracts and Plague Sermons' in *The Sacred and The Secular in Medieval Healing*, ed.by Barbara S. Bowers, and Linda M. Keyser (AVISTA President, 2016), p.78-79
[70] Gescer, p.83
[71] Gescer, p.83
[72] Gescer, p.84

emergence of medicine alongside healing. However, it was the initial distinguishing feature in this period - the focus on relics and saints - which prompted certain Christian theologies to move away from the faith's traditional reputation as one characterised by healing. It was this focus and obsession on healing through relics and saints that contributed to the Reformation which began a new era of Christian theology.

Theologies of Christian healing were by no means immune from the drastic challenges that the Protestant Reformation brought to the Roman Catholic Church. Porterfield contends, 'The sixteenth century witnessed a peculiar kind of religious unrest in which belief in the existence of spiritual realities fell under widespread scrutiny, even as the material manifestations of those realities, and testimonies to them multiplied.'[73] She explains that in this period,

> Efforts to purify Christianity were not new, but the effort to rid it of superstition had never gone so far or been so widespread. The attack against superstition signalled an unsettling distrust of received tradition. At the same time, it triggered new enthusiasm for divine revelation and authentic signs of Christ and coincided with new prophecies and new claims about miracles, witchcraft, and demons.[74]

Despite Porterfield's suggestion of a new enthusiasm, she does not deny that the miraculous within Christianity suffered as the Reformation came into full flow. John Calvin was a key player in this as he 'condemned petitions to the saints for healing as misguided and sinful.'[75]

Porterfield maintains, 'Calvin believed, superstitious stories about the healing powers of saints had crept in to corrupt Christianity, as had fantastic, so-called prophecies

[73] Porterfield, p.93
[74] Porterfield, p.93
[75] Porterfield, p.95

and other distortions of gospel teaching.'[76] This view had an impact on the theology that Calvin taught. In regard to healing, Calvin brushed aside the 'gift of healing' as 'temporary' in his teaching to the Church and instead emphasised other 'perpetual' sacraments as more important. [77] Calvin said,

> But in the Epistle to the Romans, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians, he enumerates other offices, as powers, gifts of healing, interpretation, government, care of the poor (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28). As to those which were temporary, I say nothing, for it is not worth while to dwell upon them. But there are two of perpetual duration: government and care of the poor.[78]

This had a major impact on healing within Christianity during this time period. Robert Bruce Mullin in his, 'Horace Bushnell and the Question of Miracles', argues,

> From the very beginning of the Reformation the question of the status of postbiblical miracles in general and modern miracles in particular had divided Catholic and Protestant writers. Catholic apologists traditionally claimed that the presence of miracles served as a mark of the true church […] Accordingly, Protestant churches had no miracles because they were cut off from the true church. Needless to say, the reformers rejected such argumentation and along with it Catholic claims of modern miracles.[79]

Not only did this viewpoint contribute to the split in the Church but also to the decline in the practice of healing. Mullins states that the prominent belief was that 'present-day miracles should be rejected as demonic.'[80] This rejection of healing miracles had a knock-on effect which also contributed to a decline in the belief of God. Porterfield explains,

> like Jews and Christians in the ancient world, Calvin and other Protestant reformers rejected magical forms of healing while asserting the therapeutic power of true religious faith. But in denouncing belief in ongoing miracles and equating it with belief in magic, Calvin and other reformers winnowed the field of divine activity in the world as it had never been winnowed before. Ancient and medieval

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[76] Porterfield, p.95
[77] Porterfield, p.95
[78] John Calvin, The *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Christian Classics Ethereal library, Grand Rapids, MI, First published 1636, English Translation, 1845), p.850
[79] Robert Bruce Mullin, 'The Debate Over Religion and Healing in the Episcopal Church: 1870-1930', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, Vol. 60, No. 2, (1991) 213- 234 (p.460-461)
[80] Mullin, p.461

> Christians had rejected magic as inferior to Christian practice— if not downright evil— but generally acknowledged its existence and power. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, skepticism about the existence of magic coincided with skepticism about miracles, and these tendencies to disbelief invited skepticism about the spirit world, and even about the existence of God.[81]

The Reformation is further evidence of different cultures having different understandings of, and approaches to, healing within Christianity. When considering how people speak about a healing miracle in Wales today, the Reformation had an undeniable effect on Christian practice and theology of healing, and one that was not limited to that period alone. This was no doubt, influenced by the rise in modern medicine which I will explore next.

Even with the theological shifts brought on by the Reformation, Christianity continued to be known as a religion of healing. However, once again the manner and method of healing practices evolved. Porterfield's research on Christian healing during the global development of scientific medicine, modern technology and science shows this.

Despite the change in culture and medical advancement, Porterfield argues that 'as a result of their long interest in human suffering and religious healing, Christians have constantly found themselves involved with medicine and concerned about the relationship between medical practice and religious faith.'[82] Porterfield believes, 'the relationship between Christianity and medicine, and the boundaries between them, have always been complicated.'[83] This can be seen in the continuation of healing within Christianity throughout modernity.

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[81] Porterfield, p.105
[82] Porterfield, p.141
[83] Porterfield, p.141

Throughout modernity, Christianity shifted from relying on miracles to medicine. Porterfield argues this through researching Christian Medical Missionaries. She comments, 'as scientific discoveries involving asepsis, anaesthesia, and infectious disease dramatically increase the effectiveness of Western medicine, medical missions became increasingly relevant as a way to emulate Jesus and his compassion and care of the sick.'[84] Consequently, Christians started to play a major role in private voluntary organisations and philanthropic foundations work to prevent disease and provide medical care around the world.[85] She highlights the life of Albert Schweitzer, who was 'the most well-known exemplar of this modern notion of the medical missionary' as illustrative of this movement.[86] She suggests, 'there is an element of irony in the fact that even though he undertook the practise of medicine as a means of emulating Jesus' ethic of love, Schweitzer paid little attention to Jesus' work as an exorcist and healer.'[87] Thus, 'the new authority of science and the appeal of science-based technologies altered the way many Christians thought about healing.'[88] Therefore their main involvement shifted dramatically from the miraculous to more practical help.

This shift is exemplified by an article within the British Medical Journal from 1911, entitled 'The Anglican Church And "Faith Healing".' The article rejects contemporary reports of healing miracles saying, 'We have on many occasions dealt with "faith healing"…(and) maintained two propositions: (1) That it is foolish to declare dogmatically…that "miracles" don't happen, (2) that the operative factor in spiritual

[84] Porterfield, p.142
[85] Porterfield, p.158
[86] Porterfield, p.146
[87] Porterfield, p.148
[88] Porterfield, p.160

healing is the ill-defined force known as "suggestion".'[89] Whilst it might not be all that surprising that the BMJ rejected 'faith healing', what is of note is that the article goes on to record Canon Henson sharing in their opinion. Canon Henson states,

> (i) "Faith healing" appears to be coextensive and coeval with religion itself. It is nowise distinctive of Christianity. (2) "Faith healing" appears to have no necessary connexion with moral excellence either in the "healers" or in those whom they "heal" It is throughout non-moral, and cannot, therefore, have any proper relation with Christianity. (3) "Faith healing" appears to be limited in its efficacy, which could hardly be the case if it were really the direct Divine response to human faith. Only some forms of disease are capable of being cured by "faith." (4) "Faith healing" appears to be identical in all but name with healing by means of suggestion, and therefore offers no real exception to the known.[90]

Here then we see the way in which the culture and context of the time changed non-religious and religious opinions on faith healing.

Frank and Frank in their, *Persuasion and Healing*, expand the concept of 'suggestion', as mentioned in the BMJ concerning 'faith healing', further in their examination of the placebo effect. They focus on 'the ways in which cults and revival meetings may produce beneficial changes in attitudes and behaviour' particularly in regard to healing.[91] They say, 'the psychological effect produced by religious conversion or by joining a cult may improve a person's physical health, and a successful healing ritual benefits participants both psychologically and physically.'[92] They believe that 'healing techniques […] arouse the patient's hope, bolster self esteem, stir emotion, and strengthen the patients ties with a supportive group […] all involve a healer […] (and)

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[89] 'The Anglican Church And "Faith Healing"', *The British Medical Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2659, (1911) 1609-1610 (BMJ Stable, 1911), (p.1610)
[90] *The British Medical Journal*, p.1610
[91] Jerome D. Frank, and Julia B. Frank, *Persuasion and Healing. A Comparative Study of Psychotherapy* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961), p.74
[92] Frank and Frank, p.87

the patients expectations of cure are raised by the healers' personal attributes.'[93] Frank and Frank question previously reported healing miracles arguing that, 'rivers of ink have been spilled in controversy over whether or not the cures at Lourdes are genuine.'[94]

On the other hand, Lawrence Sullivan 'called the placebo effect a 'toxic waste site' and said 'religious healers would be offended by the idea that their healing powers depended on the placebo effect.'[95] Moreover, Thomas Csordas argued that the placebo effect was 'nothing more than a label for a poorly understood process of therapeutic efficacy, a rhetorical device that obscured the mysterious nature of religious healing by subsuming it under a name- as if naming it was an explanation.'[96] Since medical advancement, the question, 'are healings real?' has been a prominent one as the discussion above shows. However, this is a part of the discussion on healing which is of no relevance to my investigation. My aim is not to prove or disprove the claims of a healing miracle. Instead, the purpose of this research is to investigate people's experience and what they talk about when they discuss a healing miracle. As opposed to first arguing if the healing is true or not, a study of people's experience will improve our understanding of religious practise in contemporary Christianity. Such a study can also be used to discover what people in Wales say about healing in their particular historical period in comparison to what has been said throughout history.

This final historical era that Porterfield researched notes a shift in behaviour and healing practices within Christianity. Although healing was still a prominent topic within

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[93] Frank and Frank, p.112
[94] Frank and Frank, p.106
[95] Lawrence Sullivan, '*Mind/Brain/Behavior: The Pleasing Placebo'*, ed.by John De Cuevas <http : //www.med.harvard.edu/publications/Focus/Jan20_1995/Mind.html> [accessed 12/8/21]
[96] Thomas J. Csordas, 'Imaginal Performance and Memory in Ritual Healing' in *The Performance of Healing,* ed.by Carol Laderman, and Marina Roseman, (London: Routledge, 1996), p.94

Christianity, the aftermath of the Reformation and the Enlightenment meant that healing was increasingly pursued through medical practices, as opposed to divine miracles.[97] Nonetheless, this focus soon shifted once again in certain locations with the emergence of Pentecostalism in the twentieth century.

Healing and the Rise of Pentecostalism

Bringing us into the twentieth century, this section will briefly examine the rise of Pentecostalism to investigate the healing practices within this denomination. Healing within Pentecostalism is included here because this subject features a large body of literature which includes discussions on healing practises in the last few decades. Although this literature does not include research on what people say when they discuss a healing miracle, it gives an indication of the types of practises and theology surrounding healing within this denomination today.

One of the defining characteristics of Pentecostalism is its pursuit of the 'gifts of the Spirit', including the 'gift of healing.'[98] As Wolfgang Vondey in *Pentecostal Theology* states, 'the experience or witnessing of divine healing distinguishes Pentecostals from other Christians.'[99] This appears to run somewhat counter to the secularist argument that modernity will slowly eradicate appeals to healing miracles altogether (as will be discussed in the final chapter). However, those studying the

[97] This generated the question- does divine healing work? A question frequently discussed following the Enlightenment, however a question and discussion which I have chosen not to engage with as my focus is on what people say when they talk about a healing miracle as opposed to, questioning if they got healed.
[98] Candy G. Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p.3
[99] Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology* (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017), p.107

movement of Pentecostalism argue that healing remains a prominent feature of Christianity despite the secular context. Candy Gunther Brown writes,

> Secularization theories predict that, as technological solutions to human problems become more effective and accessible, religious solutions will become decreasingly relevant. It is therefore striking that divine healing practices show no sign of abating even where biomedical science is the most sophisticated, convenient, and affordable.[100]

She goes on to argue that despite technological advances, many still suffer with 'lifelong, debilitating conditions' which scientific medicine 'proves unable to cure'.[101] Despite this, she puts forward the view that,

> Most Pentecostals today do not reject modern medicine, but they do insist that God is able to heal even when medicine is unable to help. Recognition of the limits of scientific medicine, even in industrialized nations, fuels therapeutic experimentation with divine healing.[102]

Many who research Pentecostalism agree with Brown and recognise that healing has continued to represent a prominent feature of Christianity. This can be shown in the numerous studies on the Pentecostal movement. Brown contends that, 'Divine healing practices are an essential marker of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity as a global phenomenon.'[103] Paul Alexander in his, *Signs and Wonders: Why Pentecostalism is the World's Fastest-Growing Faith,* notes, 'in the Pentecostal world, healings and miracles are normal, everyday events, and they're attributed to God.'[104] Likewise, Pavel Hejzlar in his *Two Paradigms for Healing* believes that, 'divine healing […] is a tangible demonstration of God's love and of the truthfulness of his Word. Present-day healing

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[100] Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing,* p.8
[101] Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing,* p.8
[102] Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing,* p.8
[103] Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing,* p.3
[104] Paul Alexander, *Signs & Wonders: Why Pentecostalism is the World's Fastest-Growing Faith, 1972* (John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2009), p.5

shows that God is real- that Jesus lives.'[105] Pentecostalism therefore demonstrates the continuation of healing practices within Christianity, despite an evolution of the methods.

There are various shared healing practices within Pentecostalism. Vondey states, 'practises of praying for the sick range from short commands, simple prayers of faith, speaking in tongues, testimonies and intercession, to prolonged tarrying, fasting prayer and prayer through at the altar until healing is manifested.'[106] Moreover, Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori in their *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* explain that,

> The pastor would ask individuals to come forward for prayer. He would then inquire about their special need and place his hands on them, asking God to cure their infirmity. In most instances there was little drama associated with these prayers. People were not throwing away crutches or instantly receiving sight if they were blind. In fact, the requests were typically more mundane.'[107]

Further practices of healing include the use of numerous 'gifts of the Holy Spirit', alongside healing.[108] Anderson, Bergunder, Droogers, and Van Der Laan, comment that,

> Other gifts of the Spirit such as prophesying, prayer for healing, and works of miracles are enthusiastically embraced and sought for by Pentecostals. Belief in the capacity of the Spirit to bring about healing, whether physical or emotional/ mental is one of the hallmarks of Pentecostalism. In this Pentecostals echo the postmodern insistence on a holistic understanding of the body-mind relationship.'[109]

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[105] Pavel Hejzlar, *Two Paradigms for Divine Healing: Fred F. Bosworth, Kenneth E. Hagin, Agnes Sanford, and Francis MacNutt in Dialogue* (Leiden; Boston: Brill 2010), p.255
[106] Vondey, p.110
[107] Donald E. Miller, and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (University of California Press, 2007), p.149
[108] Many of the authors also comment on the demonic and exorcism as an important part of the healing ministry. I acknowledge that there is much literature on this and realise it is often associated with healing. However, the link between physical healing and the demonic is a specific form of healing. It has its own field and unique distinctions and although often a process involved in the healing ministry, there are distinctions between the ministry of exorcisms and healing and therefore my study will focus on physical healing only.
[109] Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, Andre F. Droogers, and Cornelis Van der Laan, *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods* (University of California Press, 2010), p.192

Moreover, people also spoke about common physical experiences that accompany healing. For example, the person being healed, 'being 'slain in the spirit' (dropping to the floor without being hurt), or feeling a tangible experience in their body such as heat, shaking or dripping oil on the head, or tears of joy or sorrow as well as dancing, falling prostrate towards God and lifting hands high in celebration to God.'[110] When healing miracles were reported, an engagement with the Holy Spirit and participation in a worship service are often observed to be key elements in leading to outward physical signs of healing.[111] Miller and Yamamori explain that, 'worship for Pentecostals creates these moments on a regular basis, moments in which permission is given to step outside the boundaries of the usual polarities.'[112]

Candy Gunther Brown's *Testing Prayer* is notable for being one of the first reputable scientific studies to investigate this kind of prayer for healing. Brown begins by detailing an 'overview through specific examples of how Pentecostals may articulate prayer for healing in particular situations.'[113] She makes a distinction in the type of healing Pentecostals pray for such as,

> Many Pentecostals do distinguish divine healing from a recovery expected through the regular operation of natural processes. The healing may not be instantaneous or spectacular or appear to violate natural laws—and thus be classified as a miracle. However, divine healing is often understood to proceed more rapidly than usual (as when a tumour dissolves in ten minutes) or under circumstances in which healing would not otherwise be expected (for instance, disappearance of cancer that has already metastasized).[114]

[110] Miller and Yamamori, p.142
[111] Miller and Yamamori, p.142
[112] Miller and Yamamori, p.142
[113] Candy G. Brown, *Testing Prayer: Science and Healing* (Harvard University Press, 2012), p.24
[114] Brown, *Testing Prayer*, p.25

Furthermore, what is interesting is that practising healing miracles does not preclude the exclusion of seeking medical assistance. Mark Cartledge asserts, 'the process of prayer for healing is strongly determined by the nature of the illness. Where there is strong evidence that a medical procedure is the best course of action, prayer is often used alongside medical means, whereas in former generations medical support was ignored completely.'[115]

This area of literature gives an insight into contemporary healing practices within Pentecostalism. Within Pentecostalism, people speak about a healing miracle in distinctive religious terms, such as making use of 'anointing oil', or discussing 'physical signs of engaging with God', including 'tears' or 'falling prostrate'. Furthermore, healing usually takes place in a meeting or a healing service. Here we can note that this research is primarily observation based. Brown maintains that,

> Despite the widely acknowledged significance of divine healing to Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity worldwide, scholars know strikingly little about how divine healing is actually practiced in specific cultural contexts or how practices reflect and shape the interplay of local and global cultural processes.[116]

Thus, most of the studies conducted on Pentecostalism observe the practice of healing. This usually takes place in a meeting or a healing service. The research conducted so far then, is mainly observation. Scholars observe and describe a meeting and visible actions and practices of healing that might take place. However, interviews with the subjects who are ministering the healing or are reporting that they have been healed, and their experience of this healing is lacking. Brown comments on this arguing that, scholars know

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[115] Mark J. Cartledge, *The Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015) p.23
[116] Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing,* p.4

'little about how divine healing is practised.' However, my research will be taking this step and will examine the testimonies of those actually participating and examine how they are articulating their experience of healing. This will fill the gap in the literature of 'how' divine healing is practised and what people say when they talk about their experience of a healing miracle. This lack of research into healing is certainly reflected in the Pentecostal literature in Wales. Academic research into contemporary healing practices within Pentecostalism in Wales is significantly understudied as the next section demonstrates.

Pentecostal Literature Referencing Wales

Although not receiving much scholarly attention, it is apparent that Pentecostalism has also been influential in Christian contexts in Wales. William Kay and Anne Dyer are among the few authors to reference Wales and include a chapter on Pentecostalism within Britain in their edited volume *European Pentecostalism.*[117] This chapter, written by Neil Hudson, is an historical overview of the growth and development of Pentecostalism within Britain, including snapshots of Wales.[118] This chapter is helpful because Hudson comments on the growth of Pentecostalism in Wales. Hudson focuses on the life of George Jeffreys, placing him as a key figure in the development of the Pentecostal denominations in Wales, including Elim.[119] Jeffreys, was highly influenced by the 1904 Welsh revival, 'not merely for his conversion but also for his dominating vision and passion for religious revival.'[120] It was this passion which led him to attend and begin

[117] Neil Hudson, 'The Development of British Pentecostalism', in *European Pentecostalism,* ed.by Kay K. William, and Anne E. Dyer (Brill, 2011), p.41
[118] Hudson, p.41-42
[119] Hudson, p.45
[120] Hudson, p.45

worship meetings and run evangelistic campaigns in Swansea, which gave Jeffreys 'a platform to attract the attention of Pentecostals who had gathered from all over Europe.'[121] It was this platform that propelled his ministry and made him an influential figure in the growth of Pentecostal churches across Europe.[122]

Hudson suggests that once Jeffreys ended his central leadership within the Pentecostal Denomination, the practise of healing declined. In a letter to an Elim leader after Jeffreys departure, which he says,

> It will be a great thing if we could get back to those Fundamentals of Elim which distinguished us from all the other Evangelical bodies, namely Divine Healing and a greater understanding of the Gifts of the Spirit. If we lose these, then there seems to be no reason for our existence as a separate body, and I fear that we are getting away from these very quickly.[123]

Here then we see the way in which practising 'Divine Healing' was considered 'fundamental' to the new denomination, and yet how quickly this practice might decline without the energies of particular individuals. Hudson's chapter does not comment beyond these brief references however, and thus apparent practices of Christian healing in Britain (or Wales) seemed to be left somewhat unexplored. His research is entirely a historical account of the growth of Pentecostalism and therefore, although interestingly locating healing practices within this period, it does not expand upon my research's central aim to investigate contemporary practices of healing within Christianity and, specifically, how people articulate their supposed experience of a healing miracle.

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[121] Hudson, p.45-46
[122] Alongside other key Pentecostal figures such as Smith Wigglesworth and Alexander Boddy. Hudson, p.44-46
[123] Hudson, p.51

Similarly, not all those who study Pentecostalism examine the practices of healing. For example, Walter Hollenweger in his *The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches,* includes a chapter on the 1904 Welsh Revival. Hollenweger suggests that the Welsh Revival 'played an important part in the origins of Pentecostalism.'[124] However, despite the numerous references, as demonstrated above, to the practice of healing representing a key feature of Pentecostalism, Hollenweger does not reference healing at all within his commentary of this piece of Welsh history.

Overall, the historical literature gives an insight into healing practises from the first to the twenty-first century. Here then we can see that healing practices have continuously featured throughout the history of Christianity, although the understanding and methods of healing have shown significant variation. Although necessarily brief, this sketch of key developments in the way healing is seen in the history of Christianity, provides some context and point of reference for comparison. The historical literature supports my argument that healing is culturally defined and will differ throughout different historical periods and cultural contexts. Therefore, the way in which people talk about a healing miracle has changed and continually changes because of their external cultural context. It would not be surprising therefore to observe different healing practices in Wales today in comparison to those discussed in the historical literature. This brings us to our next section which will examine the literature which discusses contemporary healing practises in Wales.

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[124] Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches* (Augsburg Pub. House, 1972), p.176

Literature on Healing Miracles in Wales

To date, academic studies which research contemporary practices of healing miracles within the boundaries of Christianity are a neglected area of study within the context of Wales. That is not to say that, when taken more broadly, the supposed belief in and practice of 'healing' in Wales have been entirely ignored. A number of historical analyses have taken place focusing on the place of healing within 'folk medicine' prior to the twentieth century. For example, in her article 'Folk Healers and Healing in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Wales', Kathryn Chadbourne notes the variety of actors considered in some respects to be providers of healing. Chadbourne states that,

> Healing was the provenance of apothecaries, surgeons, wise women, astrologers, charmers, rubbers, bone-setters, herbalists, blood-stoppers, blacksmiths, parsons, snake bite doctors, conjurers, wart charmers, the dyn hysbys or gwr cyfarwydd 'wise man', the dynas defaid 'wart woman', adults, children and their parents.[125]

Chadbourne further comments that, 'any healer who could "provide relief" from the complaints that plagued Welsh people of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was regarded as […] being in some way connected with the magic of healing.'[126] Similarly, healing in Welsh history has been investigated by other researchers who have investigated the use of charms and healing objects within this time frame. Becka Roolf notes, 'Welsh folk medicine frequently employed objects such as stones, animal bones, holy water, pieces of cloth, and bits of iron, to effect cures and prevent diseases.'[127] Moreover, Owen

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[125] Kathryn Chadbourne, *Folk Healers and Healing in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Wales*, Vol. 15, (1995) 147-161 (Department of Celtic Languages & Literatures, Harvard University, 1995), (p.147-148)

[126] Chadbourne, p.151

[127] Becka Roolf, 'Healing Objects in Welsh Folk Medicine', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 1996/1997, Vol. 16/17, 1996/1997, 106-115 (Department of Celtic Languages & Literatures, Harvard University, 1996/1997), (p.106)

Davies comments that the study of charms from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries in Wales, 'serves to indicate the long history of that tradition.'[128]

Alongside these historical studies of forms of healing practices within medieval folklore and medicine, there is considerable amount of literature investigating historical and contemporary 'healing' through methods such as magic, reiki, séance healing and other indigenous healing systems.[129] In contrast to these studies then, my research is primarily concerned with contemporary practices of physical healing as they arise, and are being reported, within a contemporary Christian context in Wales. Therefore, whilst a comparative analysis with this research may prove an interesting venture in the future, there is not the space to review these studies in detail at this stage. The articles above highlight the broad range of healing practises evident throughout the centuries and that the topic of healing in Wales has been of interest to scholars. However, as we can see, investigations into healing in Wales have primarily focussed on folk traditions, rather than exploring healing in specifically Christian contexts.

Charismatic Literature

To address the research question, how people talk about their experience of a healing miracle, the scholarly discussions of charismatics must be examined. This is because, all the churches I engage with in this study describe themselves as a charismatic church. [130]

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[128] Owen Davies, 'Healing Charms in Use in England and Wales 1700-1950', *Folklore Enterprises*, Vol. 107, (1996) 19-32 (Taylor & Francis, Ltd, 1996), (p.19)

[129] For more examples of indigenous healing system see, Joan D. Koss-Chioino, and Philip J. Hefner, *Spiritual Transformation and Healing: Anthropological, Theological, Neuroscientific, and Clinical Perspectives*, (AltaMira Press 2006), and Matthew Engelke, *Sticky Subjects, Sticky Objects: The Substance of African Christian Healing, in Materiality*, ed.by Miller Daniel (Duke University Press, Durham, 2005)

[130] See appendix 2 for list of Churches and their denominations.

The charismatic literature discusses the worldviews, theologies, and the main characteristics of the communities that I focus on. Therefore, although this body of literature does not always investigate healing within specifically Welsh churches, the literature is still relevant because it describes theologies and practices of healing within the charismatic movement, which by association includes the self-identified charismatic churches that I researched. Moreover, the churches chosen as a part of this research were all affiliated with the New Wine Cymru (NWC) network.[131] NWC is a network born out of the 1960s charismatic movement which Mark Cartledge defines as,

> The label 'Charismatic Movement' […] to denote the charismatic renewal of the mainline denominations for the 1960s, as well as the independent New/House Church and 'Third Wave' movements. […] The influence of the Third Wave movement in the UK is seen most strongly in the New Wine network of churches and conferences.[132]

Therefore, this literature on the charismatic movement and its churches helps address the research question because it demonstrates the way in which charismatics pray for and discuss healing miracles within charismatic, New Wine Churches in the UK. Thus, this literature discussing charismatics provides context to the theology and healing practices within the Welsh churches that I have chosen to research.

The charismatic movement can find its roots within Pentecostalism.[133] As discussed earlier, the gifts of the spirit including healing is a key part of Pentecostalism. However, prioritising the importance of the practice of healing is not limited to Pentecostalism alone but finds itself featuring in what can be more broadly defined as 'charismatic' Christianity. This is important because the churches I have researched in

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[131] See chapter 2 for an exposition on the NWC churches chosen.
[132] Cartledge, 2003, p.6
[133] Mark J. Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives* (Wipf & Stock, 2003), p.1-4

Wales would not describe themselves as Pentecostal, however they would all describe themselves as charismatic. Allan Anderson notes, '"Charismatic," [means] those who practice spiritual gifts in the older Catholic and Protestant denominations.'[134] Anderson contends that,

> In addition to establishing its own churches, Pentecostalism has deeply influenced sectors of the mainline churches. From the sixties onward the so-called charismatic renewal movements emerged within established churches, first in Protestantism and subsequently in the Catholic Church. These charismatic movements and believers gave a new boost to Pentecostal expansion in the United States but soon elsewhere. They are commonly viewed as an integral part of Pentecostalism, despite being part of mainline churches.[135]

The difference between Pentecostal churches and charismatic churches therefore must be noted. Although charismatic churches and Pentecostal churches share the same theology for practising the gift of healing, Pentecostalism is its own denomination with its own theology, values and practices. By contrast, 'charismatic' is an overarching term which can describe many denominations such as charismatic Catholics, charismatic Anglicans and other Christian denominations. A charismatic Catholic therefore, although they might share the same ideas about healing as a Pentecostal, would have difference in liturgy, theology and other Christian practices. Mark Cartledge in his, *Practical Theology Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives,* describes 'the relationship between 'Pentecostals' and 'charismatics' as ambiguous'. He admits to using the terms 'Pentecostal' and charismatic interchangeably to describe 'charismatic churches from mainline denominations, the New/House Church movement and indigenous African Churches.'[136] Moreover, Anderson notes,

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[134] Allan H. Anderson, *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods* (University of California Press, 2010), p.14
[135] Anderson, *Studying Global Pentecostalism,* p.3
[136] Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, p. 5-6

> In modern discussions, Pentecostalism and her sister, the charismatic movement, present similar features […] the initial distinguishing features between the early or classical Pentecostals, the Charismatics and the neo-Pentecostals have all but disappeared and that discussions about contemporary Pentecostalism would better be expanded to cover the various strands in Pentecostalism and charismatic movements and their variants[137]

Therefore, although in this section Pentecostalism will occasionally be referenced, here the terminology and the practices described associated with Pentecostalism will be used to mean the practices of healing within churches who would describe themselves as charismatic, Pentecostals included. This distinction is key because the Churches I have researched in Wales describe themselves as charismatic but not as Pentecostal. David Muir says, 'all Pentecostals are Charismatics, though not all Charismatics are Pentecostals.'[138] However, the literature does not always reflect this distinction and thus, there will be significant overlap between those writing on Pentecostalism and those on Charismatics in this section. Nevertheless, the focus will try to remain on the theology and practise of healing within the charismatic movement.

The charismatic literature discusses the background, context, beliefs, features, and practices associated with the charismatic movement. Essential to the charismatic church is the subject of healing. Stanley Burgess and Eduard Van der Mass in their, *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, argue that 'the primary purpose of healing is to demonstrate tangibly God's intention and ability to lead people to the ultimate salvation which is eternal life- i.e., the fruit of healing is conversion.'[139] Therefore, 'healing is an essential part of preaching the gospel and of bearing witness to the reality and majesty of

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[137] Allan H., Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.14
[138] David R Muir, 'Theological Education and Training among British Pentecostals and Charismatics', in *Pentecostals and Charismatics in Britain: An Anthology*, ed. By Joe Aldred (SCM Press, 2019), chapter 11, section 1.
[139] Burgess and Van Der Mass, p.352

Jesus Christ.'[140] Thus, it should not then be surprising that healing is used frequently by charismatics as a demonstration of God's love and power which can lead to salvation, meaning 'healing is a dominant part of the life of the Christian Church.'[141] This helps us address the research question, how individuals talk about their healing experience, because it prepares us to expect how charismatic Christians in Wales might talk about their healing experience.

One significant belief charismatics hold is that they believe God cares about their health. Cartledge in his later book, *Testimony in the Spirit,* 'explores the ordinary beliefs and practices of Pentecostal and charismatic Christians in relation to the Holy Spirit' through the 'means of a congregational study of a classical Pentecostal church in the UK, using participant observation, focus groups and documentary and media analysis.'[142] He discovers,

> First, the health of these Christians is regarded as important to God. All of them prayed about their health and their need. Second, faith in God and believing not only that God could heal, but that he would heal them in particular, is an important aspect. In some cases healing is supported by experiences of power from God and words of prophecy attributed to God about the nature of the healing.[143]

His research shows that 'healing is a central aspect to Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity'[144] Thus, it should not be surprising to collect healing narratives on health conditions being prayed for, as this is a foundational belief. Although Cartledge only includes a small number of healing testimonies, he believes that the testimonies illustrate important attitudes towards health and healing. The second important feature

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[140] Burgess and Van Der Mass, p.353
[141] Burgess and Van Der Mass, p.374
[142]Mark J Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Re-scripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology* (Routledge, 2017), p.1
[143] Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, chapter 6, section 2
[144] Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, chapter 6, section 1

and practice charismatics perform is the act of sharing these healing stories. Cartledge contends,

> Listening to individual accounts of suffering and healing clearly allows very personal narratives to be shaped by each other. The sharing of narratives is very much part and parcel of the church culture and occurs regularly in public worship and private conversation. But in all of the narratives there is a unity of experience rather than any form of compartmentalisation.[145]

This act of sharing healing narratives is key to charismatic churches and is both performed in public and private. This means that we should expect to hear of healing stories and be able to collect narratives from charismatic churches, because sharing about healing is an important practice, alongside the act of praying for healing. Cartledge's critical analysis of charismatic churches and their healing testimonies shows the way in which some Christians talk about their healing experience and the theology which supports that testimony. That is, that charismatics believe God will intervene in their lives, and the testimonies that are shared from that intervention shapes that charismatic community.

There is an underlying belief for charismatics that God can and will intervene in their everyday lives. William Kay argues that this underlying theology of God's intervention is mostly noticeable in the area of healing.[146] Moreover, Keith Warrington says, 'it is recognized that the Spirit inspires gifts [of healing] in all believers.'[147] Nigel Scotland argues that, 'charismatic Christianity has taught its adherents above all else to experience the presence of God in a tangible way.'[148] He believes that this has led to, 'few

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[145] Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, chapter 6, section 7
[146] William K. Kay, and Anne E. Dyer, *Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies: A Reader*, (SCM Press, 2010), part 4 H*ealing*, section 1
[147] Keith Warrington, 'The Gifts of the Spirit' in *Pentecostals in the 21st century: Identity, Beliefs, Praxis* ed. By Corneliu Constantineanu, and Christopher J Scobie (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018), chapter 8 section 2
[148] Scotland, 305

charismatics [engaging] in academic theology […] however many charismatics engage in practical theology of the everyday.'[149]

This engagement with God in an everyday manner was prevalent at the start of the charismatic movement and has continued to be so even as modernity increases, and theories of secularisation become increasingly dominant. Scholars such as Kay argue that charismatics still focus and rely on healing miracles. He contends,

> Pentecostals prepared the ground for answers by establishing that miracles of healing could indeed take place in the modern (and post-modern) world and, in doing this, they fought on two fronts. They argued vigorously, though often by assertion rather than by detailed rebuttal, against the worldview that presumed modern science had killed off the possibility of miracle. They believed instinctively in a God who controlled the universe and they did so at a time when Newtonian mechanics were on the wane. They also, especially at the start of the twentieth century, argued against a dispensationalist understanding of Scripture that denied miracles could occur in any era of church history apart from the very first.[150]

Therefore, this might help explain why and how participants describe their healing experience as they do, because there is an underlying belief in their charismatic theology that God can and will intervene in their everyday life. Similarly, Emmanuel Kapofu in his chapter 'Post Pentecostal and Charismatic Expressions' argues that,

> Unlike the traditional Pentecostal church, where doctrine and accurate exegesis are critical, these neo-Pentecostals provide a space to experience the divine in what has been defined as secularization of the sacred, using their size, social media and market logic to create an atmosphere of worship. Therefore, doctrine does not bind their large, youngish congregations together, but their collective aesthetic systems that can encourage spiritual practices and felt manifestations of God.[151]

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[149] Scotland, 312
[150] Kay and Dyer, part 4 *Healing*, section 1
[151] Emmanuel Kapofu, 'Post Pentecostal and Charismatic Expressions' in *Pentecostals and Charismatics in Britain: An Anthology*, ed.by Joe Aldred, (SCM Press 2019), chapter 10, section 2.

The prioritisation of healing miracles might therefore be a deliberate strategy of charismatics to continue to thrive and survive in a secular age by consciously creating an atmosphere of worship and a space to experience the divine. Spiritual practices and felt manifestations of God for the everyday individual is therefore an essential aspect of charismatic Christianity and thus this provides us with an understanding of the background and underlying strategies of charismatic churches in order to more fully understand the context from which the Welsh participants come from when they talk about their experience of a healing miracle.

In theory then, charismatics believe that God will be present and active in their everyday life, including healing their bodies. My work will contribute to this area of research by also engaging with charismatic Christians who believe in healing. It will build upon previous studies such as Cartledge's work by conducting a similar study by also researching charismatic churches in the UK (Wales) with a focus on healing. However, where my research differs is in its scope. Whereas Cartledge studies one Pentecostal Church in the UK, this study will collect healing narratives from a number of different charismatic denominations from all across Wales. Moreover, whereas Cartledge's research was a denominational study to understand key features of Pentecostal and charismatic Christian belief, my focus will be to critically analyse healing narratives with the view of understanding what individuals say and what is important to them, as opposed to a denominational focused study. This means, the participants in my study will come from a number of different denominations (albeit, all charismatic) and the focus will not be to analyse how their beliefs fit into a charismatic theology of healing, but instead to understand what they say when they talk about a healing miracle.

In contributing to this field of study I refine what the term 'everyday' means. For Cartledge, 'everyday' means the everyday charismatic Christian and their ordinary beliefs.[152] However, in my research, 'everyday' also includes the location, language and performance of the healing miracle, as well as the everyday individual. Within the charismatic literature, the reports of healing are most documented within Church meetings. Scotland asserts, 'healing […] will be visible at Sunday services at least once a month […] [and], many charismatic churches have ministry teams who work in pairs and are ready to step out and pray for those who come forward.'[153] This is a common description amongst the charismatic literature, indicating that healing is most commonly reported and critiqued in the context of a church service, where individuals are being prayed for by healing ministry teams. However, as my findings chapter will go on to show, my results differ from these reports.

Moreover, Daniel Albrecht's research of charismatic churches, in his, *Rites in the Spirit. A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/ Charismatic Spirituality,* also discovered that healing miracles were prevalent within a church congregation if it was a focus of the senior leader. He recalls that, 'pastor Tom and others that he has trained, report healings.'[154] This continues to suggest that it is senior leaders and trained teams that pray for and subsequently report healing miracles. This is also reflective of the wider body of charismatic literature, where the focus is more often than not on the theology and beliefs of its significant figures within the charismatic movement. Key figures from the movement have usually achieved prominence for themselves through their healing

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[152] Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, p.1
[153] Nigel Scotland, *Charismatics and the New Millennium* (Eagle, 2000), p.178-179
[154] Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), p.111

ministry. For example, 'Kathryn Kuhlman's theology of healing was worked out in the practical arena (sometimes literally an arena) where, as a healing evangelist, she ministered.'[155] Smith Wigglesworth records, 'It is about eight years since I was in Oakland and in that time I have seen thousands and thousands healed by the power of God.'[156] William J Seymour, Oral Roberts, David du Plessis, Francis Macnutt and John Wimber are just a number of key influencers who have also inspired the charismatic movement through their concentration on praying for healing miracles.[157] The focus on healing from these significant figures is not surprising considering the cornerstone of the charismatic movement is the prioritisation of the experience of God and the belief that God intervenes in one's everyday life.[158] However, the literature often focuses on these significant figures and their healing experiences as opposed to the everyday charismatic individual. Therefore, little is known about how individual charismatics understand and talk about healing.

There is considerable literature on the theology of healing from significant charismatic figures and its charismatic movement, but little on what the individual actually believes or understands. Scotland acknowledges this and argues that influential figure John Wimber was concerned that,

> Western Christians divide their lives up into separate categories: the ordinary or everyday or 'natural' and 'the religious or supernatural'. in theory they believe God is able to intervene in the world in their everyday affairs but in practice he doesn't.

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[155] Kay and Dyer, part 4 *Healing*, section 1
[156] Smith Wigglesworth, 'Filled with God' (Hebrews 2, August 1922), in *Smith Wigglesworth: The Complete Collection of His Life Teachings, Tulsa, Oklahoma*, ed.by Liardon Roberts (Albury Publishing, 1996), p.143–6
[157] Stanley M. Burgess, and Eduard M. Van Der Mass, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Zondervan, 2002), p.353-374
[158] Kay and Dyer, part 4 *Healing*, section 1

> they believe in the miracles of rebirth and changed character but not in healing, deliverance, or other signs and wonders.[159]

Thus, in theory and according to the charismatic literature, we know that charismatics believe that God can and will intervene in their everyday life. The charismatic literature also highlights that sharing these stories of Gods intervention is a practical and deliberate tool to encourage and engage the wider community. However, what Scotland is suggesting here is that this is not the case for the average charismatic individual, who might believe it in theory, but does not report it in reality. This is a reasonable critique considering a significant amount of the charismatic literature still focuses on the prominent key figures and their theologies. It describes their beliefs and practices which are supposed to be representative of all charismatics. However, little is known or reported on the ordinary individuals' beliefs, theology or experience of the healing miracle. Where the everyday charismatic is researched, the focus is on the everydayness of the individual. Where my study offers its unique contribution therefore is in its focus on what the everyday individual says as well as is in my refinement of what everyday means. In my research, everyday is inclusive of both the everyday individual as well as the everyday nature of the performance of the healing miracle. This includes the everyday location they say they were healed at, the ordinary ailment they were healed of, and the common language used to describe the healing experience, as will be discussed in later chapters.

In summary then, the charismatic literature helps address the question, what do people say when they talk about a healing miracle, because it provides an understanding to the background and context of the individuals reporting these healing experiences in Wales. The participants in this study come from a movement which in theory prioritises

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[159] Scotland, p.204

the intervention of God in individuals' everyday lives through the practice of healing miracles. It will therefore be unsurprising to gather healing narratives from charismatic churches in Wales as praying for healing and sharing healing testimonies is a key practice for charismatics. My research will therefore build upon this work and use this charismatic context known for healing miracles to research charismatic churches to take this research further and discover what the average charismatic individual says when they talk about a healing miracle.

Advocacy Healing Literature in Wales

A further aspect of the literature on healing is advocacy. This literature mostly includes 'how to' books written by church leaders with the aim of teaching their church congregation methods and practises for healing. I have included this literature because, although it is highly biased and not strictly speaking academic, it offers an insight into contemporary practices of healing from those who are reporting the phenomenon. Here I note again that these are not included as evidence to argue for the actuality of the healing that will later be investigated. Instead, these primary sources, reporting healing miracles, give insight into the practices and understanding of what is being described as happening in Wales.

Bruce Collins is an Anglican vicar who offers courses on healing ministry for Churches in Wales who want to learn how to practice healing.[160] In his *Jesus' Gospel Jesus' Way,* Collins argues that performing miracles (or practising healing) was an essential aspect of Jesus' ministry and should therefore be a central feature of church

[160] See Bruce Collins, *Kingdom Intensive* Course Programme.

practise today.[161] Collins teaches methods of healing practices based upon the practices of Jesus and the early Apostles as found in the New Testament texts.[162] For example, Collins discusses Jesus' ministry to highlight the theme of 'the Kingdom of God' in the Bible, the emphasis of healing and signs and wonders in Jesus' ministry, and 'how we can come to do what Jesus did.'[163] Collins says that 'Jesus made us an amazing promise. "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing (Jn14:12)"'[164] He goes on to comment, 'there can't be many promises in the Bible that apply to Christian life today where there is such a gap between that which is promised and that which is actually experienced!'[165] As noted earlier, here we see the way in which the advocacy literature seeks to establish, or re-establish in their view, the practice of healing as a prominent feature of contemporary Christian practice. As mentioned above when discussing the biblical literature, contemporary Church leaders use the New Testament texts as a reference for how to practise healing miracles today, despite the major difference in time and cultural context.

To this end, Collins explores how Christians today are to minister healing in the way Jesus did, as recorded in the New Testament. To highlight just one example, Collins explains 'our need to Use- and Grow- in spiritual authority.'[166] He says, 'any reading of the four Gospels shows us that when ministering healing or deliverance to people, the Lord never once accomplished this through a prayer, asking God the Father to heal them,' instead 'this was most commonly done through either a word of command or an

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[161] Bruce Collins, *Jesus' Gospel, Jesus' Way* (Candy Jar Books, 2014), p.1-5
[162] Colins, p.65-132
[163] Collins, p.91
[164] Collins, p.91
[165] Collins, p.91
[166] Collins, p.151

authoritative "faith pronouncement".'[167] For example, '*go! Let it be done just as you have believed* (Matt 8:13)' and '*I tell you, get up, take your mat and walk* (Mk 2:11).'[168] Here then we see the way in which Collins appeals directly to Scripture, proposing a model of healing practice that imitates, almost directly, the words and actions of Jesus and the Apostles as detailed in the New Testament.

In addition, Collins shares examples of how he believes these methods have been successfully implemented, describing numerous stories of healing miracles that have taken place in Wales. For example, Collins recalls praying for a one-year-old boy with 'a huge growth on his neck that his head was literally forced over to one side onto his shoulder.'[169] Collins reports that following prayer, 'within a few days the lump had started to disappear.'[170] Similarly, following prayer for a teenage girl who was deaf in one ear Collins further recalls,

> she told her mother that she was beginning to hear through that ear […] the consultant told them that something utterly miraculous and medically inexplicable had happened because the 'healed' ear was performing perfectly. The mother later told me that the consultant actually wrote "healed through prayer" in her daughter's notes.'[171]

In total Collins describes eight healing stories. As this chapter will go on to reveal, this is a common technique from the advocacy authors for promoting healing ministry for their audiences. It shows that some people talk about their healing experience in a way to promote and encourage others to also seek a healing miracle.

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[167] Collins, p.152
[168] Collins, p.152 (Italics not mine)
[169] Collins, p.120
[170] Collins, p.120
[171] Collins, p.129

As well as recalling his own stories of praying for healing, Collins says that, 'In Pembrokeshire, not far from where we live, the ministry of Ffald Y Brenin is seeing astonishing healings and miracles on a very regular basis'. Ffald Y Brenin is a Christian Retreat Centre in West Wales designed for Christians to visit for 'refreshment', 'encounter' and to take part in 'a daily rhythm of prayer and explore the beauty of God's creation.'[172] Roy Godwin, director of Ffald Y Brenin between 1999 and 2019, documents his life and ministry working at the Retreat Centre in *The Grace Outpouring.* Like Collins, Godwin also records numerous personal accounts of miraculous stories and dedicates a chapter to describing the physical healings they supposedly witnessed whilst at Ffald Y Brenin, often in response to prayer. Godwin states that 'within the ebb and flow of life at the retreat centre we began to see physical healing taking place for those among us who were sick.'[173] For example, Godwin describes praying for a female 'in her twenties', who suffered with 'chronic osteoarthritis' in her ankle and was due to undergo an operation. However, 'having received prayer', when she next underwent 'proper clinical tests' her Consultant Doctor concluded that 'there was nothing wrong with her ankles at all.'[174]

Similarly, Godwin tells of a guest who had tripped, fallen and acquired 'a horrendous injury […] the hand and arm were black, and there was no sign of a wrist - just a swollen expanse from the ridge of her knuckles to her elbow'[175] Godwin records that,

> I commanded the swelling to go down by half […] during the next twenty to thirty seconds the swelling went down by half. I commanded the blackness to go and that took about a minute; then I commanded the rest of the swelling to safely

[172] <https://ffald-y-brenin.org/about#how-it-all-began> [accessed 16/07/21]
[173] Roy Godwin, *The Grace Outpouring* (David C. Cook; 2nd edition, 2012), p.119
[174] Godwin, p.121-122
[175] Godwin, p.125

> disperse, and that took about forty-five seconds. It was all back to normal shape, except for the ridge by the knuckles on the back of her hand, so I commanded that to safely disperse, and it did. She couldn't move her fingers however so then I commanded a loosening of the fingers, the joints, the tissue, and the muscles and a cessation of the pain. Suddenly she could move her fingers comfortably and easily with no difficulty.[176]

Godwin documents several more accounts like this taking place following prayer, including swollen and twisted ankles being healed, arthritis vanishing, long term food intolerances and allergies disappearing.[177] He comments, 'it didn't happen because we held healing meetings - it seemed to just happen in the everyday circumstances of life at the centre or in the context of our usual meetings.'[178] Godwin's book does not teach churches how to pray for healing, but instead contains collections of stories about his life at the retreat centre. Again, this reveals the technique of sharing healing stories, here within the advocacy literature, with the aim of inspiring others to do the same. It also highlights that these individuals are believing God to be regularly intervening in their everyday life through these healing miracles.

Similarly, Reverend Canon Steve Morgan also recalls stories of praying for people to be healed in Wales in his *Healing, Heartache and Humour*. He describes praying for a Muslim woman with a debilitating illness. He mentions,

> During the prayer time she broke down and sobbed. When asked what was happening, she said she has a picture of Jesus stretching out His hand towards her and felt a strange heat enter her body […] the following morning she contacted her consultant and arranged for a meeting. The consultant ordered a series of test to be taken and when the results came back, he told her she was completely well and would need to be weaned off all her medication.'[179]

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[176] Godwin, p.126
[177] Godwin, Ankle- p.134, Allergies- p.132, arthritis- p.134
[178] Godwin, p.123
[179] Steve Morgan, *Healing, Heartache and Humour* (Life Publications, 2018), p.101

Morgan goes on to describe other accounts of healing throughout the course of his book.[180] These personal memoirs of life and ministry continue to show the importance of reporting healing miracles for these church ministers. This is a common finding across the advocacy literature. It suggests that healing is a key part of ministry for those working in churches across Wales. Furthermore, the advocacy literature suggests that sharing healing stories is a technique adopted by these leaders to encourage or inspire their audiences to do the same. A further key contemporary example of this within Wales is New Wine Cymru, as will be explored below.

The reports of healing miracles within the advocacy literature provides an indication about what is being said when discussing healing miracles in Wales which is the main aim of this investigation. However, the advocacy literature is written with the different purpose to encourage other Christians to pray for healing. Therefore, this body of literature is biased and anecdotal and offers no formal analysis.

New Wine Cymru

Further referenced by Collins, is the work and healing ministry of New Wine Cymru (NWC). Collins says, 'that in 'the "Healing Café" model we are developing in the work of NWC, we have seen many healed in the context of preaching the gospel of the Kingdom.'[181] NWC is a network which promotes and teaches on healing to churches across Wales and therefore will be examined because of its influence on contemporary practices in this context.

[180] Morgan, Blind man-p.130, Deaf man- p.160
[181] Collins, p.2

NWC is an organisation that seeks to connect and equip local churches and their leaders through networking, training and participating in 'collaborative missions'.[182] Approximately 208 local churches currently engage regularly with NWC from across a variety of denominations including Non-denominational and independent churches, Church in Wales, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal and other forms of charismatic.[183] NWC holds a 'charismatic theology,' stating that it is 'committed to the healing and prophetic ministry of the Holy Spirit, as modelled by Jesus.' [184]

In this regard, NWC has prioritised 'training in healing for local Welsh churches,' including a 'diverse menu of healing ideas [...] created to assist your church and churches throughout Wales to engage in healing evangelism.'[185] Their 'Healing and Evangelism Menu has been designed with the un-churched in mind' and includes ideas such as 'healing cafes' and 'healing on the streets.'[186] Concerning a 'Healing Café' for example, NWC state that this 'can take place in an actual café or a church environment', where 'friends we know who are sick or in pain are invited to relax around the table experience' and receive prayer and healing ministry.[187] NWC thus explain that a 'Healing café 'is not a church service; it doesn't involve singing or long sermons: just coffee, muffins, and prayer for sick friends by a friend.'[188] Nonetheless, they claim that after 'a short explanation of the concept and what folk can expect and a few prayers later you will be hearing stories of people being healed and set free.'[189] Julian Richards, national leader of

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[182] New Wine Cymru, https://newwinecymru.co.uk/about/our-values, accessed 09/08/21
[183] Figures from 2016 New Wine Cymru Review
[184] New Wine Cymru, <https://newwinecymru.co.uk/about/our-values> [accessed 09/08/21]
[185] New Wine Cymru <http://newwinecymru.co.uk/healing-homepage/> [accessed 23/10/17]
[186] New Wine Cymru <http://newwinecymru.co.uk/healing-homepage/> [accessed 23/10/17]
[187] New Wine Cymru <http://newwinecymru.co.uk/healing-homepage/> [accessed 23/10/17]
[188] New Wine Cymru <http://newwinecymru.co.uk/healing-homepage/> [accessed 23/10/17]
[189] New Wine Cymru <http://newwinecymru.co.uk/healing-homepage/> [accessed 23/10/17]

NWC, said in 2017 that 'a conservative estimate, 1500 people across Wales have reported being physically healed after prayer since 2015.'[190] The Healing Café demonstrates NWC's emphasis on the way in which healing can be practised by every Christian in their day to day life. From this we can see that it is not limited to Church services, or ordained ministers, but that NWC believe healing can occur in an informal, café setting with any Christian ministering healing.

After running these Healing Cafés, it is common practice for church leaders to film and record (with permission) the reported healing miracles that took place that night. Evidence of this can be found on NWC's website which includes videos and stories of people across Wales who have reported that they have been physically healed at these events. For example, the website includes stories like, 'deaf ears opened!', 'blind eyes opened' and 'tendinitis disappearing.'[191] These videos and testimonies are sent to NWC to encourage other churches across Wales to run healing cafés. Individuals give their permission for NWC to use these videos for this reason, which also gives an indication of individuals' religiosity in Wales today. It is not just church leaders who are promoting healing ministry but congregational members also. Here again we see the practice of collecting and disseminating healing stories. In this instance, however, it is the people claiming to have received healing themselves sharing their stories, rather than being retold by church ministers.

Reports of healing miracles in Wales, and the work of NWC, are not limited to the materials produced by the organisation itself. In his study, *Mission in a Welsh Context*,

[190] Primary quote from Julian Richards, Senior leader of NWC, 23/10/17
[191] New Wine Cymru <http://newwinecymru.co.uk/healing-homepage/> [accessed 23/10/17]

later published as *A New Mission to Wales*, David Ollerton circulated a questionnaire through the charity *WalesWide* to 588 nonconformist ministers, 'seeking to find out the current nature and effectiveness of mission in Wales.'[192] Ollerton noted that the tradition of 'power evangelism' has 'been maintained and promoted by the NWC network, which emphasises the importance of the miraculous in the life and mission of the local church.'[193] He documents that in regards to healing, 'The *WalesWide* survey of 2012 did not have a specific question on this approach to mission, but some responses to the questionnaire and interviews did reference the miraculous, at least anecdotally.'[194] Ollerton summarises his section on 'the miraculous component of mission' in Wales by saying that 'this approach to mission, with connections into many communities in Wales has developed on a scale to be considered as a serious approach, not only to enhance the Christian message but also as a response to community needs.'[195] Thus, anecdotally there are reports of healing miracles across Churches in Wales, however no academic research has been undertaken to investigate contemporary Christian practices of healing miracles in Wales today. Interestingly, when researching contemporary practices of Christianity in Wales today, Ollerton did not consider asking specific questions on healing, indicating the way in which healing is not perceived to be a primary practice of the Christian church. This is somewhat surprising considering the amount of advocacy books which include contemporary healing miracle stories, as well as the reports and missions coming from NWC. Ollerton's study therefore reveals a gap in the research. Anecdotally, healing practices were reported, but in this instance, there were no specific questions on the topic.

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[192] David Ollerton, *A New Mission to Wales* (Cyhoeddiadau'r Gair, 2016), p.64
[193] David Ollerton, *A New Mission to Wales* (Cyhoeddiadau'r Gair, 2016), p.185
[194] Ollerton, p.185
[195] Ollerton, p.186

This is reflective of Brown's comments concerning research into Pentecostal practices. That is, 'despite the widely acknowledged significance of divine healing to Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity worldwide, scholars know strikingly little about how divine healing is actually practiced.'[196] Therefore, there is major scope for an investigation into the contemporary healing miracles being reported across Wales.

Denominational Literature

Included within the advocacy literature is denominational literature which I used as an umbrella term that covers the key documents arising out of different Christian church denominations which describe their theology, practices and often history. This next section will examine the denominational texts within Anglicanism. For example, The Thirty Nine Articles, and the Book of Common Prayer are authoritative texts foundational for worship within Anglicanism. Denominational literature can also include academic research from those who examine the methods and practises of that denomination. In addition, it can include advocacy literature from leaders within those denominations, teaching the particular methods and practices for healing the sick found within their denomination. Such literature is informative of a particular denominations' approach to healing, from theory to practical instructions, such as how to perform healing services. It might also be possible to infer the value given to 'healing', or other practices within a particular denomination, based upon the comparative attention that it receives. Thus, this literature will give an indication of what is happening (or what is intended to happen) at Church in Wales' Churches in regards to healing. The Anglican denominational literature examined below is helpful because it provides an overview of how healing is framed and

[196] Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing,* p.4

approached by sources of authority within this particular denomination. As I will discuss below, however, studies suggest that a gap can be discerned between what the official literature says and what those 'on the ground' report regarding healing.

Literature on healing practices within the Anglican 'Church in Wales' is very sparse. The only official information on contemporary healing practices within this denomination is on The Church in Wales' website. This website contains a page on 'What we believe' in regard to healing.[197] It says,

> The healing ministry is for everyone; we all need healing in some way. Through the healing ministry, Jesus Christ meets us at our point of need. Every form of suffering can be helped in some way through this ministry. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God is the good news of healing which Jesus Christ proclaimed for individuals, communities and for the world.[198]

The webpage goes on to explore what form of healing might take place in their services. This includes,

> Help to carry us through a prolonged illness or disability, A recovery more rapid than expected, experiencing our fear of death being driven out by God's love, A healing which is so unexpected that we want to call it a "miracle", A growing awareness of inner peace and wholeness.[199]

The webpage does not include common practises of praying for healing, however it does note 'The way in which services are used in the Church's healing ministry varies from parish to parish.'[200] These are,

> visits to people ill at home or in hospital, prayers for the sick in public services, sacramental ministry during or after public services, sacramental ministry in small

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[197] *Church in Wales Doctrinal Commission*, <http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/faith/healing/> [accessed 12/1/18], p.1
[198] *Church in Wales Doctrinal Commission*, p.1
[199] *Church in Wales Doctrinal Commission*, p.1
[200] *Church in Wales Doctrinal Commission*, p.1

> groups, listening ministry in private, including prayer and perhaps sacraments, other more informal methods of ministering to the sick.[201]

Furthermore, their website contains an electronic pamphlet, *Healing Services,* designed to instruct the minister on how to conduct a healing service.'[202] This pamphlet instructs that as part of the healing service, 'the laying on of hands and anointing oil' should be administered.[203] In addition, specific prayers to be said over the individual are prescribed, such as,

> In the name of God the Father, may you be released from your suffering and may your health be restored according to his holy will. In the name of God the Son, may you be filled with new life. In the name of God the Holy Spirit, may you receive inward health and the peace that passes all understanding. Amen.[204]

The Church in Wales literature shows that healing is primarily considered to take place as a part of a specific service - either in a church building or perhaps hospital visitation - with set prayers to be led by the clergy. When compared to the clear portrait provided by the examples and instructions in the previous advocacy literature, the Church in Wales literature contains very little detail on contemporary practices of healing.

Further official Anglican literature includes the *Book of Common Prayer*.[205] In the *Book of Common Prayer*, there are two references to services which can be provided for

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[201] *Church in Wales Doctrinal Commission*, p.1
[202] *Church in Wales Healing Service*, <https://churchinwales.contentfiles.net/media/documents/Healing_Services.pdf> [accessed 29/7/21]
[203] *Church in Wales Healing Service*, p10
[204] *Church in Wales Healing Service*, p.10
[205] As this research is focused on Wales, this literature review has examined the British Anglican Church only. For articles on healing within the Episcopal Church or global Anglicanism see, Jeremy Bonner, 'The Pittsburgh Paradigm: The Rise of Confessional Anglicanism in Southwestern Pennsylvania, 1950-2000', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, Vol. 77, No. 3, (Historical Society of the Episcopal Church Stable, 2008), Grant LeMarquand, 'Studies in East African Anglicanism', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, Vol. 80, No. 3, 237-241, (Historical Society of the Episcopal Church, 2011), Carter Heyward, 'Lessons and Limits of Anglicanism: Forty Years after Philadelphia', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, Vol. 83, No. 2, 146- 164, (Historical Society of the Episcopal Church, 2014), Geoffrey Troughton, 'Church, Society, and the Challenges of Modernity in the Anglican Diocese of Auckland, 1918-1940' *Anglican and Episcopal History*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (Historical Society of the Episcopal Church, 2015), 279-297

those who are sick; 'The order for the visitation of the sick' and 'The communion of the sick.'[206] The Order for the Visitation of the Sick suggests physical healing on two occasions. Firstly, when the minister says to the afflicted person, 'if it shall be thy good pleasure to restore him to his former health, he may lead the residue of his life in thy fear, and to thy glory.'[207] Secondly, there is 'A Prayer for a sick person, when there appeareth small hope of recovery.'[208] This prayer reads, 'O Lord, that there is no word impossible with thee; and that, if thou wilt, thou canst even yet raise him up, and grant him a longer continuance amongst us.'[209] The rest of the order is devoted to repentance, prayers and rehearsing articles of faith. In contrast, the 'Communion of the sick' does not mention healing at all. Rather its sole purpose is the provision of the 'last rites' and instructions concerning administering the Eucharist 'if the sick person be not able to come to the Church, and yet is desirous to receive the Communion in his house.'[210] The healing practices within this literature therefore are mainly directed and reserved for those where there is, 'a small hope of recovery'. Furthermore, it is clear that hospital visitation is seen as a primary location for healing prayer.

Additional literature on healing within Anglicanism are *The Grove Booklet* series. Although not official documents like the *Book of Common Prayer*, the Grove booklets are a series of commentaries and pastoral guides intended to accompany the official service or offering contemporary adaptations to the earlier official services of the Church

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[206] 'The Visitation of the Sick', *Book of Common Prayer*, <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/book-of-common-prayer/the-visitation-of-the-sick.aspx> [accessed 16/10/17]
[207] 'The Visitation of the Sick', p.1
[208] 'The Visitation of the Sick', p.1
[209] 'The Visitation of the Sick', p.1
[210] 'The Visitation of the Sick', p.1

of England (CoE).[211] These booklets are relevant because, although written for the CoE, they are based on the official texts which were written as authoritative texts for all Anglicans. Thus, what is said for the CoE will also be reflective of practises and theology of healing for the Church in Wales.

Michael Bottings' *Pastoral and Liturgical Ministry to the Sick,* presents updated advice similar to the practises in the *Book of Common Prayer,* including 'special prayer, laying on of hands or anointing with oil'.[212] Bottings states that, this 'could be conducted as a special service or could be combined with the communion service.'[213] Further advice and practices are included in the booklet, *Liturgy for the Sick* by Colin Buchanan and David Wheaton. They explain that a common practice for healing includes the use of anointing oil.[214] However, this practise comes with certain conditions. Buchanan and Wheaton explain that 'the laying on of hands is an informal ministry which anyone can do at any time, however anointing with oil is a formal ministry and therefore should only be used at appropriate moments and not if a complaint is something trivial.'[215] This suggests that it is mainly those who are ordained who practise the ministry of healing the sick. Although the administration of 'anointing oil' is considered a practice reserved for the clergy alone, Buchanan and Wheaton acknowledge that the 'laying on of hands' might be conducted by the laity. They explain that this healing method might be practised during a worship service, where 'a general invitation' is given 'to those in need of the laying on of hands and prayer to remain behind at the communion rail (or to pass quietly into a side

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[211] In fact, Michael Botting argues that the Book of Common Prayer is rarely used and instead the Grove booklets provide more up to date advice for the 'busy parish priest', Botting, p.5-6
[212] Botting, p.6
[213] Botting, p.6
[214] Colin Buchanan, and David Wheaton, *Liturgy for the Sick: The New Church of England Services* (Grove Books, 1983), p.22
[215] Buchanan and Wheaton, p.22

chapel) and elders will come and minister to them privately.'[216] They go on to add 'a less frequent practice found in some charismatic parishes' is that 'an invitation is given during the intercessions at the eucharist for those in need to stand in their places to indicate their needs, and those sitting near at hand are then invited to lay hands upon them and pray for them- all remaining where they are in the church.'[217] However, they explain that this requires a confidence 'that all over the building are sufficiently mature Christians to rise and minister.'[218] Here then, whilst the laity might be involved, it appears to be under the direct leading of the clergy who are conducting the service. This is helpful when considering what people say when they talk about a healing miracle within the Anglican Church because these texts suggest that the practice of healing is primarily considered to take place within a particular worship service. The concept of the laity engaging in 'the laying on of hands', and how this might be practiced, is not developed any further. This could be because Buchanan and Wheaton are primarily writing for the clergy, yet it might be further reflective of the notion that 'healing' is primarily administered by clergy.

These booklets therefore offer practical and everyday advice on ministering to the sick. The main practices for healing are prescribed within designated services, with the laying on of hands and a minister presenting healing oil. Particular prayers are supposed to be read and the prospect of physical healing, strength to continue living with the sickness or peace at the hour of death to be the expected results. The Grove Booklets are perhaps a more realistic insight into practises of healing within the CoE as opposed to the official *Common Book of Prayer*, as discussed above. However, it is the 2000 report, *A*

[216] Buchanan and Wheaton, p.20
[217] Buchanan and Wheaton, p.20
[218] Buchanan and Wheaton, p.20

Time to Heal, which provides an alternative view of the contemporary practises of healing within the Anglican church.

A Time to Heal is a report written for the House of Bishops on the healing ministry. Written by the Bishop of Chelmsford, the Right Reverend John Perry, alongside a review group, the authors start by expressing the 'hope that this report will encourage all Anglicans to embrace what is sometimes called, 'the full gospel'.[219] Thus, this report is relevant to the Church in Wales as it refers to 'all Anglicans' as opposed to just those in the CoE. The authors explain that 'the full gospel' means, 'the gospel preached with the hope of healing- so that it may become central to our mission, preached and exercised in ways that are both faithful to Jesus Christ and appropriate for the culture of our time.'[220] The report claims to be 'the first of its kind' and to examine topics never researched before. [221] For example, the report assesses the state of the ministry of healing in the CoE, seeking 'to highlight the current level of awareness of ministry, its level of support within the existing structures, the concerns and needs of those already involved, as well as the key challenges to be taken up.'[222] In this respect, the report appears to offer a broad and accurate review of contemporary practice, having included contributions from 'all diocesan bishops, all diocesan advisors in the ministries of healing and deliverance, a cross- section of hospital chaplains chosen by the hospital chaplaincies council, a cross-section of prison chaplains and all theological colleges and courses […] recognised by the House of Bishops'.[223]

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[219] A Time to Heal, *A Report for the House of Bishops on the Healing Ministry* (Church House Publishing, 2000), p.xviii
[220] A Time to Heal, p.xviii
[221] A Time to Heal, p.282
[222] A Time to Heal, p.36
[223] A Time to Heal, p.37

One of the *A Time to Heal*'s major findings was that 'there is still much to be done to establish this ministry as a part of normal, everyday life within every parish.'[224] There were a number of reasons for this, such as 'the local parish priest's interest and commitment to the ministry determining whether the healing ministry has a high profile in the parish', 'lay people not appreciating that the Eucharist is "essentially a service of healing"' and, 'limited resources being available for local training of lay people to take part in the healing ministry.'[225] Although it is claimed that 'this ministry is part of the mission of the Church, not an optional or extraneous activity', this was not reflected in the budget given for this ministry within the Church.[226] The report recorded that, 'the healing ministry is only a separate item in about half of the diocesan budgets. The most generous budget was for £2,000 p.a in 1998 but the average is less than 10 per cent of that figure.'[227] Therefore 'such limited resources compromise and discourage initiatives to set up large events to promote this ministry.'[228] This lack of enthusiasm and budget contributed to a range of concerns reported by the clergy including,

> the general failure of the Church of England to respond to the gospel imperative to heal the sick, lack of adequate training, nationally agreed, for clergy and laity in the healing ministry, lack of resources, overwork, lack of guidance and practical and prayerful support, lack of national networks within the Church, poor or non-existence communications about the healing ministry within the Church and divergence in practise, excesses and extremes, lack of accountability, lack of a system for dealing with bad practise and abuse, lack of guidelines for good practice to be owned and promoted by the Church of England.'[229]

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[224] A Time to Heal, p.37
[225] A Time to Heal, p.37-38
[226] A Time to Heal, p.37-44
[227] A Time to Heal, p.43
[228] A Time to Heal, p.44
[229] A Time to Heal, p.-48

Thus, despite the official Church theology and teaching promoting the ministry of healing, this report suggests that contemporary Christian healing within the Anglican church is not as operative as the denominational literature suggests.

As the denominational literature for Anglicanism in England and Wales has illustrated, Anglicanism does not necessarily carry a reputation for healing as much as perhaps other denominations. Mark Chapman in his *Anglican Theology*, 'offers discussions of the different identities and theologies that have been regarded as characterizing Anglican theology.'[230] Healing is not included as one of these characteristics. The topic of healing is only briefly referenced once when discussing the charismatic renewal. He argues, 'The Holy Spirit moved to England in 1963 […] when a group of parishioners received the baptism of the Holy Spirit […] this gradually came to be associated with a distinctive Christian counselling and healing ministry.'[231] The rest of his chapter does not investigate the theology of healing or common Anglican practices of healing. Instead, he goes on to explain how the charismatic renewal affected their services, for example PowerPoint replaced hymn books.[232] Healing, therefore, seems to be a subject which has often been ignored. Morton Kelsey goes further and argues there is a lack of contemporary studies on healing in general. He asserts that, 'healing is simply overlooked today.'[233] He believes one of the main reasons for this is because,

> Our culture has no place for such experiences. Men feel helpless when confronting them, and theology has no answer. Indeed Christian thinkers cannot consider experiences of healing today because of the tacit acceptance,

[230] Mark Chapman, *Anglican Theology* (Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2012), p.5
[231] Mark Chapman, *Anglicanism, A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2006), p.65
[232] Chapman, *Anglicanism*, p.65-66
[233] Kelsey, p.307

> philosophically and theologically, of a world view which allows no place for a breakthrough of "divine" power into the space-time world.[234]

Kelsey's argument here makes a salient point concerning the lack of research on healing. This is notable within the UK and especially within Wales. Therefore, an investigation into the contemporary practices of healing miracles within Wales is required.

Overall, this survey of the literature on the topic of healing in Wales, particularly in a Christian context, exposes a gap between the claims of contemporary advocacy literature and subsequent investigative academic analysis. The studies that do reference healing in Wales are either historical or include healing methods from outside of Christianity. The literature that discusses contemporary healing miracles in Wales comes from advocacy literature, charismatic literature, and denominational literature. The advocacy literature includes biblical teaching for congregational members on how to pray for the sick as well as stories from those who have prayed for others to be healed. The denominational literature differs quite drastically. Rather than including contemporary stories and illustrations of healing, the denominational literature reviewed here limits itself to prescribing liturgy, prayers and instructions for how to perform healing services. Nonetheless, what both these forms of literature have in common is that they by nature derive from central bodies, whether individual ministers advocating the ministry of healing, or denominational guides such as the Anglican books. The challenge with this, as the House of Bishops report shows, is that the picture they present is not necessarily reflective of the wider experience of lived religion of those within the Church. There is room, therefore, for further research in this area, especially in Wales where no such

[234] Kelsey, p.307

investigations have taken place. This next section, however, will summarise key academic studies that have researched healing miracles outside of Wales.

Contemporary Sociological Literature

Although contemporary studies of healing practices in Wales is a neglected area of study, research into the topic has taken place further afield, particularly in the United States of America, Canada and one in Denmark. As will be shown below, whilst also set within a geographical context, much of the literature carries a broad definition of healing, including practices from multiple faiths and 'spirituality.' Consequently, whilst instances of healing within Christian contexts are included within the research, the focus of study often lies elsewhere. This literature therefore indicates the relevance of my research into the reporting of healing miracles in Wales, which will seek to engage in an in-depth analysis of such reporting. Whilst taking place in a particular context, my research will thus seek to join the wider conversation taking place concerning healing, spirituality and lived religion.

In 2015, Nadya Pohran submitted a PhD entitled *Charismatic Healing: A Phenomenological Study of Spiritual Healing in Ottawa, Canada.* In this thesis she makes it clear that she is researching, 'Charismatic Protestant Christians in Ottawa, Canada' by taking 'a phenomenological approach in order to better comprehend the meaning-making process behind spiritual healing rituals.[235] Within this framework, she decides to use the term 'spiritual healing' so there is an openness in her study. She contends, 'spiritual

[235] Nadya Pohran, *A Charismatic Healing: A Phenomenological Study of Spiritual Healing in Ottawa, Canada* (Religious Studies Department of Classics and Religious Studies Faculty of Arts University of Ottawa, © Ottawa, Canada, 2015), p.iv

healing is a movement toward health/wholeness that is inseparable from one's spiritual belief system.'[236] She uses the term 'spiritual healing', as opposed to terms such as 'faith healing' or 'signs and wonders' because 'it does not presuppose a certain type of religious system or a certain understanding of the divine, and thereby opens itself to multiple religious and cultural traditions of healing.'[237] Despite this broad term, her focus for this study remains within charismatic Protestantism. Moreover, Pohran's focus for this study is on spiritual and emotional healing, rather than physical healing. She explains,

> As will be elaborated upon throughout this work, many of my research participants emphasised "holistic healing"—that is, a near-simultaneous healing of body, mind, and spirit. I do not aim to validate these claims. Rather, I focus on the experience of spiritual healing, and seek to explore the role of spiritual healing in the charismatic Protestant understanding of the sacred.[238]

Pohran writes about contemporary practices of spiritual healing within charismatic Protestantism through five case studies observing participants at a Christian Retreat centre alongside in-depth interviews. Pohran contends that this study is 'representative of the diverse approaches within charismatic Protestant healing.'[239]

Pohran's first finding was that she was unable to distinguish participants with the labels of 'healer' and 'supplicant' because, 'For my research participants, "healer" and "supplicant" were not static dichotomies; rather, many continuously transitioned back and forth between giving and receiving healing.'[240] Furthermore she notes the important distinction that,

> none of my research participants used the term "healer" to describe themselves. Instead, terms like "prayer counsellor," "minister," "Lead," "sister/brother [in

[236] Pohran, p.10
[237] Pohran, p.50
[238] Pohran, p.4
[239] Pohran, p.87
[240] Pohran, p.88

> Christ]," or, most simply, "friend" were preferred. The actual title of "healer" was always attributed back to the triune God; human beings were merely a channel or a vehicle for the healing power of God—whether this be attributed to the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit at any particular time.[241]

The majority of the case studies researched by Pohran revolve around emotional or spiritual healing.[242] However, one case study which does reference physical healing is that of 'Marilyn'. Pohran describes that whilst attending a prayer meeting, a

> woman asked Marilyn if she had "any tummy issues [...] any digestive problems?" Marilyn, poignantly reminded of the fact that she was scheduled to have a colonoscopy one month later in response to some digestive problems, was struck by this question and asked the woman how she knew that. "The Lord just told me," was the woman's reply. Shortly after, the entire group prayed for Marilyn and her forthcoming colonoscopy. When she had her colonoscopy, her results came out 100% fine; Marilyn views this as a healing and attributes it to the prayer experienced that day.[243]

Aside from Marilyn's story which records a physical healing, Pohran's case studies do not pertain to physical healing practices. She suggests that this is because physical healing primarily occurs in 'mass healing conferences' as opposed to private 'individual sessions' which usually focus on inner healing.[244] Therefore, when conducting the interviews, Pohran found that,

> although many of my research participants also took part in mass healing conferences, their own emphasis was often on the individual sessions they underwent (which, by the very nature of an individual session, allow for more privacy and intimacy—both of which are particularly welcome in spiritual healing experiences).[245]

Despite the focus on spiritual healing, Pohran still references physical healing, showing there are also reports of contemporary physical healing elsewhere. However, due to her

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[241] Pohran, p.88
[242] See case study of Cynthia, Maureen, Doug and Rachel in Pohran, p.91-100
[243] Pohran, p.94
[244] Pohran, p.100-101
[245] Pohran, p.100

focus, she does not provide an in-depth study on the physical healing reported. Thus, the aim of my study will be to fill this gap and provide an in-depth investigation on the topic of physical healing.

A further contemporary study on Christian practices of healing is Ella Paldam and Uffe Schjoedt's 2016 study, 'Miracles and Pain Relief: Experienced Health Effects of Charismatic Prayer Healing in a Large Collection of Christian Testimonies.' In this study, they examine 'a large collection of healing testimonies published by a Danish charismatic Christian organization.'[246] Their aim 'is neither to prove nor to disprove any objective health effects resulting from prayer', instead, 'the study examines a large collection of healing testimonies to explore the nature of health effects reported by Christian charismatic believers.'[247] Although they acknowledge the bias of healing testimonies, they also say that, 'if treated with caution' such accounts 'offer a unique and much warranted peek into the nature of experienced health outcomes associated with charismatic prayer healing.'[248] This aim is reflective of my research which also does not seek to prove or disprove if the healing occurred or not. Despite this aim, however, the study's main analysis consists of a lengthy discussion over the verification potential of the healing. This, then, is the main difference in our studies as my analysis does not seek to verify the narratives but instead analyse what people say when they talk about a healing miracle.

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[246] Ella Paldam, and Uffe Schjoedt, 'Miracles and Pain Relief: Experienced Health Effects of Charismatic Prayer Healing in A Large Collection of Christian', *Psychology of Religion,* Vol. 38, No. 2, (2016) 210-231 (Sage Publications 2016), (p.210)
[247] Paldam and Schjoedt, p.211
[248] Paldam and Schjoedt, p.211

One of Paldam and Schjoedt's findings is that 'Most healings reported in our data material occur in connection with prayer meetings (85.5%).'[249] At these prayer meetings, 'the healer preaches about the miracles in the Bible and recounts cases of previous successful healings. The power of the Holy Spirit is emphasized and the healer explicitly suggests that participants should expect amazing things to happen during the prayer session.'[250] Furthermore, 'numerous testimonies report bodily experiences during prayers such as feelings of warmth or experiences of bones and muscles "falling into place".'[251] These findings are interesting because they also mirror the way in which Marilyn's healing miracle is spoken about within Pohran's study as well as the advocacy literature.

The rest of their study is devoted to the analysis of the types of conditions that individuals believed themselves to be healed of.[252] Paldam and Schjoedt found that 'MD's ('Mission Danmark') healing practice appears to be specifically associated with pain relief in the musculoskeletal system.'[253] Despite the aims of their research, the study is less descriptive of the nature of the healings reported in Denmark. They do not investigate how the healing happened, the ways in which it is reported or spoken about. Instead, Paldam and Schjoedt's research is more of a clinical study in which they detail the conditions of which people were healed and the veracity of those healings. The article consists of a lengthy discussion on 'verification potential', as well as how the testimonies are delivered and how credible they are, plus the coding used to distinguish between the healings.[254] Their study resembles medical, clinical, and psychological studies on healing

[249] Paldam and Schjoedt, p.216
[250] Paldam and Schjoedt, p.225
[251] Paldam and Schjoedt, p.216
[252] Paldam and Schjoedt, p.219-224
[253] Paldam and Schjoedt, p.224
[254] Paldam and Schjoedt, p.215- 219

which are outside of my study's research remit as the medical studies tend to focus on proving the reliability and credibility of a healing miracle.[255] Csordas argues, 'much of the (healing) literature was preoccupied with proposing psychological mechanisms by which healing had its effect, such as catharsis, suggestion, placebo effect, trance of hypnosis. So what was explicitly religious about religious healing?'[256] This is true for much of the clinical literature on healing. However, my research is focused on religious healing and the contemporary practices of healing that people talk about when they report a physical healing, as opposed to medical proof of a reported healing. Therefore, these contemporary clinical studies of healing will not be examined any further.

Further important studies include American sociological studies by Meredith McGuire and Robert Orsi. Robert Orsi's research has focused on the lived religion and daily practises of Catholics from the Italian Harlem in New York in 1800-1950.[257] Although not a study which focuses on healing, Orsi touches upon the topic whilst describing their daily practices of religion. He notes that the community believed that the Madonna was often called upon by the locals to heal. He maintains, 'the Madonna was also asked specifically to heal many different kinds of pain the Italians suffered on account of the work they did.'[258] He further notes that, 'The Madonna's cures for the most part were not spectacular: most frequently she was called upon to heal very minor

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[255] For medical and clinical studies on healing see John A. Astin, Elaine Harkness, Edzard Ernst, *The Efficacy of "Distant Healing": A Systematic Review of Randomized Trials*, 2000 <DOI: 10.7326/0003-4819-132-11-200006060-00009>, Jadad R. Alejandro, Andrew R. Moore, Dwan Carroll, Crispin Jenkinson, John M. Reynolds, David J. Gavaghan, Henry J. McQuay, 'Assessing the Quality of Reports of Randomized Clinical Trials: Is Blinding Necessary?', in *Controlled Clinical Trials*, (Elsevier Inc, 1996) <https://doi.org/10.1016/0197-2456(95)00134-4>, Jacob Cohen, *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioural Sciences,* (Routledge, 1998)

[256] Thomas Csordas, *Body, Meaning, and Healing* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p.2

[257] Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950* (Yale University Press; 3 edition, 2010), p.lxi

[258] Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street,* p.201

household accidents and common domestic maladies— dental problems, mild fevers, colds, the many dilemmas in the lives of the poor.'[259] Orsi focuses on healing through the method of shrines, which, as will be discussed below within the Catholic literature, is outside of the boundary for this research and therefore limits the relevance to my study on contemporary practises in Wales.

Similarly, Meredith McGuire also studies healing in the USA in her important study, *Lived Religion.* As part of her research, she includes a chapter on, 'Embodied Practices for Healing and Wholeness' in which she 'examines the linkage between people's religious or spiritual practises and their practises for health and well-being.[260] She explains,

> Today, religious or spiritual practices for health and healing are prominent not only among the poor who cannot afford medical treatments, not only in rural places or among newly urbanized country folk, not only among the immigrants, the women, the uneducated, and other marginalized parts of the larger society. Indeed, many highly educated professionals—including some who work in health professions—use religious or spiritual practices for their own well-being and healing, alongside their selective use of modern medical treatments.[261]

McGuire offers five case studies of individuals who practise their belief in healing. This includes healing practices from methods such as 'psychic healing', 'yoga and meditation', inner healing and 'centering', healing through 'gardening' and healing within a 'Christian Church.'[262] McGuire's description of Rosalie's 'healing ministry' through her Christian church involves practices such as praying for members of her 'prayer group', 'laying hands on a member who needed special healing help', as well as 'praise and thanks.'[263]

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[259] Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street,* p.175
[260] McGuire, p.119
[261] McGuire, p.120-21
[262] McGuire, p.121-127
[263] McGuire, p.124

This brief insert of Rosalie's case study is helpful as it represents another individual example of contemporary healing practises in a Christian context. However, McGuire only presents one example of physical Christian healing. This is because McGuire's research has different aims and provides a broad sweep of different healing methods to give an overall impression of different types of lived religion. Therefore, Rosalie's example, and others potentially like it, are not analysed in detail with an aim for understanding more on physical healing itself. Instead, this is what my study aims to do. By focusing on physical healing miracles within Christianity in Wales, my study will build upon studies like McGuire's by providing an in-depth analysis on physical healing and what people say when they talk about it.

A further contemporary study comes from Thomas Csordas who researches charismatic Catholicism and in particular charismatic healing. In his, *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing,* he conducted ethnographic field work and had,

> interviews with eighty-seven healers of varying degrees of experience and "giftedness," including both laypeople and priests/nuns. Paper and pencil questionnaires regarding healing experience were completed by 587 participants at large public healing services conducted by five of these healers. Finally, detailed phenomenological data were gathered in sixty private sessions with eighteen supplicants conducted by six participating healers.[264]

His findings identified four relatively distinct types of charismatic healing events. They are: 'large public services with multiple patients, small services following prayer meetings, private services for the benefit of a single patient, and solitary healing prayer

[264] Thomas J. Csordas, *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing* (University of California Press, 1997), p.viii

for oneself or absent others.'[265] When describing a typical large public service, he explains the practices of healing in the following way,

> In large public healing services the principal healing minister, unless he or she is traveling as a guest in an unfamiliar region or country, is typically assisted by a staff. Members of this staff serve as ushers for those coming forward to receive prayer, "catchers" for those who may be overwhelmed by divine power and fall in a sacred swoon (see chapter 9), musicians, and members of small prayer teams. Each patient receives at least a few moments of personal attention from either the principal healer or one of the prayer teams. Staff members of several well-organized "ministries" are identified during services by a sash or jacket worn over their clothing, or by regular street clothing with a common color scheme. In a typical scenario, the service begins with the leader walking up and down the aisles of the church, using a liturgical instrument known as an aspergillum to sprinkle holy water on the assembly and pausing periodically to lay hands on a person's head or shoulder. Returning to the front of the assembly the leader delivers a sermon on divine healing, and a music ensemble composed of members of the staff leads the group in charismatic songs. Several participants are solicited to share or "witness to" previous healings they have experienced. The body of the service consists in each participant coming forward for a minute or two of private prayer, much as they come forward for the Eucharist in a mass. Each is anointed with sacramental oil and "prayed over" with laying on of hands. Some healers ask the person to name the problem to be prayed for, others do not and "leave the entire matter to God." Still others (apparently fewer) diagnose the problem by inspiration, learning through the results of an inspiration or "word of knowledge" that, for example, a supplicant is "angry and should forgive her husband." Services typically last three or four hours if preceded by a mass. Daylong or two-day healing retreats may include "workshops" on spiritual gifts prior to the mass and a healing service proper. [266]

As this finding shows, Csordas explains that healing within a charismatic Catholic context mostly occurs within official services, which is also reflective of the Anglican denominational literature. Within these services, there would be a nominated 'principal healer' as well as official staff to assist. Moreover, the healing practices include typical practices featured within the biblical, historical and advocacy literature. They are, the 'laying on of hands' and the use of 'anointing oil'. Different to perhaps Pentecostal

[265] Csordas, *The Sacred Self,* p.37
[266] Csordas, *The Sacred Self,* p.36-37

practices includes the use of ‘holy water’. However, the physical reactions mirror the healing reported in Pentecostal literature as the charismatic Catholics also prepare for physical reactions such as ‘falling’ because of being ‘overwhelmed by divine power’.

Csordas’ findings of healing within a larger healing service are also mirrored in the smaller prayer groups. When he describes a private prayer group healing session the common practices are described as,

> In prayer groups healing prayers for self or others may occur in a segment of the weekly prayer meeting. Better-organized groups may have a selected team of "healing ministers" who, following the meeting, conduct prayer for individual supplicants in a separate "healing room." Several pairs of team members dispersed through the room each see one patient at a time. They listen, talk, lay on hands, and pray for healing. Other patients wait outside the prayer room and are admitted one by one by another healing team member who acts as gatekeeper. The post-prayer meeting healing-room session stands in contrast to the large service in its relative privacy, in the increased amount of time spent with each patient (10-20 minutes instead of 2-3), and in the greater likelihood of healers and supplicants having an ongoing relationship within the group.[267]

As this quote shows, the practices within both healing meetings are similar including healing within the context of a service, incorporating practices such as the laying on of hands and specific ‘healing ministers’ who pray for healing. This phenomenological study executed by Csordas was and still is a significant contribution to the study of religious healing. This can be seen in the subsequent literature which frequently references Csordas’ research.[268] Furthermore, his study gives an indication into contemporary

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[267] Csordas, *The Sacred Self*, p.36-37

[268] See Fraser Watts, *Spiritual Healing: Scientific and Religious Perspectives*, (Cambridge University Press, 2011), James Opp, *The Lord for the Body: Religion, Medicine and Protestant Faith Healing in Canada, 1880 -1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), Tanya M. Luhrmann, *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God* (Vintage; Reprint edition, 2012)

practices of healing within charismatic Catholicism, as opposed to the traditionally held view of the miraculous within Catholicism.[269]

Overall, these contemporary studies are helpful for investigating contemporary studies of healing. Despite having significant geographical, cultural and denominational differences to my research, these studies are also discovering that healing is being reported today. They are analysing the reports of healing for different features, whereas my research is focusing on Christian physical healing within Wales. Nevertheless, although the majority of studies focus on spiritual and inner healing or healing outside of the boundaries of Christianity, those that do mention physical healings are often reported in a very similar manner to the advocacy literature elsewhere and in Wales. The limitation of these studies is that they do not go into detail on the physical healing miracles. They indicate that something is happening but their in-depth study on healing neglects an in-depth investigation into the way physical healing is narrated by those who purport to experience a healing miracle. My research will plug the gap in the literature by investigating the way people talk about physical healing miracles in contemporary Wales, contributing to this emerging conversation on healing within Christianity today.

In conclusion, the literature on healing miracles in Wales is limited. Practices or accounts of healing miracles in Wales is significantly understudied. The literature which

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[269] I recognise that stories of the miraculous are not alien within the history of Roman Catholicism. Miracles performed by historic saints and those occurring at 'healing shrines', such as Lourdes, are just two that feature within the tradition. Although an important part of healing within Catholicism, the literature on the miraculous through shrines and saints are not relevant to this study. That is because the healing practises and type of pilgrimage focus at Lourdes and other Catholic locations is different to those in Wales. Wales does not have the same sources of mass pilgrimage or special towns identified for healing focus. Thus, I am focusing on healing practises within Charismatic Catholicism only. For more on healing through pilgrimage and shrines see Ruth Harris, *Lourdes Body and Spirit in the Secular Age*, (Penguin Books, 1999)

does reference healing in Wales comes from outside Christianity or from advocacy literature. The advocacy literature in Wales is helpful because it contains narratives from those reporting that they believe themselves to have been physically healed. This provides a basic understanding of contemporary healing miracles in Wales, however the advocacy literature is subjective, biased and not necessarily reliable.

Literature which does reference contemporary healing miracles comes from sociological studies across the world or from medical studies which are outside of the scope of this study. Additionally, the denominational literature gives further insight into healing miracles within charismatic and Pentecostals traditions, as well as Anglican, however official church teaching does not necessarily reflect what is actually happening on the ground. However, more often than not, the denominational literature has been written outside of Wales and so although the practises might carry across to Wales, this cannot be guaranteed.

Lastly, the rest of the literature on healing miracles comes from biblical or historical literature. These fields of research are helpful for understanding historical practises of healing miracles which might underpin contemporary practises today. However, the literature contains no evidence of this and therefore there is a limitation on the relevancy of the biblical and historical literature for this study.

Ultimately, this literature review shows the gap in the literature on contemporary healing miracles in Wales. Therefore, an investigation into the contemporary practices of healing miracles within charismatic churches in Wales is required.

Chapter 2. Healing Miracles in Wales

Introduction

Across Wales (UK) there is anecdotal evidence of charismatic Christians reporting being physically healed after receiving prayer.[1] The topic of healing has a longstanding history and role in charismatic Christianity. However, in recent years, reports of healing by Christians have been significantly understudied, especially within Wales, as the literature review has demonstrated. Therefore, this research aims to investigate reports of healing occurring in Wales and what people say when they talk about their experience of a healing miracle.[2] Through participant interviews and surveys, I explore healing miracles through the lens of lived religion. This methodology chapter will address why the research question, to investigate how people in Wales talk about a healing miracle, has been chosen and how the research was carried out.

This chapter, outlining my methodology, is split into three parts. The first part will look at why this topic was chosen and the aim of the research project. This section also begins with an exposition of the term 'healing miracle'. It briefly discusses the literature surrounding this term and provides a rationale for why healing miracle has been used as opposed to other terminology such as faith healing or signs and wonders. Furthermore, it will explore the importance of experience, narrative and individuals' lived religion

[1] The research will focus on one category of healing and that is, physical healing miracles only. The research will exclude other categories of healing such as mental health healing and inner healing because it is physical healing miracles which are being reported across Wales as a current phenomenon. It is this current phenomenon I want to investigate.

[2] When talking about the research conducted, I write in the past tense. However, when examining what people say about their healing miracle I write in the present tense because for these individuals, the experience is current and being reported as happening regularly for them today.

drawing on the work of sociologists such as Meredith McGuire, David Hall and Robert Orsi. The second part will discuss the practical stages of the research examining the chosen methods of questionnaires, face to face interviews and sampling. This part will also discuss ethics, consent and anonymity. Lastly, the third part will set out the chosen structural method of analysis for the healing narratives collected.

Part 1. Research Question and Aims: Healing Reports as Lived Religion

This section will define the aim of the research and account for the use of narratives through the lens of lived religion to investigate how people talk about healing in Wales.

Defining the Aim of Research

The main aim of this research was to go to the locations where healing miracles were being reported and collect as many narratives as possible from those claiming to have had these experiences. This method meant that, firstly I was able to explore whether the anecdotal accounts of charismatic Christians talking about being healed in Wales were possible to gather and analyse.

Secondly, this method had the intended aim to accumulate a large amount of data to understand what was '*actually* […] going on'. John Swinton and Harriet Mowatt in their *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* state, 'a key question asked by the Practical Theologian is: is what *appears* to be going on within this situation *actually* what is going on?'[3] The narratives were key to this for they provided 'on the ground' information which aided this investigation. Moreover, this research included face to face

[3] John Swinton, and Harriot Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (SCM Press, 2006), p.v

interviews with chosen church leaders to understand their perspective and opinion on the reported healings and gain further insight into the accounts. As I discussed in chapter one, there is often a gap between what is said in the advocacy and denominational literature, and what people's accounts are of what is actually taking place. The aim of my research aligns closely to that of Thomas Csordas, who – as I discussed in the previous chapter – carried out a phenomenological study amongst Catholic communities of charismatic Healing in New England, USA in 1973.[4] Csordas conducted fieldwork using questionnaires and interviews to investigate healing practises within charismatic healing events.[5] Subsequently, his goal was to focus on individual embodiment 'to advance our understanding of a particular practise.'[6] Similarly, I aim to report and investigate the ways in which healing miracles are described and experienced in Wales.

Consequently, what my research explicitly did not aim to do was to prove nor disprove physical healing. It was not desirable to perform a scientific analysis of people before, during and after a healing miracle to officially document whether they were healed. Neither was the aim of this research to produce a theological or doctrinally sound method or approach to physical healing. The scope of this study was confined to the main task of researching whether charismatic Christians were talking about being healed in Wales, and what and how people were talking about healing miracles. As Candy Gunther Brown puts it, in her *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*,

> This book does not seek to answer the question of whether individuals are "really" healed or whether a divine agent is actually responsible. Although these may be significant questions for another project, the questions that compel us are how

[4] Thomas J. Csordas, *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing* (University of California Press, 1997)
[5] Csordas, *The Sacred Self*, p.viii
[6] Thomas Csordas, *Body, Meaning, and Healing* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p.1

> people's perceptions of seeking, experiencing, or witnessing divine healing affect their self-understandings, religious affiliations, or cultural practices. [7]

Brown goes on to explain her empathetic stance which does not necessarily sympathise with the subject, but instead aims to analyse their perspectives to interpret their experience.[8] Likewise, my research does not aim to 'agree' with the participants, but instead uses their narratives to investigate the reported phenomenon in Wales. Similarly, Ninian Smart takes a 'dimensional' approach within phenomenology adopting a 'stricter methodological agnosticism'. Smart uses the famous Native American proverb to express this when he writes, 'we should not judge a person until we have walked a mile in his or her moccasins.'[9] George Chryssides expands Smart's position for religious studies today and notes that, 'although one can disagree about whether there exists a god or supreme power, the people who practise their religions undeniably exist, with their associated worldviews.'[10] In the same vein as Brown and Smart's work, my area of research adopted 'Smart's phenomenological approach' which entails 'structured empathy: in other words it does more than describe, but attempts to organise the phenomenon, using appropriate scholarly apparatus.'[11]

Therefore, the premise of this research is that charismatic Christians in Wales believe themselves to be physically healed after receiving prayer. As a researcher I accept the individual's healing narrative as a true and real experience for them, in order to investigate and analyse this reported phenomenon. Researching the phenomenon through

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[7] Candy G. Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p.5-6
[8] Candy G. Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p.5-6
[9] Ninian Smart, *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), p.6
[10] George D. Chryssides, and Roland Geaves, T*he Study of Religion. An Introduction to Key Ideas and Methods* (Bloomsbury Academic; 2nd Revised edition, 2013), p.226
[11] Ninian Smart in *The Study of Religion. An Introduction to Key Ideas and Methods*, ed.by George D. Chryssides, and Roland Geaves (Bloomsbury Academic; 2nd Revised edition, 2013), p.226-227

the lens of lived religion, which I will proceed to expound upon below, was therefore a crucial component of the method and consequent analysis of this research.

Healing Miracle

The term healing miracle is loaded. With numerous denominations having different thoughts, theology, and practices when considering 'healing' within Christianity, the term can conjure up many different understandings. This section will explain why the term 'healing miracle' has been chosen for this research as opposed to other frequently used terms such as divine healing or faith cure.

Common phrases to describe Christian healing are 'faith healing' and 'divine healing'. These terms are often associated with the Pentecostal denomination of Christianity. Brown, for instance, writes about divine healing practices as 'an essential marker of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity as a global phenomenon.'[12] In recent years, the term divine healing has been favoured over faith healing due to the negative connotations often associated with faith healing. Brown comments,

> The term "faith healing" is, moreover, confusing analytically because of its negative connotations in popular parlance, evoking images— such as the flamboyant, fraudulent, money-grabbing "faith healers" of movies like Elmer Gantry (1960), Leap of Faith (1992), and The Apostle (1997)—that are far removed from the vast majority of religious healing practices, many of which are transacted outside large religious services and without the ministrations of prominent evangelists, many of whom are more complex figures than the stereotypes suggest.[13]

[12] Brown, *Charismatic healing*, p.3
[13] Brown, *Charismatic Healing*, p.4-5

She goes on to promote the use of divine healing instead because it emphasises God's love as the source of healing as opposed to merely human faith.[14] Likewise, the term 'faith cure' or 'divine cure' is seldom used for similar reasons. Nadya Pohran argues that,

> Although "faith cure" is essentially a synonym for "divine healing", "faith cure" holds a particular negative connotation due to other forms of Victorian "cures" that were later revealed as scams. As society's general acceptance of cures such as the "water cure," and the "gold cure" lessened, the term "faith cure" was replaced with "faith healing" or "divine healing" in order to distance itself from the above-mentioned "cures."[15]

Instead, James Opp in his, 'The Lord for the Body: Religion, Medicine and Protestant Faith Healing in Canada', on the topic of faith healing, 'suggests that scholars should use the term "divine healing" in order to respect this distance, unless referring directly to an instance that was identified as "faith healing" by those involved.'[16]

Therefore, I have chosen not to use these terms: faith healing and faith cure, because of the negative connotations associated with these terms. Furthermore, unlike James Opp's recommendation, I have also chosen not to use the terms divine healing or divine cure because these terms are often associated with specific denominations, particularly Pentecostalism. Amongst other denominations, Pentecostals have sometimes acquired a reputation for adopting more 'extreme' methods and practices of healing. For example, Amado Cruz when writing an article on healing for 'Catholic Charismatics Today'**,** maintains that the majority of Catholics are suspicious of healing within Pentecostalism because it 'conjures up (in the popular mind) images of emotionalism,

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[14] Brown, *Charismatic Healing*, p.4-5
[15] Nadya Pohran, *A Charismatic Healing: A Phenomenological Study of Spiritual Healing in Ottawa, Canada* (Religious Studies Department of Classics and Religious Studies Faculty of Arts University of Ottawa, © Ottawa, Canada, 2015), p.54-55
[16] James Opp, *The Lord for the Body: Religion, Medicine and Protestant Faith Healing in Canada, 1880-1930* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), p.12

fanaticism, religious mania, illiteracy, anti-intellectualism, messianic posturing, panting after miracles.'[17] Similarly, John O'Neill in his, 'Charismatic Renewal and its Spirituality', contends that, 'it is true that shared, spontaneous prayer forms have been largely unknown in Catholic circles until quite recently; such forms of prayer being often associated with strange folk such as Quakers or Pentecostals.[18] As my research covers all denominations within the Christian Church in Wales, I did not want to deter Churches and participants by using a loaded term. Therefore, by adopting the more neutral phrasing of 'healing miracle', negative connotations or reactions were less likely to be provoked.

Moreover, I avoided using the term 'spiritual healing' because of the openness it invites. Pohran defines spiritual healing as 'a movement toward health or wholeness that is inseparable from one's spiritual belief system.'[19] She uses this term because it creates 'a cross-cultural/interreligious definition of spiritual healing because it does not presuppose a certain type of religious system or a certain understanding of the divine, and thereby opens itself to multiple religious and cultural traditions of healing.'[20] However, this is not the aim of my research. The investigation into healing miracles in Wales does not intend to be representative of all spiritualities. Instead, its focus is on healing miracles within the charismatic Christian churches in Wales. Thus, the term 'spiritual healing' has not been used.

Furthermore, the terms 'signs and wonders' or 'healing prayer' were not used. This is because I did not want to persuade or influence the participant to include

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[17] Amado S. Cruz, 'Catholic Charismatics Today' *Philippine Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1/ 2, (1973) 96-110 (Ateneo de Manila University Stable, 1973), (p.97)
[18] John O'Neill, 'Charismatic Renewal and Its Spirituality', *The Furrow*, Vol. 25, No. 11, (1974) 599-603 (Published by: The Furrow Stable, 1974), (p.599-600)
[19] Pohran, p.50
[20] Pohran, p.50

something in their narrative which they would not have done otherwise. For example, if I had asked the participant to write their story on 'healing prayer', it assumes prayer was involved and thus could influence what they would write, or whether they felt eligible to give a healing testimony. Likewise, Morton Kelsey in his *Healing and Christianity*, explains that the root word for 'signs and wonders' means 'a happening that excites wonder and awe.'[21] Thus, the meaning behind the term 'signs and wonders' might also consciously or subconsciously influence the participant to write in a particular manner when describing their healing event and therefore, these terms were not used within the research.

The term 'healing' used as a noun, without further qualifiers or adjectives was almost adopted as the leading term for this research. However, on its own, 'healing' can invite all matters of experiences, such as inner healing, emotional healing, body, soul and spirit healing. Csordas, when instructing his readers how to read his studies on healing suggests,

> One can approach the individual chapters as a series of studies that document the sufferings and strivings of afflicted people trying to become whole and in many instances, holy. At the same time, one can trace the overlapping trajectories of the studies as steps toward a standpoint for understanding the experiential specificity of human existence, a cultural phenomenology grounded in embodiment.[22]

As these instructions show, healing is a complex topic with numerous meanings and avenues to explore. However, my research was to focus on physical healing only, as opposed to spiritual or inner healing, embodiment, or wholeness. Therefore, the word 'miracle' was included in order to research physical 'healing miracles'. This is because,

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[21] Morton Kelsey, *Healing and Christianity* (Augsburg Books, 1995), p.107
[22] Csordas, *Body, Meaning, and Healing*, p.8

the term miracle is more commonly associated with physical healing. Evelyn Frost in her, *Christian Healing*, puts forward the view that,

> Because miracles are, by their very nature, frequently associated with the happening of the unexpected, they appear to conflict with the law of causation, and have therefore been regarded by some as interventions in, or interruptions or contradictions of, the laws of nature; it is under this aspect that science frowns upon them and rationalists seek to reject them. The definition of a miracle, however, need not be restricted by preconceived ideas as to its origin, but may arise from reviewing the effect rather than the cause. In common usage the term means a wonderful phenomenon usually associated with some event in which the law of causation cannot be observed; in other words, the majority of miracles belong to the field of the 'unrationalised' as yet. [23]

Thus, without using the words faith or divine, I wanted to keep the 'divine' aspect of the healing, that is, charismatic Christians in Wales are claiming it is healing through the Christian God. The healing is reported as a miracle, an intervention and something unexpected. This is in contrast to healing through modern medicine only or through relieving symptoms rather than eliminating the cause. Furthermore, as the focus of the research is on physical healing as opposed to inner healing, the term miracle implies an observable difference in the individual. Thus, suggesting physical healing. Moreover, the term 'healing miracle' is inclusive of both 'healings' and 'miracles'. This is because there is a common distinction within Christianity between a 'healing', for example an illness which might recover on its own accord, but prayer accelerates the process resulting in a healing, and 'miracle' for example an illness which is incurable but with prayer the impossible occurs and therefore it is deemed by charismatic Christians as a miracle. Keener in his *Gift Giver* says,

> "Miracles" literally means "demonstrations of power," and the plural may signify diverse kinds of workings for different miracle workers, as in the case of healings. In the Old Testament and in stories about Jesus that Paul told the Corinthians,

[23] Evelyn Frost, *Christian Healing* (A R Mowbray & Co Limited, London, 1949), p.164-165

> "miracles" could include healings and presumably included acts of faith such as moving mountains (1 Cor 13:2). This gift probably overlaps with "gifts of healing" and "faith" elsewhere in the list, but it undoubtedly includes other kinds of miracles as well, such as nature miracles.[24]

This thesis will be focusing on physical healing miracles only as opposed to nature miracles. However, the term 'healing miracle' is thus inclusive of both meanings, providing narratives on both healing and healing miracles.

Lived Religion

Lived religion is a relatively new trend in social studies. Although it has long been a component of anthropology, traditionally, many theological and religious studies would favour official religious documents and teaching to understand a religious concept or phenomenon over individual experience. David Hall in his *Lived Religion in America* suggests that 'while we know a great deal about the history of theology and (say) church and state, we know next-to-nothing about religion as practised and precious little about the everyday thinking and doing of lay men and women.'[25] This is exactly what lived religion aims to address. It was not until the late twentieth century that it was popularised by scholars such as Robert Orsi, David Hall and Meredith McGuire who rooted lived religion in cultural and ethnographic approaches to the study of religion as opposed to sociology or historical study alone.

Lived religion is often confused with the similar, but distinctly different term: 'popular religion'. Orsi contends, 'popular religion is a term badly in need of definition. Among detractors of the idea, popular religion means all those crazy religious things that

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[24] Craig S. Kenner, *Gift Giver. The Holy Spirit for Today*, (Baker Academic 2001), p.118
[25] David D. Hall, *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice* (Princeton University Press; First Edition, 1997), p.vii

people do and all the crazy ideas they have outside the structures of an organised and properly ordered church.'[26] David Hall in his *Lived Religion in America* distinguishes between the two practices arguing that,

> Where lived religion goes its own way is in breaking with the distinction between high and low that seems inevitably to recur in studies of popular religion. That is, these case studies are not built around a structure of opposition. Nor do they displace the institutional or normative perspectives on practise, as historians of popular religion so commonly do.'[27]

This difference was crucial to conducting this research because the aim was not to uncover, as Orsi says, 'crazy religious things' and compare them in opposition to the official teaching of the church. The healing narratives were collected from those who attended Christian churches and were often in line with the teaching from the church leader interviews as the next chapter will illustrate.

The Experiences of Individuals' Lived Religion

Lived religion prioritises the experience of individuals' religiosity through its approach to its ethnographic studies, however that 'experience' is construed.[28] When discussing how to conduct research, Orsi encourages one to think about lived religion as,

> the practise of making the invisible visible, of concretizing the order of the universe the nature of human life and its destiny, and the various dimensions and possibilities of human interiority itself, as these are understood in various cultures

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[26] Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950* (Yale University Press; 3 edition, 2010), p.Iviiii

[27] Hall, p.ix

[28] The topic of experience has a long history within theology. It is outside of the scope of my study to discuss the history of experience here. However, for a discussion on experience see, Friedrich DE. Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, (J. Oman (trans.), New York: Harper and Row, 1958 [1831]), Jensine Andresen, *Religion in Mind: Cognitive Perspectives on Religious Belief, Ritual, and Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (ed.). 2001), Geertz Clifford, "The Pinch of Destiny: Religion as Experience, Meaning, Identity, Power" in *His Available Light* ,167– 86, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), James William, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004 [1902]), Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (Independent Publishers Group; New edition edition,1982), Rosemary Radford, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (SCM Press; New edition, 2002)

> at different times, in order to render them visible and tangible, present to the senses in the circumstances of everyday life.'[29]

In the same way, the goal of this research was to 'make visible' the reports of healing miracles in Wales to prioritise charismatic Christians' experiences to discover and understand people's experience when recounting a healing miracle within their everyday life.

This position can be seen in the way in which Orsi conducted his study in his influential work, *The Madonna of 115th Street, Faith and Community in Italian Harlem.* Orsi's research revolved around the Italian Harlem community and their 'story of a religious celebration, the annual festa of the Madonna of Mount Carmel on East 115th Street in New York City, and of the devotion to this Madonna which flourished among Italian immigrants and their American-born or -raised children who lived around her.'[30] He called his study 'a study of religion in the streets.'[31] Orsi had two methods for researching this community which he defined by his interpretation of 'religion'. The first was to 'describe the sacred rituals, practices, symbols, prayers, and faith of the people. The immigrants' religion, in this sense of the word, was deeply Catholic.'[32] Similarly, the first aim of my research was to examine the rituals, practices, prayers and faith of charismatic Christians in Wales to explore and analyse the way healing miracles are experienced and discussed. Orsi's second aim was a concern with, 'the people's religion defined as the totality of their ultimate values, their most deeply held ethical convictions, their efforts to order their reality, their cosmology […] More simply stated, religion here

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[29] Robert Orsi, 'Everyday Miracles; The Study of Lived Religion', *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, ed.by David D. Hall (Princeton University Press; First Edition, 1997), p.73-74
[30] Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, p.1vii
[31] Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, p.lvii
[32] Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, p.lxi

means "what matters."'[33] Orsi's description of religion as 'what matters' summarises the heart of lived religion. Through researching the realities of individuals' lives and the way they conduct themselves, their traditions or in Orsi's case, their festivals, reveal what part of their religiosity really matters to them. Likewise, this research set out to discover 'what matters' to individuals when they describe their healing experience. By allowing individuals in Wales to share their own story, it would provide a deeper understanding of their 'ultimate values, their most deeply held ethical convictions, their efforts to order their reality, (and) their cosmology.'[34] Through the healing narratives collected, ultimately, these stories collected would show 'what matters' to people in Wales in the healing miracles that are part of their lived religion.

Orsi highlighted his commitment to researching 'what matters' in his 1997 essay on 'Everyday Miracles'. When describing his research to his students whilst teaching his university class he recalls their horror at some of the daily practices of those living in the Bronx. He notes the students' particular outrage by, 'the general blurring of categories they want to keep distinct (sacred/ profane; spirit/ matter; transcendent/ immanent; nature/ machine) which occurs at St Lucy's' such as 'the image of the holy water being poured into car engines.[35] He describes their scoffs and dismissive 'load of crap [sic]' comments and observes that 'not one student [...] has been willing to say that the practices at St Lucy's are of obvious importance to the people who do them and therefore worthy of our

[33] Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, p.lxi
[34] Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, p.lxi
[35] Orsi, *Everyday Miracles*, p.5

serious attention.'[36] Responding to his students' fervent dismissals of what religiosity involves, Orsi argues,

> to study lived religion entails a fundamental rethinking of what religion is and of what it means to be "religious". Religion is not only not sui generis, distinct from other dimensions of experience called "profane". Religion comes into being in an ongoing, dynamic relationship with the realities of everyday life.[37]

This prioritisation of the realities of individuals' lives is what produces in-depth data on how actual people do religion. It is this data which provides a more grounded understanding not just of a particular experience or phenomenon, but also an insight into whole communities, society as a whole through individuals' religiosity and the unique ways of expressing their beliefs and value systems.

Likewise, Meredith McGuire also prioritises experience within her social science research. McGuire, writing and researching in the early noughties after Orsi and Hall, is highly influenced by their work and situates herself in line with their sociological position. She also discovered the importance of prioritising experience when she researched embodied practices for healing and wholeness within peoples' lived religion. She expressed that she, 'had no doubt that most of the people we interviewed had experienced something profound and real, something that was a real healing for them, something that was at least as real as a healing as what modern medicine has to offer.'[38] Thus she argues, 'we must respect these people's expressions of their experiences and their deep sense that healing worked in their lives.'[39] When researching medieval

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[36] Orsi, *Everyday Miracles*, p.5
[37] Orsi, *Everyday Miracles*, p.7
[38] Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford University Press, USA; 1st Edition, 2008), p.120
[39] McGuire, p.120

Christianity and associated practices (especially regarding healing, magic and superstition) she maintains that,

> One of the reasons we misinterpret medieval religious practise as merely 'superstitious' or 'irrational' is that we fail to grasp practitioners' conception of religious power. A mode of action is not irrational if a person perceives it to work.[40]

She goes on to explain that it was rational for medieval people to believe in the miraculous as modern medicine has not advanced yet and thus as a twenty-first-century reader, we cannot call every experience superstitious when it was real to them.[41] Likewise, today, if an experience is real to an individual, we also need to take that experience seriously. I build upon McGuire's and Orsi's prioritisation of experience for my own research. By adopting the lens of lived religion, I was able to conduct research which prioritised the practices and everyday thinking and realities of normal women and men in Wales. In order to investigate what people say when they talk about a healing miracle, this was the best methodology selected to answer this research question. Thus, this method of approaching research by prioritising the realities of individuals' lives was at the heart of this investigation and, at the heart of prioritising the realities of individuals lives is, 'experience'.

This prioritisation of experience was a clear move away from researching official institutional teaching to discover more about a religion. Since the rise in postmodern thinking and owing to the work of sociologists such as McGuire, Hall and Orsi who broke boundaries in this area, the research of individuals' experience rather than just official

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[40] McGuire, p.33

[41] One of the reasons we misinterpret medieval religious practise as merely 'superstitious' or 'irrational' is that we fail to grasp practitioners' conception of religious power.

Church teaching or theological doctrines, has become a more accepted practice. This can be seen across many fields of research in sociology, history and religion and it is a practice upon which this research builds. In McGuire's key work, *Lived Religion, Faith and Practise in Everyday Life,* she explains that her focus throughout the book is 'on how religion and spirituality are practised, experienced, and expressed by ordinary people (rather than official spokespersons) in the context of their everyday lives.'[42] She does this by firstly encouraging scholars of religion and especially sociologists to 're-examine their assumption about individuals' lives.'[43] She contends,

> What might we discover if, instead of looking at affiliation or organisational participation, we focused first on individuals, the experiences they consider most important, and the concrete practises that make up their personal religious experience and expression?

Thus, the emphasis driving her work is not about researching the official spokespeople within a religion but instead 'about religion as expressed and experienced in the lives of individuals.'[44] Similarly, Dawn Llewellyn's research on literature as having a spiritual dimension, in *Reading, Feminism, and Spirituality: Troubling the Waves,* also prioritises, 'the actual embodied reader and her experiences.'[45] Llewellyn does this by developing a 'reader-centered feminist approach' which allows a 'shift from interpreting meanings of texts to interpreting the activity and processes of reading.'[46] Lewellyn specifically does not 'offer explicit analysis of the literature named by women readers in this study' as to not undermine the women's' reflections.[47] Instead, her focus 'maintains the profile of the

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[42] McGuire, p.12
[43] McGuire, p.4
[44] McGuire, p.3
[45] Dawn Llewellyn, *Reading, Feminism, and Spirituality: Troubling the Waves* (Palgrave Macmillan US, 2015), p.19
[46] Llewellyn, p.21
[47] Llewellyn, p.21

reader and her experience, giving insight into what women are reading, but emphasizes how they are using the texts they name.'[48] Likewise, this study does not critique contemporary healing miracles through the lens of official spokespersons or religious literature. Instead, its focus is on the individual, their experience and how they describe a healing miracle.

Prioritising experience over official religious spokespersons was important to McGuire because during her research she discovered that none of her interviewees 'expressed a pattern of religious belief and practice that fit standard sociological assumptions about individuals' religious worlds.'[49] She puts forward the view that,

> the individual is able to experience, rather than simply think or believe in, the reality of her or his religious world. Religious rituals are important contexts for making religious worlds real and present to the senses, but they are occasional and typically removed from the world of everyday life.[50]

This is where McGuire's research differs to my own. As McGuire researched lived religion outside of official spokespersons, she discovered that people's lived religion looked very different and was 'removed from the world of everyday life'.[51] However, as my next chapter will reveal, the healing narratives I collected did not stray significantly from their own Church leader's theological teaching and moreover, the descriptions of their healing experiences were very much in line with their 'everyday life'.

Despite this difference in finding, the aim of my research builds upon McGuire's. This project also aimed to take seriously the expressions and experiences of charismatic Christians reporting healing to discover what they say about healing miracles as opposed

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[48] Llewellyn, p.20
[49] McGuire, p.3
[50] McGuire, p.13
[51] McGuire, p.13

to focusing only and primarily on the accounts of official religious spokespeople or on academic theologians. I do in fact interview fourteen Welsh Church leaders as part of this research to understand their theology on healing and to investigate what they say about a healing miracle, compared to what is written in the official church texts. However, my primary focus is on the so-called 'ordinary people'. Thus, by mirroring McGuire's focus on 'ordinary people', as opposed to on official spokespersons, this research was able to provide a grounded picture of contemporary Christianity in order to analyse the reports of healing in Wales and what 'ordinary' charismatic Christians said when they spoke about their experience of that reported healing miracle. To summarise therefore, this research built upon the framework of lived religion and its prioritisation of experience to investigate if there was healing occurring and what people were saying when they discussed their experience of a healing miracle in Wales. Crucial to this research and prioritising individuals' experience was the collection of data in the form of narratives.

Selection of a Narrative Method

In order to discover how people in Wales talked about their experience of healing miracles, this research collected narratives from those reporting healing miracles, as its main tool of investigation. The best way to collect data on the reported healings across Wales was through a narrative method. This is because my main aim was to examine what people are saying about their experience of a healing miracle. A narrative, therefore, allows an individual to express without questions, interruption, or persuasion, what happened in their reported experience of a healing miracle, as will be explored in more detail below.

Social science researchers, Bob Matthews and Liz Ross, call narratives

> socially constructed stories. A narrative is the depiction of a sequence of past events as they appear in present time to the narrator, after they have been processed, analysed and constructed into stories.[52]

Likewise, by collecting data on healing in narrative form, the healing narratives also contained a sequence of events which was then consciously or subconsciously processed, analysed and delivered in story form as a complete event. This description of an occasion that an individual constructed from their experience of a healing miracle provided data on what people talk about when they describe this reported experience.

Popularisation of a Narrative Method

Narrative methods have become increasingly popular within the humanities and social sciences, although this has not always been the case. David Maines, expert in sociology and narrative, argues for a narrative sociology in his article 'Narrative's Moment and Sociology's Phenomena: Toward a Narrative Sociology.' He says that, 'being so quick to jump directly to the data, primarily for purposes of testing theories and propositions, sociologists by and large have ignored or buried in disciplinary myths the communication processes that are both substance and media.'[53] Due to a scepticism on the part of Enlightenment philosophers such as John Locke, David Hume, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Thomas Hobbes and Jeremy Bentham towards narratives and experience as imprecise, ambiguous, evocative and metaphorical, they were not considered valuable data for a long time.[54] Maines argues however that the work of William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki provided a turning point for this train of thought.

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[52] Bob Matthews, and Liz Ross, *Research Methods. A Practical Guide for the Social Sciences* (Longman; 01 edition, 2010), p.265
[53] David R. Maines, 'Narrative's Moment and Sociology's Phenomena: Toward a Narrative Sociology', *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1, (1993) 17-38 (Taylor & Francis, Ltd, 1993), (p.18)
[54] Maines, p.19

Thomas and Znaniecki, in their research on *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America (1918-20),* used narratives as a form of data. 800 pages of their 2200-page, five volume monograph were in the form of letters, biographies, and other narrative documents.[55] This generated much debate and prompted a turn towards the use of narrative data and experience. Maines notes 'it is doubtful that Thomas and Znaniecki would have developed a narrative sociology even if they had that as a goal, which they did not' and therefore in his paper, he builds upon their foundational work to express the usefulness of narrative as a form of data. [56] He explains,

> Narratives are socially organized phenomena, containing characters, plots, and temporal ordering which can be systematically described. The researcher, who is also the storyteller and narrative analyst, is responsible for the story structure by locating central themes, sequencing life events, and organizing the time span.[57]

Maines' narrative sociology was helpful when conducting this research because he unpacks a clear rationale for why narratives are key to understanding an individual's experience. This rationale included a ten-point list of why narrative is crucial; with points of particular importance to this study being,

> 'Since all socialised humans are storytellers, they are always in a potential story-telling situation', 'all narratives are potentially rational accounts', 'all social science data are already interpreted data; the uninterpreted datum does not exist', 'all sociological facts are narrated facts insofar they have been processed through some form of story structure that renders events as factual', 'the act of data collection is an act of entering respondents' lives that are partly formed by still unfolding stories', 'sociology can only be a science of interpretations.'[58]

These points are important because it provides a defence for why this method of collecting narratives does not need to be scientific or uninterpreted data. Since all data is

[55] Maines, p.19
[56] Maines, p.20
[57] Maines, p.17-38
[58] Maines, p.21-22

interpreted, there is no delusion of trying to gather unbiased and uninterpreted data. Collecting narratives of charismatic Christians' healing miracle reports allows the crucial questions of this study to be answered. As Maines argues, all individuals are storytellers and thus by exploring the method of individuals telling their healing stories, what is important to the individual and their experience is what will emerge from the narrative. The narrative will provide a personal insight into the reported phenomenon which no other method could provide as effectively. This is one of the main reasons this investigation chose to use narratives as a method of data collection, because it allows the participant to explore what they think is important when talking about a healing miracle and thus, the question of what people say when they talk about a healing miracle can be answered.

Types of Narrative

There are many different types of narratives. This research collected both oral and written narratives. Descriptions of experience can appear in many different forms. Roland Barthes and Lionel Duisit in their 'On Narrative and Narratives' comment that,

> there are countless forms of narrative in the world…among the vehicles of narrative are articulated language, whether oral or written, pictures, still or moving, gestures… narrative is present in myth, legend, fables, tales, short stories… it is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; indeed narrative starts with the very history of mankind.[59]

The written narratives collected came from mainly charismatic Christians in Wales who wrote down their experience of a healing miracle on a questionnaire. The advantage of the written narratives is that the data consisted of narratives with minimum interference

[59] Roland Barthes, and Lionel Duisit, 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative', *New Literary History* Vol. 6, No. 2 (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p.237

and no interruptions. They were entirely the narrator's story and conveyed what they considered to be important.

The second method of healing narratives collected were oral narratives from face-to-face interviews with church leaders. The advantage of these interviews was that the participant explained more with an active listening ear. As well as asking the church leader's theology on healing, I, the interviewer asked if they have been physically healed themselves. This also allowed the church leader to describe their experience of a healing miracle in an authentic manner, including the details that they deemed important to talk about.

An example of other research which also used oral and written narratives to investigate individual experience are coming-out narratives. Coming-out narratives proved beneficial in providing a similar framework for conducting narrative-based research in Wales.

Coming-Out Narratives

Narratives have been a tool for investigation for many different types of research. One area of research which was particularly helpful when considering narratives for collecting data on healing was within the subject of queer theology. In queer theology, many researchers have made use of narratives as a research method to investigate the personal experience of coming-out. My research methodology therefore also employed techniques and insights from those who have researched coming-out narratives.

A coming-out narrative is the story told from an individual who has been through the process of coming-out by telling others about their sexual identification. Annamarie Jagose argues that coming-out and sharing a disclosure narrative is considered an

essential act to becoming gay.[60] She says, 'Gay liberationists promoted the coming-out narrative- an unambiguous and public declaration of one's homosexuality- as a potent means of sociological transformation.'[61]

The major similarity of a coming-out narrative and a healing narrative is the desired aim of the research to take individual's experience seriously enough to investigate that experience as a phenomenon in and of itself. When collecting, organising and analysing coming-out narratives, one is not trying to prove if that individual is gay or not, but instead it is a matter of analysing the sequence of events, major themes, thoughts and happenings of that coming-out process. Likewise, with a healing narrative, this project's aim was not to attempt to prove if an individual had been healed or not. Instead, the purpose of the investigation was to collect and analyse the data of the reported healing miracle to discover the sequence of events, major themes, thoughts and happening of that experience of healing for the individual. By investigating this and what people say when the talk about a healing miracle, we then learn about a phenomenon in contemporary spirituality.

Marni Alyson Brown in her, 'Coming-out Narratives: Realities of Intersectionality', also collected written narratives from self-identified lesbians and gay men living in Atlanta, New York, and Miami to investigate what happens and what people spoke about when they come out. When discussing her methodology, she argues,

> narrative analysis is not about proving a point or argument. Narrative analysis differs from other qualitative methodologies by focusing on how an individual retells their lived experiences using their own sense of reality and language.

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[60] Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory, An Introduction* (Melbourne University Press, 1996), p.38
[61] Jagose, p.38

> Narrative sharing reveals an understanding of self, others, and situations, all critical to action and interactions.[62]

Therefore, through using written narratives as the main source of data, individuals' experience takes priority over proving a point. This means that what is expressed in that written narrative is what the individual deems important and thus, crucial data for understanding what people talk about when they discuss an experience.

Moreover, Brown comments that, 'the participants in this dissertation research do not represent larger society' as 'that is not the goal of a qualitative methodology or narrative analysis.'[63] Like Brown's, this research was not designed to be representative of Christianity as a whole across Wales, but instead the research specially targeted those who believe themselves to be healed in order to collect their healing narrative. This research, therefore, did not limit the study to finding a representative audience because the aim was not to discover specifically how many individuals were claiming to be healed or what Christianity looks like across the whole of Wales, but instead to discover what this sample of charismatic Christians were discussing when they spoke about their experience of that reported healing miracle.

A further coming-out researcher is Deborah Chirrey who in, ''I Hereby Come Out': What Sort of Speech Act is Coming Out?', examined the process of a coming-out narrative in verbal form.[64] She explains that 'the process of coming-out linguistically as

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[62] Marni A. Brown, *Coming Out Narratives: Realities of Intersectionality* (Georgia State University 2011), p.56

[63] Brown, p.2

[64] Chirrey's research was especially helpful when considering gathering data through the face-to-face church leader interviews. As this was in the form of oral data, her emphasis on a locutionary speech act helped me to also be aware of the extent to which the church leaders' experience and theology might influence their audience within their church as well as myself as the listening researcher.

a lesbian or as a gay man is occasionally referred to as a performative speech act.' [65] She explains that 'revelation and disclosure involve more than merely asserting belief. They present to the hearer the new, gay or lesbian subject of the speaker. In so doing they have the potential force of altering reality of both the speaker and the listener.[66] In this example we see the importance of the act of speaking itself in the narrator's journey. In the case of the coming out narratives, these allow the speaker to clarify their position, to express who they are and their personal experience. Likewise, with the healing narratives, the speaker expresses something that has happened to them and their experience of it. In both cases- the act of narrating, that is the act of talking about the experience is crucial to the story itself. Therefore, with both a coming-out speech act and a healing narrative, the 'speakers are not only using language to create a new facet of the self's identity but, in addition, are altering reality for the self and altering reality for others.'[67] Chirrey in fact acknowledges this similarity between Christianity and a coming-out speech act in her article. Although she does not reference healing narratives, she makes the comparison between a sexual identity coming-out speech act and 'coming-out' as a born-again Christian. She maintains,

> There are other discourses of disclosure that have a good deal in common with coming out […] For example, individuals who convert to a particular religion will use locutionary acts in order to construct a new spiritual identity for themselves and to integrate that identity into their lives and into the lives of their friends and acquaintances. Evangelical Christian movements encourage individuals to invite Christ into their hearts through prayer and to initiate a new facet of identity: that of born-again Christian. This could be analysed along similar lines to a coming-out locution. Similarly, the tradition of testifying or witnessing to that experience before others can be viewed as another performative act. In this case the testifier is reconstructing the born-again self and his/ her altered social reality, and may be

[65] Deborah A. Chirrey, ''I Hearby Come out': What sort of speech act is coming out?', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7/1, (2003) 24-37, (p.24)
[66] Chirrey, p.29-30
[67] Chirrey, p.25

> attempting to alter the social reality of the listeners by introducing them to a version of the world in which a spiritual life is not only possible but of primary importance. In this respect, the performative acts are very similar in type to those involved in coming out as gay or lesbian.[68]

Thus, a coming-out narrative and a healing narrative are both perlocutionary speech acts. They tell a story in and of themselves but also mutually welcome a response from the listener. Therefore, this work on coming-out narratives helped this study to broaden its research methods and analysis by following the similar method of collecting narratives. Not only was the data analysed to discover what people said about their healing experience, but the implications and consequences of the told healing narratives were also considered.

Ultimately, the comparison between a coming-out narrative and a healing narrative is useful for this research project because it highlights the importance of the individual's experience. Again, with both a coming-out narrative and healing narrative, the aim is not to prove if that individual is necessarily telling the truth – if they really were sick needing healing, or if they really were gay, wanting to come 'come out'. Instead, the aim is to take seriously their experience and understand the consequences of the experience on the individual.

Part 2. **Research Methods: Narratives and Interviews**

The second part of this chapter will examine the research methods chosen to investigate healing miracles in Wales. It will consider the chosen research methods of questionnaires and face-to-face interviews to gather the healing narratives. It will also discuss sampling methods and will explore individual and church participant sampling through NWC. It

[68] Chirrey, p.34-35

will explain the reason for selecting the churches chosen to be researched and how participants were approached to be involved in the study. It will discuss the method of using NWC as the main 'gatekeeper' and will cover questions on ethics, consent and anonymity.

Researcher Bias and Gatekeepers

When conducting research, it is crucial to clarify one's own epistemological standpoint. Although this research adopted a notion of neutrality approach, like that of Ninian Smart, towards those researched and their experience, as a researcher I know I cannot claim 'neutrality and ideological or political innocence.'[69] As Chryssides and Geaves note in their *The Study of Religion*, 'the researcher can never be objective just as there is a rejection of the idea that there is an objective reality or 'truth' about a phenomenon.'[70]

Therefore, as a Welsh Christian within a charismatic church, who has experienced physical healing personally, witnessed others being physically healed and prayed for people to be physically healed, my role as the researcher was one of high involvement and personal interest in this topic. As the aim of the research is not to prove or disprove healings but instead to analyse what people are saying about them, my standpoint did not cause significant complications with collecting this data. Instead, the aim was to collect and analyse narratives to discover how people spoke about a healing miracle. In fact, during the research in many ways my own religious involvement was beneficial. In Chryssides' words,

> researching one's own religion may also afford the advantage of having greater access to gatekeepers and gate openers, particularly if the researcher holds some

[69] Smart in Chryssides, p.226-7
[70] Chryssides and Geaves, p.233

> office within his community. Belonging to the religious community that one is researching also means that there are few issues in relation to the limits of participation.[71]

Through living, working and attending a church in Wales I have built up many contacts with church leaders across Wales. This means that I have established trust with key 'gatekeepers' for the research and therefore had access to a large amount of people who were reporting that they were being physically healed. This helped when choosing a location to research healing miracles because I had anecdotally received reports of people claiming to have experience a healing miracle. As I had connection with these communities, I had a basic understanding of what was going on and therefore wanted to investigate further. Moreover, as an insider I was able to invite participants to the research as someone whom they could trust and as one who does not intend to disprove their narrative. Therefore, participants trusted me and were able to feel more comfortable to be honest and open.[72]

Orsi found similar benefits of researching with an insider perspective when he investigated the Italian Harlem in New York. He writes that he set out to research 'history' but quickly became disorientated when he found himself travelling with people from New York City's outer boroughs, talking with people who lived in East Harlem, stopping by families' homes to chat, eating and drinking with them, sharing cigars with Mount Carmel's Pastor and being invited into serious conversations about things that mattered to people.[73] As Orsi's research continued however, having these close connections and

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[71] Chryssides and Geaves, p.83

[72] I am aware that some of the participants who took part in the research would have some personal connections with me as a researcher, especially those who attend the same local Church that I attend. Therefore, the risk of interviewer bias was limited by choosing a sample of churches outside of my local church and city.

[73] Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, p.xlii

building friendships with those in the community of East Harlem allowed him an insider's perspective which gave a deeper understanding to his research. He discovered that, 'I was learning as much from how people were talking to me as from what they were telling me, as much from what was going on around the stories as from the stories themselves.'[74] He summarises his perspective on this topic explaining that,

> Ethnographers and the people they live and study among are alike involved in these processes of interpreting, arguing, communicating, and understanding. Scholars of culture step into these rounds, attend to them, and contribute to them as they in turn struggle to understand other people and cultures, to understand themselves in relation to other people, and to communicate what they know and feel. This realisation drew me across the distance I had established between myself and the people I was talking to and began the process of liberating me at last to be present in East Harlem.[75]

Similarly, to Orsi's research then, I was also able to use my unique positioning as a researcher to enhance this project by gaining trust with key gatekeepers which led to fewer limitations with participants sharing their healing narratives.

Questionnaires

To address the question of how charismatic Christians in Wales talk about their experience of a healing miracle, the aim of this investigation was to collect as many healing narratives as possible during a given time frame. Distributing and collecting questionnaires was the method chosen for collecting these healing narratives. Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison comment that the advantage of using questionnaires is that 'they can be cheap, reliable, valid, quick and easy to complete.'[76]

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[74] Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street, p.*xxix
[75] Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street,* p.xliv
[76] Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, Keith Morrison, *Research Methods in Education* (Routledge; 7th edition, 2011), p.471

This was the case and resulted in over 600 narratives being collected in a couple of months.

However, as with many methods of research, there was an initial struggle to get responses. Cohen, Manion and Morrison advise researchers to 'be satisfied if you receive a 50 per cent response to the questionnaire (a very much lower response rate is probably going to be the case).'[77] This method relied on the church leaders who had been interviewed to distribute the questionnaires. Although this worked in some churches, in others the response rate was very low. Therefore, in order to attain the highest possible response rate, the method of 'self-administered questionnaires in the presence of the researcher' was used for the rest of the churches.[78] This ensured a faster response rate, and the questionnaires were completed rapidly and on one occasion with any queries or uncertainties being addressed immediately.[79] Where self-administering questionnaires was not available, an electronic version of the questionnaire was emailed out and returned via email. This method also proved very useful, especially for those who might not have attended a Sunday service on that particular day, but still had a healing narrative to share.

The questionnaire began with questions of personal information because I wanted to be able to compare the data and assess whether there was any correlation between age, gender, ethnicity, and church denomination, with those who were reporting healing and those praying for healing.[80] The main emphasis of the questions in the survey consisted of asking when the individual believed themselves to be healed and if it was a full healing

[77] Cohen, Manion and Morrison, p.501
[78] Cohen, Manion and Morrison, p.502
[79] Cohen, Manion and Morrison, p.502
[80] Please see Appendix 3 for full questionnaire.

that they experienced. This gave basic data on the healing miracle which had been reported. Further questions included enquiring whether the individual had ever prayed for someone else to be healed and how often they might do this. This question allowed an exploration of the two-way phenomenon of healing miracles in Wales, as some may not have been healed themselves but may have prayed for others to be healed. These questions were quick and easy to answer ensuring a higher response rate on questionnaire completion. Although the questions do not provide in-depth data on healing miracles themselves, they provided basic information which could be compared across all questionnaires across Wales. It is the final statement on the questionnaire which was crucial to collecting the healing narratives.

To address the question of how charismatic Christians spoke about their healing experience, the questionnaire finished with a request to encourage the participant to share their healing narrative. The request said: 'Please now share more details of your healing story in the box below.' Below was a large empty text box titled 'healing story' where the participant was free to write anything that they believed important to be shared with regard to their healing story. It was a deliberately open rather than specific and detailed question in order to ensure the individual would not be influenced as to what they should enter in that healing story box. Instead, the research collected data from an individual who had the freedom to express whatever they felt important to record about their healing story. Questionnaires were the most suitable method to collect healing narratives from those who reported that they had been healed in Wales. The healing narratives recorded on these questionnaires formed the main data set used to investigate the question of how people talked about their experience of a healing miracle.

Interviews

To address the question of how charismatic Christians talked about their experience of a healing miracle, this research also conducted face-to-face interviews with fourteen church leaders across Wales who were reporting that they were seeing healing miracles in their local churches.

The reason this research investigated the church leaders' opinion on healing miracles was to discover if there was a correlation between what was said in an average congregational member's healing narrative and what was being officially taught by that church leadership. The type of interview which was conducted was a semi-structured interview using an 'interview guide approach'. This means 'topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; interviewer decided sequence and working of questions in the course of the interview.'[81] The strengths of this approach were that 'the outline increased the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent […] (and) interviews remain fairly conversational and situational.'[82] This meant data could be gathered on what the church leader believed to be important in regards to what happens in a healing miracle and if there are any consequences for their own personal faith or the faiths of those in their congregation. The interview included 'the topics and questions given, but the questions are open-ended and the wording and sequence may be tailored to each individual interviewee and the responses given, with prompts and probes.'[83] This allowed freedom to ask specific questions on healing whilst giving the participant the opportunity to speak

[81] Cohen, Manion and Morrison, p.510
[82] Cohen, Manion and Morrison, p.510
[83] Cohen, Manion and Morrison, p.511

freely. Leading questions were avoided by minimising prompts and probes to a simple, 'please would you tell me more about that?' The interview consisted of myself, the researcher, asking the church leader specific questions but then leaving them to answer uninterrupted.

One of the key questions asked in the interview was, 'What is your theological view on healing?' and 'Have you ever taught on healing and what did you teach?' [84] These questions helped address the question of how people speak about healing miracles because the answer firstly demonstrated their own way of discussing healing miracles but in addition, revealed whether they taught a method of healing to their congregations. It allowed me to observe if there was any correlation between the leaders' theology and their method of healing with the method provided in the content of the healing narrative from their congregation. Further important questions included 'Have you ever been physically healed? (What happened?)' and 'Have you ever prayed for others to be healed? (What happened?).' These questions not only provided further healing miracle narratives but highlighted if there was a correlation between the church leader's personal experience with the way they might teach about healing and how that was then reflected in their congregation's personal experiences of healing miracles. The interview finished by asking the church leader their opinion on the extent and nature of healing miracles by asking, 'How often do you see or hear of healing reported in your church?' and 'Describe a typical healing which might take place in a church service.' This gave a greater insight into the perspective and opinion of someone who is currently within and experiencing the

[84] Please see Appendix 2 to view the full interview questions.

reported phenomenon as well as addressing the question directly of how an individual speaks about their experience of a healing miracle.

The method of interviews was therefore chosen because it added detail to the data; it highlighted whether the church leaders' teaching and their emphasis on healing miracles had any correlation to the content of the research narratives gathered from that church's congregation. It must be noted that after the research was conducted, the church leader interviews were not drawn upon in a substantial way. This was because, as stated above, the research's main aim was to discover what the ordinary, congregational member might say when they talk about a healing miracle. The church leader interviews were designed to provide foundational information on the congregational members church's theology on healing. As the next chapter shows, the analysis of the church leader interview in comparison with the congregational members healing narrative demonstrated no significant difference. The congregational members theology and emphasis on healing more often than not, matched the church leader's theology and emphasis on healing. Therefore, the church leader interviews are only drawn upon within the findings chapter to occasionally show this point; that charismatic Christians healing narratives are in line with what their church leader teaches on healing at their local church. Therefore, the interviews were a helpful practise in this research, providing background information, however they are not significantly drawn upon within the analysis.

Sampling

The main aim of the research was to collect as many healing narratives as possible in order to investigate the question of how people talk about their experience of a healing miracle. Therefore, when discussing how to collect healing narratives it was important to

consider how to collect as many narratives as possible, whilst keeping the investigation feasible and therefore a sample was used. The sample consisted of charismatic Churches within the NWC network.[85] It was from these churches that the narratives were collected, and church leaders were chosen to conduct interviews.

The aim of the research was not to measure exactly how many people in Wales were reporting they were being healed. Neither was the aim to be representative of Wales or even local churches in Wales. Rather, it was to investigate how people talk about their experience of healing and therefore, the research investigated only the churches who were reporting that they were experiencing this phenomenon of healing. The role of NWC provided a pool of churches and charismatic Christians who claimed they were being healed or who were praying for others to be healed. This enabled the research to identify as many people as possible to gather data on what they were saying was occurring. For the purposes of this research, NWC granted access to their database consisting of 88 videos and 24 written accounts sent in to NWC of people sharing their healing stories.[86] These accounts were mostly recorded in churches across South Wales including Swansea, Cardiff and the Valleys, where healing was being reported. Thus, to ensure the investigation was feasible, Cardiff and the Valleys were the locations chosen for the questionnaires to be distributed and the interviews to take place.

NWC were invaluable in assisting with selecting a sample of church leaders from NWC churches in the South to interview. The face-to-face interviews were conducted

[85] New Wine Cymru is an inter-denominational organisation consisting of over 200 senior leaders and 651 Churches, (latest statistics collected 14/07/21), <https://newwinecymru.co.uk/> [accessed 20.06.21]
[86] These stories and statistics were not included in my final research numbers. The authors of these 88 accounts had granted permission for the narratives to be used as NWC saw fit, and therefore by granting me access did not breach GDPR data regulations.

with fourteen NWC church leaders in Cardiff and the Valleys. Avoiding Swansea due to research bias, these locations were chosen to incorporate both urban and rural settings. Although these locations were not representative of the whole of Wales, if healing was being reported in these locations then it might lead to further research on accounts of healing elsewhere across Wales. It must be noted that although only churches in South Wales was researched, as the research went on it was extended to include the entirety of Wales as when Christians across Wales began to hear of this study, many voluntarily sent in their own stories.

NWC is made up of many different types of churches from numerous denominations. However, this research project chose churches that considered themselves charismatic because they are the churches which would most likely see healing miracles, as the literature review clarified. Thus, by focusing on charismatic churches, I had the opportunity to collect as much data as possible without the fruitless activity of researching churches who do not report regular healing miracles. In Browns' *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, she suggests that divine healing singles out 'more so than any other factor […] as distinguishing Pentecostals and Charismatics from other Christians.'[87] Therefore, researching churches that considered themselves charismatic gave a better chance of discovering healing miracles and thus provided a larger amount of data. The term charismatic was chosen because it allowed this study to research any church which considered itself to be charismatic without being restricted to a specific denomination.

[87] CG. Brown, p.4

The study included churches who considered themselves, 'new church', 'Non-denominational' as well as those who were Anglican, Baptist and New Frontiers.[88]

Snowball Sampling

In addition to researching the chosen sample of fourteen churches, I also began a snowball sample. Through the NWC database, an email was sent out to every church explaining the research and requesting charismatic Christians to complete the online questionnaire and email it back. This allowed me to collect further narratives from individuals belonging to any church within Wales as opposed to just the fourteen churches. This led to more churches all across Wales hearing of the research, which in turn led to more individuals emailing their healing narratives. I thus combined the data in order to talk about healing miracles within Wales as a whole as opposed to just South Wales. I also attended two NWC conferences in South Wales and distributed questionnaires there. All this data added to the snowball sample of narratives collected. Although from different churches and Christian denominations, the narratives collected all came from churches affiliated with NWC and thus remained within the sample of the type of charismatic church I intended to research.

Pilot Study

This investigation checked the clarity of the questionnaire items and the interview questions through a pilot study. Jon Krosnick and Stanley Presser comment that 'the wording of questionnaires is of paramount importance and pre-testing is crucial to their

[88] See appendix 2 for a complete list of the churches researched and their denominations.

success.'[89] A pilot study therefore increases the 'reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire' for one is able to 'gain feedback on the questionnaire', 'eliminate ambiguities or difficulties in wording', 'to identify omissions and redundant and irrelevant items', 'to check the time taken to complete the questionnaire' and, 'to check whether the questionnaire is too long or too short, too easy or too difficult.'[90]

The questionnaire was piloted in my local church in Swansea: Cornerstone Church. As Cornerstone is the church I attend, it was easy to distribute the questionnaire as well as receive feedback on its items. This allowed formal and informal feedback which provided greater opportunity to perfect the questionnaire. The main feedback received was on structural layout of the questionnaire to make it more readable and user friendly. In addition, it was suggested that questions included a yes/no option for those who did not have a personal healing story but could still complete a questionnaire if they had prayed for someone else to be healed.

As a member of the leadership team of Cornerstone Church, it was not appropriate to pilot the church leader interview questions to my church leaders.[91] Instead, I interviewed a couple from the regional NWC Network leadership team, Geraint and Bethan, senior leaders of Church 15.[92] Church 15 is a NWC charismatic church in Llanelli and thus the same type of church and leaders with which the main interviews would take

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[89] Jon A. Krosnick, and Stanley Presser, in *Research Methods in Education*, ed.by Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, Keith Morrison, (Routledge; 7th edition, 2011), p.496
[90] Cohen, Manion and Morrison, p.496
[91] It is important to note that many of the NWC reports of healing are from Cornerstone Church Swansea which is the Church I attend. Although reporting a lot of healing miracles I have chosen not to interview the leaders of Cornerstone as it is the church of which I am a member. It would not be appropriate to research my own Church as my involvement may influence participants to exaggerate or answer in a particular way.
[92] I have employed pseudonyms for churches and their leaders for the purpose of anonymity.

place. During the pilot study I was able to identify which questions didn't work as well as I had hoped they would. I was also able to practise my interview style as the researcher. The major lesson I discovered was that Geraint and Bethan both seemed a little nervous at the onset of the interview. It was not until a few questions in did they begin to speak more freely about their experience on healing. From this observation I decided to introduce at least ten to fifteen minutes of casual conversation with the church leaders before I began and started recording the official interview. This introductory conversation was intended to help church leaders to relax into the interview. I also discovered that once the recording tape was switched off, they went on to discuss healing, their theology and church practice as well as personal stories for a further thirty minutes. For further interviews, I therefore ensured to have a notebook and pen on me in case this happened again. This situation happened numerous times, so when the audio recording was off, I made notes of what the leader said instead. Afterwards I showed them my notes and asked their permission to include those details in the interview data, to which all leaders agreed.

The final insight gleaned from the pilot study included learning where and when it was best to ask particular questions. I learnt that some questions were answered more comprehensively towards the end. I also learnt to refine a few of the questions; too many points to cover within one question meant not everything was touched upon. The pilot study provided the best sharpening experience for the interview questions and meant that the official fourteen interviews with the chosen sample leaders ran smoothly and allowing for as much data to be gathered as possible.

Ethics

At all times this research has adhered to the University of Chichester's ethics policy. At no point in the research did harm come to the researcher or those being researched. The investigation ensured that the church leader would be available for pastoral support in the very unlikely circumstance that a participant had an unknown vulnerability or was affected in any way by the research.

At all stages of the research, any participant, including the church leaders, all congregational members and those from the snowball sample, were all given consent forms which they signed and agreed to without any coercion and with the full knowledge that they could withdraw from the research at any moment.

Information Sheet and Consent Form

Before every stage of the research the participant was provided with oral and written information of the study as well as a consent form. The information sheet set out the study's purpose as well as what was required from the participant. Following GDPR regulations the information sheet stated in specific detail how an individual's data would be kept, how long it would be kept for and how it would be disposed of. It further explained the options for anonymity, data confidentiality and again clearly stated the rights of the individual regarding their involvement in the research, and most importantly, that taking part was voluntary.

If they did not want to take part, they did not have to give a reason and were put under no pressure to change their mind. They were informed that they could pull out of the interview or stop completing a questionnaire at any time and would also have up to one month to pull out of the study after the data had been collected. They were informed

that there would be no risk to them in participating in this study. In the unlikely circumstance that the study did cause any distress or anxiety, they were informed that their church leader would be on-hand to offer any immediate or follow-up support needed.

The consent form summarised the information sheet and provided a tick list for the participant to give their written consent to take part in the study. Anyone participating in any stage of the research had to give their full consent. Cohen, Manion and Morrison state that consent 'protects and respects the right of self-determination and places some of the responsibility on the participant should anything go wrong in the research.'[93] The research never forced nor coerced anybody into taking part but instead ensured that all individuals had a clear idea of what the research was about and what their data would be used for. Ed Diener and Rick Crandall define informed consent as 'those procedures for individuals to choose whether or not to participate in the research once they have been told what it is about and what it requires.'[94] They suggest four elements for the researcher to consider. Firstly, 'Competence'- 'that responsible, mature individuals will make correct decisions if they are given the relevant information', ensuring that researchers 'do not engage individuals incapable of making such decisions because of either immaturity or some form of impairment.'[95] Secondly, 'voluntarism'- 'ensuring that participants freely choose to take part (or not) in the research.'[96] Thirdly, 'full information'- 'that consent is fully informed, though in practise it is often impossible or even undesirable for researcher to inform participants on everything.'[97] Lastly, 'comprehension'- 'the fact that

[93] Cohen, Manion and Morrison, p.122
[94] Ed Diener, and Rick Crandall, in *Research Methods in Education*, ed.by Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, Keith Morrison (Routledge; 7th edition, 2011), p.122
[95] Diener and Crandall, p.122
[96] Diener and Crandall, p.122
[97] Diener and Crandall, p.122

participants fully understand the nature of the research project, even when procedures are complicated and entail risks.'[98] This investigation ensured that all four of these elements were put into practise when undertaking the research.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

This investigation ensured utmost respect to anonymity. This was done through pseudonyms for the individuals and the churches. Given that the aim of this research is to focus on what people say about healing miracles, it was unnecessary to include specific details of their age, gender, or ethnicity. This information was collected, and I make a general comment on it in my analysis. However, the description of an individual or any personal details do not need to be included when commenting on what they have said in their healing narrative. However, they cannot remain entirely anonymous as it is possible that someone might identify them through their healing narrative which they have given permission to be used.

Within sociological work it is common for people to use 'K anonymity' first introduced by Latanya Sweeney and Pierangela Samarati in order to protect privacy. In their 1998 article, 'Protecting Privacy when Disclosing Information: K-Anonymity and its Enforcement through Generalization and Suppression', Sweeney and Samarati say,

> shockingly, there remains a common incorrect belief that if the data looks anonymous, it is anonymous […] On the contrary, de-identifying data provides no guarantee of anonymity. Released information often contains other data, such as birth date, gender, and ZIP code, that in combination can be linked to publicly available information to re-identify individuals. [99]

[98] Diener and Crandall, p.122
[99] Latanya Sweeney and Pierangela Samarati, *Protecting Privacy when Disclosing Information: K-Anonymity and its Enforcement through Generalization and Suppression* (1998), <https://dataprivacylab.org/dataprivacy/projects/kanonymity/paper3.pdf> [accessed 17/04/2020]

They continue to introduce k-anonymity as a method to keep personal information about individuals private through supressing data in tables of minimal generalisation. Therefore, although pseudonymisation does not remove all identifying information from the data, it reduces the likelihood of a dataset to be matched to the original identity of the individual. Thus, where the participant can remain anonymous, they will, and the only identifiable data will be their healing story. This method worked well for researcher Mike Savage who in his study of four residential areas in and around Manchester (UK), he and his colleagues identify the areas but give pseudonyms to the 182 research participants drawn from those four areas.[100] Building on this approach, I assigned all individuals who gave a healing narrative a pseudonym.

Moreover, I made sure the churches were also given pseudonyms. The 'tradition of giving communities pseudonyms is well-established' and thus to ensure individuals anonymity was kept, the churches researched as well as the individuals were pseudonymised.[101] Furthermore, because questionnaires were chosen as the method for collecting the narratives, when completing the questionnaire, any persons who wanted to remain anonymous did not need to fill out any personal details that they felt might be exposing. Therefore, they could exclude their name, age, gender, church and location and just complete the healing story text box. The only disadvantage of this was when analysing general trends across locations, ages or genders, the data was not as complete as it could have been. Despite this disadvantage, most individuals did complete the personal data due to being assured they would be anonymous. Additionally, the

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[100] Mike Savage, Gaynor Bagnall, Brian J. Longhurst, *Globalisation and Belonging*, (SAGE Publications Ltd; First edition, 2004)
[101] Graham Crow, and Catherine Maclean, 'Community' in *Social Divisions*, ed. By Geoff Payne (Basingstoke: Palgrave second edition, 2006), p.200

questionnaires still allowed an individual to complete their healing narrative without exposing personal data and it was the healing narrative which was the most important part of the data.

The questionnaire also provided another tick-box with an opt-out option if the participant did not want their information discussed or written up in the final research analysis. In this case, their narrative was simply included in the final statistics, but their healing story was not disclosed. The questionnaire did not ask any questions about one's health issues as they might be identifiable from this. Instead, they had the freedom to write whatever they felt comfortable with sharing in their narrative. This meant that at the questionnaire stage there was complete anonymity. The participant was made aware that they may be identifiable through the disclosure of any further details that they provide within their healing narrative. As well as providing a pseudonym, the participant was also given the option to inform me if they would rather this information not be disclosed.

Part 3: Analysis of the Healing Narratives

A structural analysis method was chosen to analyse the healing narratives collected. Data analysis is a crucial component to the research. Cohen, Manion and Morrison explain that, 'qualitative data analysis concerns how we move from the data to understanding, explaining and interpreting the phenomena in question.'[102] Therefore, it was important to be aware during this stage of the research that 'qualitative data analysis focuses on in-depth, context- specific, rich, subjective data and meanings by the participants in the situation' and thus 'qualitative data analysis is often heavy on interpretation, and there

[102] Cohen, Manion and Morrison, p.643

are often multiple interpretations to be made.'[103] The type of analysis method chosen would therefore have a significant impact on how the data was interpreted. This is especially true when analysing narratives about individuals' experience. Pickering notes,

> experience is never pure or transparent. If experience is to be used to provide evidence and gain insight into everyday cultures, and if ideas about it are to inform research practice and modes of analysis within cultural studies, what is gathered in the name of experience cannot be presented as raw data or regarded as offering a direct expression of people's participation in different cultural fields.[104]

Pickering goes on to explain that 'lived experience' involves interpretation and interpretation depends on how experience is expressed, conceptualised, given identity and its quality of narrative.[105] Thus, choosing a structural analysis method allowed the freedom to examine and portray the stories that individuals created, within the boundaries of a suitable method. This helped the analysis stage remain focused on the specific question of how charismatic Christians talk about their experience of a healing miracle.

Structural Analysis

As the narratives were collected, it became clear that there was a similar pattern and structure appearing. Therefore, an initial structural analysis of the data was carried out. Catherine Kohler Riessman is a key writer on narrative analysis. In her study, 'Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences', she presents a research case study on divorce for which she used a structural analysis method, and says the benefit of structural analysis was that she was able to,

> analyse linguistic choices- *how* the speakers composed their tales and was not limited to only *what* they said about the relationship between infidelity and

[103] Cohen, Manion and Morrison, p.643
[104] Michael Pickering, and Gabriele Griffin, *Research Methods for Cultural Studies* (Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p.19
[105] Pickering and Griffin, p.19

> divorce. If I had relied only on thematic coding of the stories, and ignored sequence and narrative structure, I would have missed important differences in meaning of the "same" event for different participants.[106]

Similarly, across the healing narratives it was clear that individuals were not only speaking about *what* happened when they were healed, but the structure to their story revealed *how* they believed themselves to be healed.[107]

Significant contributors to the growth of the use of narratives as a form of analysis are William Labov and Joshua Waletzky. These sociologists were amongst the first to explore how structures within a 'story' could be systematically subjected to formal analysis. They identified in their 1972 article, 'Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience' that 'narrative accounts' were structured around six elements.[108] They argue that it is these six key elements that define the boundaries of a narrative whilst also providing the key features to use as tools of analysis for the narrative itself. I built upon the 'Labovian Structural Analysis Method' for analysis of the healing narratives collected.[109] This is because the Labovian method focuses on the structure within the narrative without losing the key elements of the narrative itself. This was key for the research because it helped keep the analysis on how people express their experience through structure whilst not neglecting any common themes or important details which might also emerge within an individual's narrative.

Labov and Waletzky, in their 1967 article on 'Oral Narratives of Personal Experience' comment that they were 'concerned primarily with the characteristics of

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[106] Catherine K. Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*, (Sage Publications, 2008), p.90
[107] Riessman's use of italics
[108] William Labov, and Joshua Waletzky, *Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience,* <https://www.ling.upenn.edu/~rnoyer/courses/103/narrative.pdf> [accessed 28/11/18], p.12-41
[109]Labov and Waletzky, p.12-41

narrative itself.'[110] Furthermore, Riessman explains that 'Labov wanted to identify sequences and structural parts of the narrative that recur across stories about experiences.'[111] Riessman summarises his approach explaining,

> A "fully formed" narrative includes six elements; an abstract (summary and/or "point" of the story); orientation (to time, place, characters, situations); complicating action (the event sequence, or plot, usually with a crisis or turning point); evaluation (where the narrator steps back from the action to comment on meaning and communicate emotions- the "soul" of the narrative); resolution (the outcome of the plot); and a coda (ending the story and bringing action back to the present). Not all stories contain all elements, and they occur in varying sequences.[112]

This six-element approach is helpful because, 'structural narrative analysis provides tools for investigators who want to interrogate how participants use speech to construct themselves and their histories.'[113]

Like Labov, Patricia Ewick and Susan Silbey also have a particular structure for analysis and comment on the qualifying nature of a narrative. They undertook a major study on law breaking using the method of collecting narratives because they wanted to present individuals' experience and discover common themes. They believe,

> to qualify as narrative, a particular communication must minimally have three elements or features. First, a narrative relies on some form of selective appropriation of past events and characters. Second, within a narrative the events must be temporally ordered […] Third, the events and characters must be related to one another and to some overarching structure.[114]

Ewick and Silbey's work provides another structure for what constitutes a narrative. Without these three key elements a narrative could be anything and everything, confusing

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[110] Labov and Waletzky, p.13
[111] Riessman, p.84
[112] Riessman, p.84
[113] Riessman, p.103
[114] Patricia Ewick, and Susan S. Silbey, 'Subversive Stories and Hegemonic Tales: Toward a Sociology of Narrative', *Law & Society Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (1995), pp. 197-226, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3054010. [Accessed: 15-11-2018], p.200

the research and its aim. Building on this research therefore, a healing narrative collected must have an appropriate selection of past events such as what the physical issue or pain was and what led to the healing taking place. Secondly, the narrative must be temporarily ordered in time. Therefore, it must be obvious in the narrative that the healing followed prayer for healing as opposed to a general recovery years later. Lastly, these two must relate, for example, the narrative given must be about the sequence and events of the healing miracle for that individual. The boundaries allow the narratives collected to be focused, which is key for the analysis stage to answer the question of the nature of healing miracles. The clearer the focus of the narrative, the more visible the style and significance of experiences of healing miracles will be.

When analysing the healing narratives, I therefore built upon the work of Ewick, Silbey and Labov. I took Labov's six elements; abstract (A), orientation (O), complicating action (CA), evaluation (E), resolution of results (R), and coda (C) and created my own codes with the structure that I could see was forming. The structure I developed was; Pain (Pa), Prayer (Pr), Healing event (He), Response (Re). Across every narrative collected, these codes were applied, and every section of the narratives was written into tables according to this structure.[115] Through this method of ordering the narrative and coding each clause, evidence for the research question of how people talk about their healing experience, began to emerge. I discovered that contained within the structure of every healing narrative were four key components. The four components are: nature of the ailment, location of the healing event, the person who prayed for the healing, and the language used to describe the experience. Through methodological innovation in relation

[115] See Appendix 4 for example of structed healing narratives.

to the Grove Booklets, I used these four components to construct three categories. I constructed a 'traditional' category which consisted of all four components describing a healing miracle in a way which aligned with the Grove booklets. I called the second category, 'everyday' because it was these four components which were the opposite of how a healing is described in the Grove booklets and instead features an 'everyday' description, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Lastly, the third category created was 'mixed' which included components which were both traditional and 'everyday'.

The structural analysis proved the best method when trying to order, organise and discover common patterns amongst the narratives collected.[116] These four components which when combined created three categories reflected what Labov's model of analysis aims to achieve. Labov's model is not about 'reconstructing the told in the telling' or 'making a telling from the told', but is an approach that is event-centred, viewing the narrative as a representation of events, and text-centred by embodying personal experience narrative as text.'[117] This was crucial to my own research which is event focused, (the healing), but also aimed to explore the personal experience of the individual told within their narrative through the text and structures presented by the individual. Glenn Thomas Mason provides a helpful example of the application of the Labovian structural analysis method, which was influential in how this research carried out its analysis. Mason's research on *'Coming Out' Stories: A Narrative Study Into 'Coming*

[116] Although a thematic analysis method could have been chosen and would have also allowed themes to be discovered throughout the healing narratives, the main limitation of this method was that by focusing on major themes, the important information and individuality of the narratives could have been missed.
[117] Glenn T. Mason, *'Coming Out' Stories: A Narrative Study into 'Coming Out' as Lesbian and Gay to the Family*, A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology (DCounsPsych) in the Faculty of Humanities 2016, <https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/files/57430848/FULL_TEXT.PDF>[accessed 18/11/18], p.61

Out' as Lesbian and Gay to the Family, was beneficial to this project because he adopts this structural method in his work and uses it in the same manner adopted by my research in order to analyse healing narratives.

Using a snowball sample, Mason recruited 16-25-year-olds who self-identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other and conducted telephone and face-to-face interviews. His overall aim was to 'collect 'coming out' stories and to explore how both parents and adolescents structured their accounts.'[118] Mason comments that he considered using a thematic analysis but 'believed this would have limitations in that it would move [him] away from the individual stories by developing themes across accounts.'[119] He explains, 'I needed to adopt a method that enabled me to […] go 'deeper' into the story that was being narrated to me' and therefore, because structural analysis 'views language (discourse) as a form of social interaction', Mason was able to go beyond the story itself and 'the language that was used to uncover the social reality that underlay participant accounts.'[120] Thus, he was not focused on a single common theme but looked beyond the story to the language and structure to see if anything emerged.

Drawing from these studies, I also allowed for significant themes to emerge as well as discovering how charismatic Christians expressed that experience through the language and structure used in the narrative. Mason's research clearly highlights the advantages of using a structural analysis method because, as he puts it, 'my selection of a structural analysis enabled me to look at each story independently, but also provided the opportunity to compare across participant accounts, should I wish, without losing

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[118] Mason, p.74
[119] Mason, p.74
[120] Mason, p.55

individual meaning.'[121] Furthermore, in his research Mason discovered that the 'structural analysis showed that participants did not restrict their stories to a single event of 'coming out' to the family. They spoke about 'coming out' experiences based around numerous chronological events across their life to date and included evaluations of these.'[122] Implementing a structural analysis ensured that this was not missed. Similarly, with healing narratives, a healing story was not always one individual event but included stories from childhood, doctor reports, and events across a lifetime. This method, therefore, contributed positively toward the research analysis for like Mason reflects, it allowed me as a researcher to 'dig deeper' and facilitate 'insight into a range of meanings, but also keeping me aligned closely to the participant's narrative account.'[123]

To summarise, an examination of the advantages and possible limitations of the studies and examples discussed above informed the decision to use a structural analysis method to analyse the data collected in this research project. The structural analysis method allowed an examination of the data which did not neglect its structure and format. Moreover, it provided a method for which the key components and major themes of the narratives could be exposed. It was through examining these themes and the structure of the healing narratives collected, that this analysis was able to discover how people talk about their experience of a healing miracle in contemporary Christianity across Wales.

In conclusion, the three parts of this chapter: defining the aim of the research, choosing the research methods of questionnaires and interviews, and selecting a structural

[121] Mason, p.74
[122] Mason, p.8
[123] Mason, p.75

analysis method, best served this investigation in addressing the question of how people in Wales talk about their experience of a healing miracle.

Building upon the work of sociologists like McGuire and Orsi was crucial for this research in understanding the importance of experience for people's lived religion. It provided the framework upon which this research was built. Furthermore, it is through experience that people's religiosity can be examined and where individuals' lived religion can be explored on their own terms.

By implementing the method of collecting healing narratives through questionnaires, individuals' first-hand experiences were recorded. Similarly, to the coming-out narratives within queer theology which prioritise individual experience, it is the healing narratives which reveal how people talk about their experience of healing, what happened and the idiosyncrasies of a healing miracle in their church, community and life. Additionally, it is these narratives which provided the individual with the freedom to express what they considered important to talk about regarding their healing experience. The face-to-face interviews also brought a meaningful perspective on how some church leaders spoke about a healing miracle in comparison to official church doctrine. Furthermore, the interviews provided extra data and provided an insight into whether the theology and teaching of church leaders had any effect on the individual in their church who reported experiencing a healing miracle.

Researching charismatic Christians in charismatic NWC churches in the Valleys and Cardiff was critical for collecting the largest sample possible on healing miracles. This is because, as the literature review has shown, healing miracles would be most likely to be found in charismatic Churches. Furthermore, as NWC is a network which teaches

and encourages Churches to practice the ministry of healing, then the churches connected to this network would also be most likely to be reporting healing miracles and thus able to provide a larger sample of narratives. This sample provided enough data to analyse how people across Wales talked about the reports of healing miracles.

Lastly, it was through a structural analysis method that this data was analysed to determine how people talk about their experience by looking for common themes across the structure of the narratives, without neglecting the individual stories and experiences which were key to the individuals and their lived religiosity.

Healing is a vast topic and one with many different angles and arguments. This research is not designed to prove or disprove healing miracles or even to gather a representative sample of the Christian Church and their involvement in these reported miracles. Instead, considering the recent number of charismatics in Wales reporting healing miracles, this research's main aim was to analyse reports of healing miracles occurring in charismatic churches in Wales. I aimed to take the experience and lived religion of charismatic Christians reporting these miracles seriously, thus answering the question of how people in Wales talk about their experience of a healing miracle.

Chapter 3. How Charismatic Christians in Wales Talk About Their Experience of Healing Miracles

Introduction

This chapter examines the ways in which charismatic Christians in Wales talk about their experience of healing miracles. Many people who shared their healing narratives talk about their experience of a healing miracle in what I go on to describe as an 'everyday' way.

The chapter begins with a description of how the narratives gathered illuminate experiences of healing in Wales. Moreover, this first section will present the statistical data of those who gave a healing narrative, which shows that the healing narratives are not affected by age, gender or location. To make sense of these narratives and how the people researched understand these experiences, the second section will demonstrate that the narratives tend to follow a four-part structure. As this chapter will demonstrate, every healing narrative has four main parts: pain, prayer, healing event, and response. Finally, the last section of this chapter will analyse what this study has identified as the four key components in these healing narratives. The four components are: nature of the ailment, location of the healing event, the person who prayed for the healing, and the language used to describe the experience. These four components within the narratives will be compared to show how people talk about their experience of a healing miracle. In addition, the narratives have been broadly divided and compared across three categories: traditional, everyday and mixed. The narratives have been separated using these four components because it provides a structure to compare the narratives across all three categories. It is this comparison of the four components across the three categories which

demonstrates the ways in which people narrate and describe their healing experiences. As this chapter will show, when examining the healing narratives given by people in Wales, most talk about their healing experience in an everyday way, as something that often happens outside of a formal religious context and which is described in a colloquial, informal manner with little reference to transcendence, mystery or the supernatural.

The Healing Narratives in Wales

This section establishes that the first finding is that healing is being reported amongst some charismatic Christians in Wales today. Within six months, 605 narratives were collected from individuals reporting that they had experienced a healing miracle in Wales. The volume of narratives collected from the sample of 14 charismatic churches in South Wales, alongside the snowball sample across the whole of Wales, was striking and highlights the multitude of people claiming to have experiences of this nature.

Raw data for this analysis comes from questionnaires distributed among 14 churches in South Wales as well as data from interviews with the church leaders of those fourteen chosen churches. Over 10% of every church congregation, regardless of size, indicated that they had experienced a healing miracle. 179 questionnaires of personal healing narratives were collected from the fourteen chosen sample churches. Furthermore, as churches across Wales heard about this research, they began voluntarily sending their stories of healing miracles. Thus, a snowball sample began which included questionnaires from anyone in Wales who had a Christian healing story to share. This included charismatic Christians reporting being healed themselves or documenting times when they had prayed for others to be healed and seen healing occur. Questionnaires were also distributed at two Christian conferences in South Wales. The questionnaires collected

from these two events went into the snowball sample. In total, there were 252 questionnaires from the snowball sample across Wales, resulting in a total of 431 questionnaires. However, out of the 431 people who completed a questionnaire, 79 of those reported multiple healing stories in their survey. This meant that a total of 605 healing narratives were collated.

The sample church questionnaires and the snowball sample followed the same structure and content. The only difference between the two is that the chosen church questionnaires can be compared to their own church leader's interview and theology of healing. Otherwise, the questionnaires from both samples are identical in terms of content and structure. Moreover, the few narratives collected from North and Mid Wales (from churches within the NWC network) mirrored those from the South. All the narratives were collated to maximise the amount of data available to effectively examine the way in which people in Wales talk about their healing miracle experiences. Therefore, having collected these wider narratives also, I will use 'Wales' in this thesis, rather than just South Wales to describe how people talk about a healing miracle.

Furthermore, since the deadline for collecting healing narratives has passed, numerous churches and charismatic Christians have called or emailed to report a personal healing, and church ministers have made contact to report further members of their congregation receiving a healing miracle. Moreover, a healing ministry charity in England heard about this research and sent their records of over 800 reports of healing miracles in the last 20 years. These extra narratives have not been included in this data as there needed to be a set sample in order to accurately and reliably analyse set data to determine how people talk about a healing miracle. However, these anecdotal reports, in addition to the 605 healing narratives collected and analysed, is a striking finding and

indicates that a significant number of individuals are reporting that they are experiencing healing miracles in Wales today. Thus, this qualifies as a religious phenomenon that requires study.

Personal Data

The personal data collected implied that age and gender made little to no difference to healing miracles being reported. Furthermore, the charismatic Christians reporting their experiences of healing were mostly reporting that they are Welsh and lived in locations all over Wales, despite the sample being taken in the South. In addition, as the statistics below reveal, the data also showed that most people reported a full healing and prayed for others to be healed.

Out of the 431 questionnaires collected, 239 were female and 187 were male (five unanswered re: gender) implying that there is not a significantly higher trend towards either gender being more likely to be healed. Although there were slightly more females who gave a healing narrative, this isn't surprising when considering the church statistics provided by the church leader; across all fourteen churches researched there was always a higher number of women than men who were members of that church congregation. Thus, these numbers show an almost equal split between male and females who reported being physically healed.

Regarding age, there was a slight trend towards the older age group reporting a higher number of healing miracles, but across the age demographic there was not a significant difference. There were 62 questionnaires from those in the age group of 18-30, 56 questionnaires from those in the age group of 31-40, 60 in the age group of 41-50, 72 in the age group of 51-60, 100 in the age group of 61-70, and 47 in the 71+ age group

(34 unanswered re: age). There was little difference in how many questionnaires were collected across all the other age ranges and not a significant difference in numbers, suggesting that age made little difference to if or how healings were reported.

The participants were also asked to fill in their ethnicity. Most people (251) identified with Welsh British, 35 selected 'other' and 132 were unanswered, pointing towards a Welsh majority. Furthermore, participants were also asked to provide the location of their church. 408 questionnaires gave a location of South Wales. That included South East Wales, West Wales, and the Valleys. 18 were from North Wales and five were from Mid Wales. However, as this study was directed at South Wales and was therefore a targeted study, this does not necessarily indicate there is more healing in the South. A future study could research North Wales to discover if there is a similar phenomenon in this area. Ultimately, healing miracles were reported in different locations across the South and therefore location did not appear to affect whether an individual reported a healing miracle or not.

Moreover, the questionnaire provided an option for the participant to include their churches name or denomination. For the chosen sample study, all participants were from that particular charismatic church. However, this option was particularly helpful for those who completed a questionnaire as a part of the snowball sample, as otherwise there would have been no knowing what type of church that they reported healing from. Out of the 605 healing narratives collected, 483 stated that they were from a charismatic church, 61 did not complete an answer and 61 answered 'other'. Out of those who did not say or said 'other', many of those narratives were written by non-church going participants.

The questionnaire asked participants to state when they experienced physical healing. 59 reported in the last six months, 47 reported in the last year, 59 reported two-three years, 49 reported four-five years, and 147 reported five+ years (70 unanswered). Again, there was not a significant difference in when the reported healings took place, apart from the five+ years category which predictably would be higher as it represents healing narratives over an accumulation of time. Moreover, out of the 431 questionnaires collected, 331 ticked that they believed they experienced a full healing and 41 said they received a partial healing (59 were unanswered). Participants were then asked if their healing had any effect on their personal faith. 330 said yes and 29 said no (72 were unanswered). Out of the 29 that ticked 'no' many wrote next to their answer 'I had a strong faith already'. Lastly, participants were asked if they had prayed for others to be healed and if yes, to indicate how often. 372 answered yes, they do pray for others to be healed and seven answered no (52 were unanswered). Out of the 372 who ticked yes, they do pray for others, 73 said they prayed weekly, 15 said they prayed monthly and 277 said they prayed when the need arises (66 were unanswered).

The statistics give a further insight into the healing miracles being researched. They show that healing miracles are being reported by all ages, gender, denominations, and areas of the country. The statistics further highlight that age, gender or location in Wales have little to no effect on the structure of the narrative written or its content. All narratives produced the same commonalties, regardless of who wrote them.

To summarise, when investigating the way in which people talk about their experience of a healing miracle in Wales, the first point was to establish there were healings being reported. This was confirmed through the number of narratives collected. The personal data also highlights that age, gender and location in Wales had no impact

on the extent or nature of the healings being reported. The rest of this chapter will therefore be devoted to understanding how people talk about this reported experience of a healing miracle.

Structure of a Healing Narrative

The first major finding from this research is a common narrative structure. When individuals talked about their experience of being healed, the majority of narratives described the event following the same four-part structure. The narratives collected had a wide range of details and different lengths in the written responses. Some narratives contained a few sentences with minimal information, however most of the narratives included detailed descriptions of ailments, healing prayers and responses, written over 1-2 A4 pages. The longest narrative was 24 pages long, including a PowerPoint with photographs and hospital scans. Despite the differing ranges of lengths and detailed responses, all narratives consisted of the same four-part structure. This study has categorised this four-part structure as: pain, prayer, healing event, response.

The first part of the structure, 'pain' includes a description from the narrator of the ailment they were suffering from. This detail consists of where in the body the individual described their ailments, sickness, or pain, what their ailment was, how long they had been in pain for, what the doctors said about the condition and the effect it was having on their life and those around them. The narrator either describes a major condition, for example, life-threatening or life-altering, or a minor condition which was not life-threatening but caused daily pain. James from Church 10 is an example of someone who had a major condition. He says, 'I had a malignant melanoma – lump on face. Successful op but cancer had spread - liver, kidney, lungs and behind the eyes.'

Another example includes Gabriella from Church 8 who says, 'I was diagnosed with a condition called Ankylosing Spondylitis - uncurable and degenerative - attacks bones and joints of body.' Alternatively, the narrator describes a minor condition. For example, Lucy from Church 6 started her narrative by explaining she had 'terrible toothache' and Isabel, also from Church 6, began her narrative by explaining 'I am a nurse and suffer with joint pain - knees and feet.' It made no difference if the condition was major or minor, the narratives always contained a description of some kind, indicating what the condition was.

The second part of the structure is 'prayer'. The narrators nearly always mention that they were prayed for, and then often include the details surrounding the event that included prayer. They typically mention who it was that prayed for them, for example, someone in their church, a friend, a church minister, or themselves. Often, they record the location at which they were prayed for, such as at a church, in a house, on the street, in a supermarket. They also describe the type of prayer. Prayers can be long or short and include actions like the anointing of oil or the laying on of hands. For example, Tracy (Church 4) said 'mum prayed over me' and Grayson (Church 4) said 'friends at church prayed'. Tiffany (Church 5) says that she was 'prayed for at Church', Patricia (Church 13) says she was prayed for at a 'healing service', whereas Daniel (Church 1) comments that he was 'prayed for in Costa'. Ffion (Church 9) talks about friends 'laying their hands on my feet' and Oliver (Church 1) said, 'the elders prayed for me and anointed me with oil'. There are many different types of explanations, but all contained an element of discussing how, who or where they were prayed for.

The third part of the structure is the 'healing event' where the individual describes what they felt to be the process of being healed. They would comment that the pain had

completely gone, or after more prayer, gone. Sometimes it was the next day or week that they woke up feeling better. Many describe the actual event itself by commenting on a physical or spiritual reaction to the prayer such as a burning feeling in the location where the pain was. For example, Gabriella (Church 8) describes that, 'as they prayed it felt like I had a warm hand touch each of my joints. Felt like a length of time but was instant. I was aware of the relief of pain. I was then able to stand, jump out of bed, touch my toes, put hands flat on floor, this came as a surprise and I had no pain and full range of movement'. Skyla (Church 12) also describes praying for a friend at Church and narrates, 'She suddenly said 'oh' and felt something move within her. After a few more 'ohs' the back straightened and the constant pain in her back was healed. And the pain in her stomach has been healed as well'. There was always a comment on the details of the healing event no matter how different it was for each individual.

The last section of the four-part structure is 'response'. The narrator finishes their account of their healing experience by making a comment on how they felt after being healed and if it had any effect on themselves, their personal faith, or the people around them. Many ended their report with a prayer toward God such as 'thank you/ praise God'. For example, Ruth (Church 2) says, 'Fantastic to be pain free for 20 years. I feel like jumping to the moon and back. It's fantastic thank you Lord.' Juliana (Church 10) finishes her narrative by explaining, 'That episode changed my life, my faith. I hungered after God in a new way, exploring all that he is. I still hunger today. Jesus became my best friend in a different way. It was all real and practical not just academic'. The responses were often very varied yet frequently recorded in individuals' narratives.

Healing: A Four-Part Narrative Structure

Out of the 431 people who completed a questionnaire, 343 used this four-part structure when describing their healing narrative (80%). The other 20% still used this same structure, but only parts of it. 71 participants used only three parts of the structure (17%), seven narratives used only two parts of the structure (2%) and one narrative used only one part of the structure (1%).

An example of an individual using all four parts of this structure is Alexander from Church 1. He begins his healing narrative with the first part of the structure; describing the pain. He says, 'I had really bad back aches, it was like it for months. I couldn't bend properly; I couldn't lift heavy stuff. So, it was really bad back ache, it was really, really bad.' He then moves on to the second part of the structure by commenting on prayer saying, 'two of the brothers prayed'. He uses the third part of the structure which describes the healing event when he says, 'So, the brothers prayed for me and God instantly healed it. Instantly, on the spot, it was like a burning sensation, done its [sic] done. Jesus healed me straight away.' Finally, he finishes his narrative using the last part of the structure 'response'. He comments, 'No pain since. I couldn't bend and touch my toes before. Now I can touch my toes. I'm feeling really really good! God is good.' This is a typical example of the healing narratives gathered which makes use of all four parts of the structure.

A further example of an individual using all four elements of the structure is Tiffany from Church 5. Firstly, she talks about her pain saying, 'I had a painful back and leg after lifting my elderly mother'. She then comments on who prayed saying, 'David (husband) and I prayed. Watching God channel on tv, hands up worshiping'. Next, she

comments on the healing event as she says, ‘the power of God went through me and the pain went’. Lastly her response to this was that it ‘Encouraged me and as I shared this story it has encouraged others to believe for healing too.’

One final example of an individual telling their healing story using this four-part structure is Christopher from Church 6. He comments on his pain, describing that, ‘my feet were crushed from a bucket loader whilst landscaping a garden. Friends called an ambulance […] I was passing in and out of consciousness, my feet were red swollen, and my bones broken’. He then uses the second part of the structure to explain the prayer stage, ‘Whilst the parents called an ambulance their kids gathered around me age nine, seven, five and began to pray a simple prayer “Jesus please heal [Christopher’s] feet.”’ Thirdly, he talks about the healing experience by saying, ‘Immediately I began to feel the pain subside and a warm, tingling sensation in my feet and legs. Moments later the redness and swelling vanished, and there was no more pain or appearance of broken bones.’ Lastly, his response to this healing was to comment that,

> Within an hour I was able to walk around without any discomfort and was able to drive home without any evidence of the incident at all. Needless to say, an ambulance was not necessary and thanks to the faith of those children, their Christian parenting, and the healing power of Jesus Christ.

80% of the healing narratives collected spoke about their healing experience in this way, using all four parts of this structure to describe the event.

Regarding the rest of the data collected - the narrators still followed this same structure but often missed out one or two parts of the four. 17% of the narratives spoke about their healing using this structure but only commented on three elements of the structure. The three elements of the structure used varied from narrative to narrative.

An example of someone who describes the healing miracle using just three parts of the structure is Wyatt from Church 2. Wyatt comments on the pain saying, 'I've actually got a broken ankle, I've got ten plates, ten screws, and 39 staples holding my ankle together. I lost my whole ankle bone outside my foot from an injury off a ladder two years ago. Couldn't hardly walk, can't run, my life was changing.' He then skips the second part of the structure (prayer) entirely and moves onto the third part, 'healing event' where he says, 'Tonight I've been healed.' There is no mention of prayer, who prayed or how he was physically healed. He then uses the fourth part of the structure, 'response', when he says, 'I can now actually walk properly, I've got no pain whatsoever and hopefully I won't have any more for the rest of my life, so thank God for it.' Which part of the structure an individual may miss out when telling their healing narrative varies considerably. Wyatt missed out the second element, prayer, however others miss out a different element.

For example, Grayson from Church 4 misses out the third stage 'healing event'. He comments on the pain; 'Knee pain, regular pain and prevented activities', he mentions the second structure, prayer, when he says, 'Friends at church prayed.' However, he then misses out the third element; 'healing event' when he skips straight to the fourth element 'response' saying, 'Since then I have been able to do activities, I'm active in the cricket club where I hopefully carry out some sort of witness.' It might be an assumption from the storyteller that the reader knows they were healed and therefore they do not comment on the healing event, or an assumption that prayer was involved. Regardless, their narrative still follows the same structure, but often just one element is skipped over.

Lastly, 2% of narratives only referenced two elements of the four-part structure. For example, one anonymous individual completed a form in Church 12 and simply

writes, ‘I have prayed for a homeless man to be healed, a woman with poor eyesight and a young girl who was paralysed.’ The individual neither comments on what happened during the healing event, how he prayed, or their response. All he comments on is the ailments and the fact that he prayed. Elias from Church 14 also tells his healing narrative in a similar fashion. He does not comment on whether he has been healed himself but writes that he has prayed for others, saying ‘Prayed for numerous people - healed leg pain, back pain etc. Prayed for many addicted to heroin who have not suffered the withdrawals.’ Again, he does not give many details on the prayer or healing event, but simply comments on the ailments of those that he prayed for and states that they were healed. It is possible that these two narratives only use part of the structure because they are telling someone else’s healing story and therefore may not know all the details for a full account.

However, examples of someone who talks about their own healing (as opposed to praying for someone else) but only uses two parts of the structure can also be found amongst the data. Beverly from Church 6 comments on her pain saying, ‘Torn the muscles and tendons on the medial side of my right leg. Experience pain in movement’. She then skips the second element of prayer and the third element of the healing event and simply says in her response, ‘no pain now.’ Similarly, Lauren from Church 6 also describes her pain, ‘Elbow tendon very sore for over a month’ and then skips the next two elements of the structure and says in her response, ‘now completely healed.’ This study found that it was very rare that individuals used such a sparse structure when talking about their healing experience.

Church Teaching and Healing Narratives

As well as individuals using this common four-part structure, the church leader interviews also pointed towards a known structure when describing a healing miracle. Kieron, senior leader of Church 9 said, 'I don't think there's an algorithm in terms of absolute, this is how you do it but I certainly think there's structure'. Suzie from Church 3 listed a one to ten check list on how she prays for the sick including points from the four-part structure such as, 'I say in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command this pain to go', ask them 'on a scale of one-ten has the pain changed at all? […] If they say no, then we pray again'. Similarly, David from Church 2 listed his usual method of praying for the sick, describing the method like this:

> we'd find out exactly what it is that we're dealing with, what the condition is if they know it and then, we might put our hand on that particular area or just on the shoulder perhaps. We would speak in the name of Jesus into that particular condition. Say it was shoulder pain, we would speak into that condition and say, 'In the name of Jesus, we command that pain to go', and then we'd just wait a while and let God do something with that pain. Then we would probably ask them on a scale of 0-10 how is that pain now? In fact, we might even ask them before we start how the pain is and then after we've prayed on a scale of 0-10 how is the pain now? That then gives us an indication, of what God is doing. If the pain is going down, we pray again for the pain to go down further and persevere possibly until the pain has gone completely. That's how we would do it.

All fourteen of the church leaders interviewed gave a comparable answer to David's method, thus revealing an apparent common structure that church leaders are using when they talk about healing miracles. Therefore, it was perhaps not surprising to find this structure reflected in the narratives of these church leaders' congregations. Although the narratives did not contain all points that the church leaders gave, they still reflected the general teaching of the church leaders' structure, including four main points: pain, prayer, healing event and response. However, the narratives from the snowball sample who might not have encountered the teaching in the churches that the sample narratives were

gathered from, also used this four-part structure. This would indicate that there is a commonly used four-part structure that charismatic Christians use when describing their experience of a healing miracle in Wales today.

Overall, the structural analysis of the data has shown a pattern in individuals' healing stories. The way people talk about their healing miracle has a clear structure consisting of four key elements. This includes commenting on pain, prayer, the healing event, and a response to that healing. Although some narratives only use part of the structure, the narrative they tell is still within that structure and does not stray from it. The statistical data shows that 414 people out of 431 collected used either three or four parts of the four-part structure. A major finding of my research, then, is that across contemporary Wales, charismatic Christians are reporting that healing miracles are taking place and they are using a strikingly similar structure to narrate these experiences of healing.

Everyday Miracles

The second major finding from this research is that healing miracles are talked about in an 'everyday' manner. As discussed in the first chapter, the literature suggests a division between the expected view of a healing miracle found in official Anglican teaching, and what actually happens day to day within a local church practising healing and is found in the 'how to' books written by contemporary church leaders. Partly, my research shows what would be expected, that some of the healing narratives collected pointed towards charismatic Christians claiming they have been healed through traditional methods found in the healing literature. However, the data collected has revealed another version of healing being reported across Wales, which does not involve church buildings, church

ministers or official healing methods. It is this category that is arguably more noteworthy and surprising, where miracles are not 'traditional miracles' but can be understood as 'everyday miracles'.[1] Out of the healing narratives collected, 78% confirm the assertion that there is a non-traditional version of healing taking place across Wales. This version of healing is what this study describes as 'everyday miracles'.

'Everyday miracles' describes the phenomenon which is narrated in the accounts about healing that were collected as part of this study. The 'miracles' part indicates that the narratives are still reporting a religious and supernatural encounter resulting in the belief that they have been physically healed. The 'everyday' part is the manner in which people across Wales have been healed and how they describe this experience. For the everyday miracles, the experience of healing does not take place within a church or with a church minister involved. Furthermore, charismatic Christians talk about their experience of a healing miracle in an everyday way, using informal and colloquial language, and often humorous metaphors to describe what happened.

The Categorisation of Healing Narratives

I have organised the healing narratives into three different categories. This is because the narratives have three distinguishing features which define the type of narrative they are. I have grouped them into traditional narratives, everyday narratives or mixed narratives.

[1] As discussed in the previous chapter, Robert Orsi makes use of this term 'everyday miracles' in his chapter within David Hall, *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, (Princeton University Press; First Edition, 1997). However, Orsi does not define the term and neither does he develop it or use it regularly throughout his chapter. Instead, he simply uses it as the title for his chapter which then goes on to define and make use of the term 'lived religion' to describe his research. Therefore, I am using 'everyday miracles' on my own terms and will develop my definition of the phrase throughout the chapter, as opposed to using Orsi's use of the term.

The first category is the 'traditional healing narratives': that which could be expected to happen during a healing experience according to the Anglican literature on healing.[2] Of all the narratives, 22% fit into this category. The term 'traditional' has been used to categorise healing narratives that adhere tightly to the descriptions used within this established guide of traditional healing methods. For example, as I discussed in my literature review, the Grove booklets are an Anglican resource aimed at equipping ministers and lay leaders in the practises of Christian ministry. The Grove booklet *Worship, Anglican Healing* by Carolyn Headley gives practical instruction on how to heal the sick in a Christian context. This booklet not only provides insight into perceived traditional views of healing, but it also reveals the practical and perhaps more commonly used methods of a healing miracle. Therefore, this Grove booklet on Anglican healing has been used as the reference point when categorising healing narratives. As found in this Anglican guidance, for instance, the individual would be healed by the minister, typically of a serious condition, inside a church building and would use traditional language to describe a spiritual or physical reaction that they might have had. These elements of a traditional healing miracle have all been taken from the Grove booklets on healing ministry which will be discussed in depth below.

The second category is the 'everyday healing narratives'. 33% of narratives fit into this category. The term everyday can be used in many ways and can have multiple meanings and connotations. In my usage of the term, 'everyday' refers to what is ordinary, normal, informal, and common. The term is used to denote a contrast to official Church teaching

[2] The Anglican literature was chosen to categorise the healing narratives as opposed to the Catholic or Pentecostal literature. This is because the Anglican literature has the most up to date guidance, as well as official Church teaching, compared to the Pentecostal literature, which is mostly anecdotal stories and healing illustrations.

and doctrine whose language and conception of healing might be considered more specialized, extraordinary, unusual, unique, and exclusive. The use of the word ordinary is an accepted term in practical theology and has become a popular term for describing an individual's everyday religion. This is reflected throughout Jeff Astley's *Exploring Ordinary Theology*. Astley describes ordinary theology as 'the theological beliefs and processes of believing that find expression in the God-talk of those believers who have received no scholarly theological education.'[3] The 605 narratives collected describing a healing miracle is exactly that: the God talk of those who have received no scholarly theological education.

Where this research differs to Astley's is that the narratives collected are far more than simply ordinary because they have been articulated by ordinary people, instead they are ordinary and everyday because of their content. The way people talk about their experience of a healing miracle is a way that does not conform to the traditional church terms and topics about healing miracles, instead using rather informal, colloquial, and often humorous metaphors to describe what happened. When researching how 'ordinary people' read the Bible compared to academics, Andrew Village 'reminds us to be cautious with the term 'ordinary' lest we imagine it means simple, mundane or uninteresting'.[4] Likewise, it can reasonably be argued that the healing narratives collected in this study are far from boring or uninteresting, and instead their ordinariness is quite striking and reveals the everyday nature of the healing miracles being reported across Wales.

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[3] Jeff Astley, 'The Analysis, Investigation and Application of Ordinary Theology' in *Exploring Ordinary Theology: Everyday Christian Believing and the Church* ed. By Revd Leslie J Francis, et al, (Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), p.1

[4] Andrew Village, 'The Bible and Ordinary Readers' in *Exploring Ordinary Theology: Everyday Christian Believing and the Church* ed. By Revd Leslie J Francis, et al (Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), p.127

It is the content of the narratives which reveal their 'everydayness' as individuals discuss common colds being healed and comparing their sickness and healing experience to common household appliances. Furthermore, there is a 'relational everydayness' featured in the narratives where individuals talk about being healed by their spouse, who is an 'ordinary' person in their life as opposed to naming, for example, a spiritual healer that they might visit for healing. Similarly, the narratives feature a 'spacial everydayness' where they report being healed in nail salons and coffee shops, as opposed to religious locations or near to particular holy shrines. The narratives in this category are everyday because of the 'normal' ailments people believed themselves to be healed from, the 'ordinary' people who prayed for them, the 'regular' locations they were healed at, and the 'common' language used to describe their healing experience. In other words, these elements are deemed ordinary because they are outside of a church context and are all opposite to the 'traditional' elements found in the Church literature.

The third category is 'mixed healing narratives' which are narratives that carry elements of both the traditional and the everyday. 45% of narratives fit into this category. This category shows that no one narrative approach can be described as universal or 'one size fits all'. As Jeff Astley puts it in in his study *Exploring Ordinary Theology*, there is 'no one ordinary theology, as there is no one academic (or, in truth, normative ecclesiastical) theology. As the church is both many and varied, we should expect variety in ordinary Christian theology.'[5] Similarly, there is no one 'ordinary healing narrative'. This last category demonstrates that the healing narratives can be considered both orthodox because of tradition and yet ordinary in their language use and integration into

[5] Astley, p.3

everyday life. Although they are mostly everyday, they still carry an element of traditional healing narratives and therefore are categorised as mixed healing narratives.

The rest of this chapter will expand upon these three categories to demonstrate the way in which those who gave a healing narrative in Wales spoke about their healing experience. Beginning with the traditional, the narratives which one would expect to find will be categorised first. The second category discussed will be the 'everyday narratives'. They are ordered in this way to contrast the traditional with the everyday miracles. Lastly, the 'mixed narratives' will be examined.

The Four Components of a Healing Narrative

Within all three categories are four components which can be used to compare the narratives across the categories. These components are, location of healing (church context/non-church context), who healed (minister/not a minister), nature of the ailment (serious/non-serious), language used (traditional/everyday).

The location of healing refers to where the individual described their healing experience taking place. If they talk about a church building, a church home group meeting, a healing café, or a church project, then they will be categorised as being within the church context and therefore placed in the traditional narrative category. Anything outside of a church building or church-run activity will be considered as a non-church context. This means a participant might report that they were healed in a supermarket, a coffee shop or their house, showing the spacial 'everydayness' of their narrative. If this is described in the narrative, then it will be categorised in the everyday component.

'The healer' refers to the person that prayed for the individual to be healed. If the narrative mentions a church leader, minister, lay minister, or small group leader, they will

be categorised into ‘minister’, which is the traditional component. If it is anyone outside of those, such as a friend, a family member, or a colleague, they will be put into the ‘not a minister’ category, which will be considered the everyday component.

‘Nature of the ailment’ refers to how serious the individual describes their ailment as. If the individual describes any serious or life-threatening or life-altering conditions such as cancer, amputation or heart disease, they will go into the serious category, categorised as a traditional component. For those who mention conditions which are minor and could otherwise clear up with time or medication, a condition which although might be painful to live with day to day, it is not life-threatening, then they will go into the non-serious category and will therefore be placed within the everyday component.

Lastly, the language that charismatic Christians use to describe their experience will be considered. Traditional language will refer to those who describe methods which are set out in the traditional Anglican literature on healing. This includes methods of healing such as ‘the laying on of hands’ and using ‘anointing oil’. It will also include descriptions of religious experiences such as a physical or spiritual reaction to the healing miracle. Everyday language will refer to those individuals who do not describe their experience in these official terms. Instead, they describe their healing experience in a colloquial, conversational, and informal manner, where descriptions are frequently casual or non-religious, making use of familiar phrases, similes and metaphors taken from everyday life. Using these four components, this study will clearly place each narrative into one of the three categories.

Traditional Healing Narratives

In traditional healing narratives, all four components describe the healing experience in a traditional way. This would mean a participant (1) was healed in a church context, (2) was prayed for by a minister, (3) was healed from a serious ailment, and (4) used traditional language to describe their healing experience. These narratives are deemed traditional because the descriptions of how the participant was healed can all be found within traditional Anglican literature on healing. 22% of healing narratives were placed within this traditional category.

Location of Healing

67% of people commented on the location of their healing miracle. Half of these, as may be expected, spoke about their healing experience taking place within a church context. Headley makes it clear that the ministry of healing is to take place in a church building and preferably during a church service. She says, 'preparation by those ministering begins well before the service in personal prayer, quiet openness to God's Spirit, and ensuring that they arrive without too many distractions or too much busyness in activity or thought.'[6] This indicates the assumption that healing would take place within a church service or context. Furthermore, she later lists advice on healing ministry for circumstances such as, 'Ministry within the context of holy communion, Ministry in the context of other services, Ministry within regular services,' again highlighting the traditional view that healing will take place during a service.[7] The only mention of healing

[6] Caroline Headley, *The Laying on of Hands and Anointing in Ministry for Wholeness and Healing* (Grove Booklets Ltd, 2002), p.17
[7] Headley, p.21

outside of a church service is when someone is too sick to attend a service and therefore the minister might perform 'ministry at home or hospital.'[8]

The narratives that have been placed in this traditional category therefore all describe their healing experience taking place within a church context. For many, they were healed at a church service or a special healing service at their local church. For example: 'In a Sunday meeting' (Jacob, Church 1), 'Attended healing service' (Dylan, Church 4), 'we prayed in church' (Tiffany, Church 5), 'went to church and got prayer' (Miranda, Church 6), 'prayed for at a meeting' (Shane, Church 5), 'During a healing service I received healing prayer' (Patricia, Church 13). For others, they do not mention a church service, but they do describe their healing experience as taking place within a church context such as, 'At homegroup' (Olive, Church 12), 'At a Roy Fields worship night at City Temple' (Jaxon, Church 6)[9], 'prayer meeting in bible week' (Betty, Church 1), 'prayer meeting on Tuesday' (Nancy, Church 1), 'At a healing café' (Joseph, Church 2), 'Came to a healing café' (Carter, Church 2), 'Attended healing café' (Dorothy, Church 3).

These narratives all describe a service or event which was hosted by a church with an aim to pray for and heal the sick. Therefore, the locations described in these narratives are deemed traditional, as it is expected that one might report a healing miracle within a church context designed to heal the sick.

[8] Headley, p.21
[9] City Temple Church is not this individuals Church, and neither is it's a Church which was within the chosen snowball sample to study.

The Healer

Whilst talking about their healing experience, 305 people documented the person that prayed for them during their healing experience. 14% of the narratives commented that it was an official church minister who prayed for them and 43% spoke about other church members praying for them.

Traditional approaches to healing ministry would assume that it is the official Church minister who prays for healing. Headley says, 'in a service there is an expectation that those ministering have the trust and authority of the church for this ministry, and they should therefore be at least locally approved and trained.'[10] She further comments that, 'anointing oil is administered, as in James, by the elders of the church gathered around the sick person.'[11] Although she doesn't explicitly say it is only the church minister who can pray for the sick, the entire booklet revolves around one central authoritative Church figure performing services and then praying for the sick. Furthermore, she does say 'in some churches the ministry has become such a natural and accepted part of church life that it is practised widely and by a large number of people. This is not how it had been envisaged officially because of the desire to ensure appropriate use and avoid abuse.'[12] This more than alludes to the official emphasis of healing ministry being intended for the officially trained minister.

This traditional method of praying for the sick by a minister was reflected in 14% of the narratives. For example, Jessica (Snowball Sample (SS)), who said, 'the minister

[10] Headley, p.18
[11] Headley, p.18
[12] Headley, p.19

prayed for me', Samuel (Church 1) who reports he was prayed for by 'the elders' and Emily (SS) says, 'I went straight to my pastor and asked the church to pray.'[13]

Although the healing ministry is officially designed to be performed by a minister, Headley does acknowledge lay ministers and the community in the church body who can also pray for the sick. She says, 'Representatives of the Church (can minister) - authority to minister can be delegated to those who share in the Church's leadership. Godly and spiritual men and women commissioned by the Bishop [...] would seem to equate closely with the elders in James.'[14] Again, although this hints that other church members might pray - they still must be commissioned by the bishop and therefore it does not give permission for just anyone to pray. This is perhaps a deliberate grey area about who can pray for the sick and this is most certainly reflected in the narratives.

43% of the narratives listed people in their church praying for them for healing such as, 'friends at church prayed' (Grayson, Church 4), 'homegroup prayed' (Olive, Church 12), 'a few people in church prayed for me' (Lily, SS), 'as a church we prayed' (Andrew, Church 7), 'Typed a prayer request on church Facebook group' (Anthony, Church 6). It was unclear whether these people listed were officially trained lay ministers, recognised in leadership and 'equated closely with the elders in James'. However, what was clear was that those praying were trusted charismatic Christians within a church context who prayed for their healing. Therefore, this study deemed it appropriate to assign these narratives to the traditional view that it was trusted fellow church attenders who prayed for healing for that individual.

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[13] SS= Snowball Sample
[14] Headley, p.29

Nature of the Ailment

Every individual began their healing narrative by commenting on what kind of pain or ailment they had in their body. 34% of people described receiving a healing miracle from a major health condition.

The Grove booklet series on healing does not comment on what type of ailment or how severe the ailment must be to receive a healing miracle. However, Headley does explain that the 'emphasis on anointing, involving laying on of hands, [was] used as preparation for death rather than for healing' and therefore healing became more associated with 'practices as extreme unction and conflated with the rites of penance and final communion (viaticum).'[15] The only other mention of what type of illness can be healed is in relation to using anointing oil as a method to heal the sick. Headley explains, 'It is seen as applicable to those with deep illnesses, or people who are organically 'sick' with their illness.'[16] Although this is how sacramental anointing developed historically, it has led to an association now with 'deep illness'. Therefore, in modern times, the focus of healing and the act of anointing oil would be on those with perhaps serious ailments, as opposed to those with minor ailments such as headaches or acne.

Due to the emphasis of the healing ministry being directed to those who have 'deep illnesses', and so need a healing miracle, it can be assumed that an individual is expected to have a severe ailment to require further help from the church. Furthermore, it might be assumed that the ailment or pain that the individual is suffering from is beyond medical care and thus requires something more, something drastic, something

[15] Headley, p.12
[16] Headley, p.18

unimaginable, such as divine intervention from a higher being - a miracle. Thus, any narrative which describes a life-threatening illness, or a seriously life-altering illness will be deemed as a major ailment and therefore traditional.

Out of the 431 questionnaires collected, 145 people (34%) did describe receiving a healing miracle from major health conditions such as incurable conditions, life-threatening diseases, dying family members or risk of turning off life support. Examples of major conditions being described include,

> Annabelle from Church 12: 'At 13 I was diagnosed with rare form of cancer. In hospital for 7 months - 5 operations, radiotherapy, bone transfer. Docs [sic] told me before my 15th birthday to go home - nothing they can do for me - cancer has spread to all my internal organs',
>
> Whitney, Church 12: '2016 I was diagnosed with Oesophageal cancer - 9 hr op. 2018 diagnosed cancerous mass in stomach - terminal. Chemo to give extra time but I gave it up because it made me feel worse. Wanted quality not quantity',
>
> Karen, Church 1: 'Surgery for problem in hip which went wrong. Left nerve damage in spine and down leg. Lots of pain killers, injections in spine and foot to try to relieve the pain',
>
> Michelle, Church 1: 'Cancer in bladder returned. I trusted Jesus to heal me. Went for chemo [sic] for 3 months. Bladder cancer dormant but still there. Bad news - now had bone cancer and no treatment for this',
>
> Adrian, Church 14: 'Pyloric stenosis as a baby. Narrowing of the stomach meaning projectile vomiting. Nearly died',
>
> Blake, SS: 'double pneumonia and sepsis and organ failure - nearly died',
>
> Tyler, SS: 'Blind',
>
> Reagan, SS: 'Baby died in the womb and no way to remove, poisoning the mother.'

All of these conditions were later reported as being totally healed. These example descriptions of major health conditions that are reported as being healed, is what might be expected from a healing story. Major life-threatening conditions which require more than medical intervention but a divine intervention too. 34% reported themselves miraculously healed from a major ailment such as these.

Language Used

Narrators in this category used traditional language to describe their healing experience. Traditional language includes talking about the religious actions that took place during their healing prayer such as the use of anointing oil and the laying on of hands, what was said in their healing prayer, such as the use of Jesus' name, and the reaction they had during the experience, such as spiritual or physical manifestations.

Traditional Language Describing Actions

40% (167 people) reported 'miraculous actions' within their healing experience. The two most common actions spoken about were the 'laying on of hands' and the use of 'anointing oil'. These are traditional phrases describing common Church practice, and charismatic Christians have referred to these when talking about their healing experience.

Headley references these two practices frequently throughout her teaching on how to minister to the sick. She explains how to perform this action saying, 'The laying on of hands involves placing hands on the head, or one hand on the head and the other on neck or shoulders, or a combination of these if two are ministering. The touch is light and should not feel like an oppressive pressure to the recipient.'[17]

The narratives also show charismatic Christians use the religious term, the 'laying on of hands' when talking about their healing experience. For example, Willow (SS) describes praying for a lady who had a bad knee saying, 'I laid hands on her knee and commanded the pain to go and it did'. Similarly, Zara (SS) tells a story about falling out of bed at the age of 12 causing a fracture in her right hand, meaning she could no longer

[17] Headley, p.17

play the piano. She says, 'after prayer and the laying on of hands, I was instantaneously healed and within a very short while was playing the church organ'. Bryson (SS) begins his story by talking about his amicable relationship with his ex-wife who he then goes on to pray for. He records,

> I asked her if I could pray for her, so with permission I placed my hand over her knee and commanded it to be healed in Jesus' name. She text me a few days later and said that she wanted to apologise because she hadn't let me know that that same day the pain had gone and she was walking fine. Within a few days the brace was taken off as it was no longer needed.

Additionally, Headley teaches on using anointing oil in the practice of praying for the sick explaining that,

> Many involved in the ministry hold anointing oil to be [...] a profound act, requiring thorough preparation with counselling and serious reflection and confession prior to ministry. It is seen as applicable to those with deep illnesses, or people who are organically 'sick' with their illness [...] Such anointing should be done in response to clear direction from the Lord that it is right to do so.[18]

Half of the narratives reflected this teaching and used the traditional phrase 'anointing oil' when describing how they were healed. For example, 'I was anointed [with oil] by brothers and sisters in church […] and then I was healed!' (Isaac, Church 5), and 'I decided that we would trust God. So, I anointed him with oil and commanded the cancer to die and it did.' (Maisie SS). Samuel (Church 1) had a condition where his whole body had gone numb, and doctors had told him that he would never receive feeling back. He describes the account of his healing with oil like so,

> So my elders laid hands on me and prayed for me, and anointed me in oil […] Then one day I was sitting there, it was the evening and we were watching the television […] All of a sudden I had this itch in my forehead […] So knowing that I can't really get there without pressing hard just to get rid of this itch which was driving me mad. I pressed hard and I went 'ah I felt that!' I said to my wife 'I felt that!' I went like that to my arms and thought that I could feel all of that. When it

[18] Headley, p.18

> had happened, it must've happened within minutes or an hour because I would've thought I would've felt something before. But all over my body I had sensation, I had feeling. It came back.

The actions of anointing oil and the laying on of hands are traditional actions which describe an official practice taught by the church. These exact phrases of the actions have also been used by the narrators to describe their traditional healing experience.

This also reflects the data collected from the church leader interviews who all commented that they teach their congregation these particular actions alongside prayer. Kieron, Church 9 says, 'We often tell people to ask if they can lay hands on people.' Mark, senior Elder from Church 11, says, 'we probably stick to the particular bible teaching in James where it says 'if anyone among you is sick call for the elders and they will anoint you with oil [...] So, we would probably use the anointment of oil and […] we would lay hands on them.' These miraculous elements are therefore a key feature of what the church leaders teach and are therefore reflected in the narratives collected from those churches. These practices are expected, and standardised practices used and taught by these churches and thus the narrative is deemed traditional when charismatic Christians copy and use this traditional language to describe their healing experience.

Traditional Words Spoken

As well as actions, there are traditional phrases, words, and prayers that Headley suggests ministers and lay people use when healing the sick. For example, she directs all people to 'Pray in the name of Christ.'[19] Additionally, she gives suggested prayers they can pray, such as 'Common Worship words of administration for the laying on of hands: In the

[19] Headley, p.18

name of Christ and trusting in his might alone, receive Christ's healing touch to make you whole.'[20] These standardised words and prayers were repeated frequently throughout the narratives collected, highlighting the traditional language that many use to describe their healing experience. 64 people (22%) commented that they were prayed for using 'Jesus' name'. Example narratives which include this are; William, Church 1: 'So he prayed for me and as he said 'in the name of Jesus' I watched my leg grow', David, Church 1: 'laid hands on me and called on the name of Jesus', Jessica, SS: 'He laid his hands on the joint of the knee and prayed in Jesus' name. At the time I didn't feel anything but within 24 hours all the pain had gone', Ruby, SS: 'They simply prayed in the name of Jesus that I would be healed', Eric, SS: 'I put my hands on him and said in Jesus name be healed', Dean, SS: 'prayed in Jesus name for healing', Steffan, SS: 'I can't remember the exact words but it would have been something along the lines of, 'Holy Spirit would you heal whatever needs to be healed, whether that is muscle, tissue or skin, be healed in Jesus' name', Lola, SS: 'I got her to put her hand on where it hurt and prayed a simple prayer like 'Pain go in Jesus name' and then asked if she was happy to pray, 'Please heal me Jesus' which she did and she was completely healed.'

The church leaders also spoke about using Jesus' name when they prayed for the sick. For example, when Rob from Church 14 prays for others, he says, 'I simply say I'm going to pray for you in Jesus' name.' Similarly, Suzie from Church 3 says, 'I say, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command this pain to go.' Again, these narratives are categorised into the traditional category because they reflect the official Church teaching

[20] Headley, p.25

on the words and phrases that should be used in a healing prayer when describing their healing experience.

Traditional Reactions Described

A further way that the narrators describe their healing experience in a traditional manner is through the language they use when they describe a traditional reaction to a healing miracle.

> Headley lists five common reactions to healing ministry including,
>
> > Silent acceptance of Christ's touch, emotional release in tears of intense sorrow, joy, or laughter, physical manifestations such as shaking, swaying, falling, vibration, relief of physical symptoms or correction of physical disabilities, sensations such as heat, power, electric shock, light or tingling, feelings of wonder, or a deep sense of peace or purpose, assurance of the promise of soon being taken to be with God.[21]

These physical and spiritual reactions were described by some individuals, deeming their healing narrative traditional. 107 questionnaires reported a physical reaction during the healing event. Examples of physical reaction during the healing event include,

> Bethany, Church 13: 'During the healing I instantly felt a warmth around my back and tingling feeling. Instant relief',
>
> Julie, Church 12: 'As soon as he started praying for backs, I felt as if my back was on fire and a lightning bolt shot through me. I could barely stand, and I knew immediately I had been healed',
>
> Vicki, Church 6: 'A warmth entered my shoulder and had full healing',
>
> Kayleigh, Church 14: 'I was filled with joy and thanked God for my psoriasis because it meant I became a Christian. I felt a feeling of an electric shock shoot through my body, I fell to the floor and was lost in the Lord's presence. My mother saw a patch of psoriasis disappear on my hand as I lay there',

[21] Headley, p.19

Andrew, Church 7: ‘the first time we said that, Becky said ‘my eye feels like it’s on fire!!’ it started vibrating and then it popped (not physical sound popped but popped into place) into a straight position’,

Gwen, SS: ‘We stood in front of her to pray, but she felt as though we were poking her in her back, which we couldn’t have reached. She told us then that that actual spot was where she had a cancerous tumour. We prayed some more. This time she felt like a hand going down inside her back and out into both sides of her pelvis where she then told us two secondaries had developed’,

Violeta, SS: ‘As I and a friend prayed, she felt what she described as a knitting together sensation’,

Georgia, SS: ‘My foot became warm and then hot, so much so that I had to take my shoe off’,

Rebecca, SS: ‘A cyst was found during a scan which could have terminated the baby, and as we prayed we both felt a ‘pop’ sensation, I went back for another scan and the cyst had gone and I had a healthy baby girl,’

Emma, SS: ‘As they were praying for me, I felt this ‘ice cold bullet’ go through my back. I collapsed to my knees and I had no pain’,

Camilla, SS: ‘As I prayed we both felt movement in her knees.’ These physical reactions found in the healing narratives collected are also recorded in official church literature as possible outcomes of a healing prayer; these narratives are therefore deemed traditional.

As well as a physical response, 82 people also recorded a spiritual reaction in the moment of the healing event. Examples of some of the spiritual reactions include stories such as,

Aaron, Church 12: ‘During this time I heard the voice of God - sounds insane but it is the truth. everything was muted, like a TV turned off and I heard a clear man’s voice saying ‘it’ll be alright son’’’,

Nathan, Church 9: ‘I could feel a very significant power flow into and through my body. Prayed for over an hour for various things. Every time my symptoms would get better’,

Amalia, Church 1: ‘When they prayed for me, I felt a power come, light, it filled all my body inside’,

Henry, Church 1: ‘So we stood there and worshiped. I didn’t get hot flushes or fall to the floor - I just felt peace of God in the situation. Just felt like it was all fine’,

Kimberley, Church 14: ‘Midnight of the same day I felt a joy (not a normal joy) and I laughed, and I knew I had been healed’,

Gary, Church 6: ‘I just felt the holy spirit say to begin to pray in tongues. Spoke in tongues for about 4 to 5 hours non-stop and I’m not exaggerating. That’s why it’s

such an unusual and special experience for me because I knew there was a battle going on in the spirit realm and as I was praying in the spirit I just knew something was going on',

Anya, SS: 'As we prayed, she 'saw' in the Spirit a big thorn being pulled out of it. The pain went when she tried it out',

Charlotte, SS: 'A week later I was in worship and I felt God say to me 'I need you on your knees'. I got on my knees and felt a burning on my shoulders and since then have felt no pain, and no inflammation',

Scarlett, SS: 'I went forward and instantly felt the power of the [Holy Spirit]. I was laying on the floor and couldn't move. I felt peace and happy, not afraid. I was instantly healed and had no pain since',

Blake, SS: 'There was a tangible presence of God in the room and before our eyes the girl's leg was completely restored to normal.'

Like the physical reactions, these spiritual reactions found in the healing narratives are also recorded in official church literature as possible outcomes of a healing prayer. These narratives are therefore also deemed traditional.

Ultimately, it appears common within the healing narratives collected to see a pattern of people frequently recording a physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual reaction during the healing event that they describe experiencing. As listed in Headley's common reactions, a spiritual or emotional reaction of joy, peace, laughter and so on are all expected and deemed a common response to a healing miracle. Thus, those who reported a physical or spiritual reaction in response to their healing experience have been categorised as a traditional narrative.

To sum up, the category of traditional narratives included 145 narratives. This means that 22% of the healing narratives collected across Wales could be considered to fall into the category of traditional healing miracles. A traditional healing miracle includes four key components; the individual was prayed for in a church context, by a church

minister, with a serious ailment and using traditional and orthodox language to describe their experience.

Everyday Healing Narratives

In contrast to the 22% traditional healing narratives collected, 78% of healing narratives did not fit into the traditional category. This study has therefore categorised them as 'everyday'. Of the everyday category, 45% featured predominantly everyday components, but with one component having an element of tradition. Therefore, this section will focus solely on the 33% that were entirely 'everyday' as I conceptualise it. For a narrative to be considered entirely everyday it must have everyday features across all four components. That means, the location the narrator claims they were healed at is outside of a church context, they were healed by someone other than a minister or lay leader, they were healed of a minor ailment and the language they use to describe their healing experience is ordinary, informal and colloquial.

Location of healing

As discussed in the previous section, healing miracles were reported occurring inside churches, as expected. However, strikingly, they were also reported as taking place in regular and everyday locations outside of a church context.

Half of the collected narratives spoke about their healing experience occurring in ordinary locations outside of the church. For example: 'at Wonderland Nails whilst having a pedicure' (Nina, Church 4), 'in a shop' (Levi, Church 4), 'Watching TV at home' (Beth, Church 5), 'At the scene of the accident' (Christopher, Church 6), 'Wife prayed in bed' (Asther, Church 9), 'Over the phone' (Ethan, Church 1), 'In Costa Coffee' (Daniel, Church 1), 'In a gym' (Easton, Church 14), 'at a wedding' (Caleb, Church 8), 'outside

M&S in town' (Olivia, SS), 'At the traffic lights in the car' (Lola, SS), 'my wife and I prayed over the phone' (Brandon, SS), 'In Prison' (Hailey, SS), 'At Cardiff Airport' (Charlie, SS), 'over zoom' (Eloise, SS).

These locations reported by these participants are ordinary and everyday locations. Charismatic Christians are not reporting having to travel to sites of religious significance, such as Lourdes, or to a special and exclusive church to be healed, but instead are describing themselves being healed outside of locations like a *Marks and Spencer* store, in their local gym, or in a nail salon. These are all locations that are normal and considered everyday for the life of the individual.

The narratives were split almost exactly equally between those that reported being prayed for inside a church and those that described being prayed for elsewhere. 133 people spoke about their healing experience happening at church, closely followed by 130 people who said their healing experience occurred in an everyday location. This implies that location has no impact on whether a person reports a healing miracle. The narratives show there is not a particular healing location that individuals find themselves healed at but instead the healing miracles are reported to occur 'on the go', in everyday situations at everyday locations. Sacred and profane were not so clearly demarked within the narratives.

Healing miracles occurring in everyday locations is also reflected in the church leader interviews. Leaders mention numerous different locations in their own stories of praying for the sick. For example, locations such as 'on the street' (Frank, Church 5), 'out in Barry' (Edward, Church 4), 'at work with the plumber' (Kieron, Church 9). Furthermore, Alan from Church 1 even says, 'when we do street outreach, praying for

people on the streets would be a norm, and going praying for you next door neighbour who is sick would be a normal practice' and Rob from Church 14 commented that, 'We see more miracles outside the church than inside.' Charismatic Christians in Wales are therefore describing their healing experience as taking place at the various everyday locations that they happen to find themselves in. Furthermore, this is something that the church leaders interviewed were teaching and promoting.

The healer

Charismatic Christians spoke about their healing experience in an everyday way when reporting that it was ordinary people who prayed for them for healing, as opposed to official Church ministers.

When describing their healing experience, there was never an elaborate explanation or a particular sought-after individual with a healing ministry who prayed for healing. Instead, 81% of individuals commented that it was ordinary people who prayed for them to receive their healing. For example: 'mum prayed for me' (Virginia, Church 4), 'My wife and myself prayed' (Ryder, SS), 'my kids prayed for me' (Theodore, Church 8), 'sister laid hands on my eye' (Cindy, Church 3), 'my friend prayed for it' (Joshua, Church 6), 'My son and his girlfriend prayed for me' (Ruby, SS), 'I prayed for them' (Easton, Church 14), 'I had just become a Christian and I became aware that healing is available today. I therefore [prayed for myself and] started to ask the Lord to heal my back' (Frank, SS), 'My friends prayed for me' (Nathan, Church 9), 'My friend Barbara prayed for me' (Emma, Church 1), 'Typed a prayer request on church Facebook group' (Anthony, Church 6). 81% of individuals in Wales reported receiving healing prayer from

ordinary people like this, who were around them every day or who they were in touch with regularly, for example, a friend, a spouse, children, or a colleague.

Ordinary people praying for healing miracles is also reflected in the church leader interviews. When interviewed, all fourteen of the church leaders responded 'yes' to the question, "have you ever taught on healing to your church?" The church leaders also proceeded to describe what they teach and one of the main points submitted was that everyone can heal the sick. For example, Frank, senior leader of Church 5 says,

> Yes. Taught a lot on healing over the years. How to receive healing for yourself. Barriers to healing, how to minister healing. As people see it, they are more encouraged to believe they can do it [pray for healing]. We [church leaders] don't want to be set up in any sense as the only ones who can pray for the sick, we want others to pray. When we're abroad my main ministry has been teaching leaders how to teach their people to do it!

Although Frank taught this abroad, it is also reflected in the narratives collected in Wales. Likewise, Lewis, senior leader of Church 10 says, 'some people have gifts of healing, but I believe the whole church is anointed to minister to the sick.' This teaching that the whole community can pray for the sick is reflected in the narratives which report that everyday people are praying for healing and subsequently reporting that a miracle occurred.

'Non-Church' Attender Healings

As well as everyday people praying for individuals for healing, the following narratives show that some charismatic Christians in Wales believe that all people can receive a healing miracle. This is highlighted in the narratives which discuss non-church attenders receiving a healing miracle.

In addition to describing who prayed for them, some charismatic Christians recorded stories of praying themselves for non-church attenders to be healed. As far as

we can tell, the individual who claimed they were healed would not describe themselves as a Christian or a church attender. This was either clearly implied in their story or it was explicitly stated by the narrator that they had prayed for someone who didn't belong to a church. 43 people made it clear that they were praying for a 'non-church attender'. For example:

> 'Prayed last week for a girl in our youth who wasn't a Christian but had awful pain in teeth. Pain went and she was shocked' (Jack, Church 8),
>
> 'Prayed for non-Christian couple on the street - After saying no, lady saw husband get prayer she then asked for prayer for her joints.' (Levi, Church 4),
>
> 'he laid his hands on his wife, said she could feel burning in her back and, the Lord healed her back, and she's an atheist' (Asher, Church 9),
>
> '[Lauren] is not a Christian, but I asked if I could pray and she said yes. She told me when I prayed it was as if she was in a big bubble and a peace came all over me. Six months later all the cancer had gone, and she has been totally clear. Praise you Jesus' (Suzie, SS),
>
> 'Uncle had bowel cancer. He wasn't a Christian. Needed radiotherapy to shrink the cancer before it was removed. Allowed my mum and I to pray for him. When he went in for surgery to remove it they could not find it' (Imogen, SS).

Moreover, narratives discussing praying for non-Church attenders include:

> non-Christian young girl who was 14 […] had cancer, terminal cancer. They ultimately told her take her home, we've done everything we could, and she is not going to survive this. (after prayer) […] in about 3 months she began to change for the good. Over the next 6 months her hair grew back naturally, and she got healed. The cancer disappeared, literally. (Gary, Church 6),
>
> As a church, we went into the centre of town to pray for people. I came across a homeless man and we began talking. He explained he had hurt his knuckles in his right hand after losing his temper and punching a wall. He showed me the bruising and swelling and demonstrated how he could not clench his fist due to the pain. I offered to pray for his hand and I did. I said: 'Jesus, please heal this man's hand – I command the pain to be gone in your name. Suddenly, the man swore: 'F****** Hell [sic]!' and asked me 'What the hell have you done to my hand?' The swelling had gone down and he could clench his fist freely and without any pain. (Gavin SS)
>
> In the Summer of 2014, I once prayed for a man called Mike. He was an atheist at the time but had been coming along to our church with his girlfriend Jo who visited occasionally. One Sunday Jo asked if I would pray for Mike's arms. He

> had tendonitis in both forearms between his wrist and elbows, this started from an incident at his job as a supermarket security guard and developed over a number of years. He told me he was in pain every day and had been seeing a physiotherapist for some time and was due to start acupuncture treatment the following week. I asked Mike to pray a simple prayer - "Jesus please heal me now." Then I prayed for Mike. Inviting the Holy Spirit to come and bring the healing power of Jesus to Mike's arms, I commanded the tendonitis and pain to go in Jesus' name. After just a few seconds I asked Mike how the pain was. When he opened his eyes I could see he was shocked. He said he could 'feel as though the pain was lifting out of his arms'. He also described how he felt an incredible sense of love inside him. (Graham, SS)

Narrators always specifically mentioned if it was a non-church goer that they had prayed for, suggesting a belief amongst those who gave a narrative, that healing miracles are not restricted to those within the Church.

This was a subject which also featured heavily in the church leader interviews. When asked the question, 'Do you ever see healing miracles outside the church or with non-church goers?', all church leaders reported that they do see non-church attenders get healed. Two leaders said 'few', but the other 12 all said they see 'many' non-church attenders experience a healing miracle. Lewis, Church 10, says, 'I believe it's 'easier' for non-Christians to receive healing than it is for Christians!' and Nick, leader of Church 12, says, 'More than with Christians. When we have a healing café we get a number of people who identify as Christian and then we get other people coming in who have seen the advertisement or people who have been invited or who have just wandered in off the street.' All church leaders went on to tell numerous stories of non-church attenders that they have seen physically healed. Kieron, Church 9 explains,

> you'd be amazed how open people are, non-Christians to talk about healing because they think God is a religion they don't think that he actually affects their real life, they think he's just in a book or you know, they've just got the wrong view of him and they don't think, basically they think God's irrelevant, so, it's a good way to show them that God is actually not just relevant but present and knows them personally and knows what they're struggling with.

Therefore, the narratives suggest that churches in Wales are not restricting the practice of healing to those who belong to a church. Instead, everyday people are praying for healing and everyday people are receiving and experiencing healing miracles.

Nature of the Ailment

Every individual began their healing narrative by commenting on what kind of pain or ailment they had in their body. 66% of people reported receiving a healing miracle from a very normal and everyday condition. It seems clear that people in Wales are not restricted to major health conditions for a miracle, but they are in fact reporting that they are asking for healing from a condition that could otherwise clear up with time or medication. A condition which, although might be a nuisance day to day, is neither life-threatening nor life-altering.

Examples of minor and everyday ailments include conditions such as: 'painful arthritic knee' (Alice, SS), 'Wheat allergy- had to completely change my diet' (Teresa, Church 8), 'Suffering really bad throat infection - lost voice for 2 days' (Betty, Church 1), 'tooth pain' (Lucy, Church 6), 'Warts on face' (Marsha, Church 4), 'Suffering from severe painful hands' (Claudia, Church 13), 'As a child had 20 verruca's [sic] on my foot' (Nina, Church 4), 'Sneezing and irritation' (Lincoln, Church 6), 'Right thumb joint fixed - non mobile, not apposable - limits action and painful' (Melody, Church 6), 'Turn in the eye and double vision' (Mila, Church 7), 'Broke my toe' (Carl, Church 1), 'bad acne' (Freya, SS), 'torn hamstring' (Austin, SS), 'Awful headache' (Asher, Church 9).

Some narratives even acknowledge an embarrassment or reserve at asking for healing for minor conditions. For example, Betty from Church 1 describes her healing miracle experience in this way:

> I was suffering from a really bad throat infection and lost my voice for two days, but there was a prayer meeting in bible week. First of all I thought, I won't go forward, it's something only small and minor, but God prompted me to respond, because he's interested in every single detail of our lives. I went forward for prayer, I couldn't speak to ask what I wanted for prayer, and the moment that they finished praying I could say Amen! I got my voice back.

As shown, Betty not only describes her minor ailment and experience of a healing miracle, but further, she comments on her reluctance to approach God with her small ailment. This is followed by a prompting to do just that, and then her healing. Similarly, Melody from Church 6 says, 'I thought Jesus would regard my problem as too minor and not worth healing. But got the impression Jesus doesn't do things by halves [...] Got prayed for. After prayer, the pain eased'. Again, she describes her healing experience as well as her personal thoughts and feelings towards Jesus and her opinion on Jesus' thoughts about her minor condition. Moreover, the narratives highlight such a strong belief that God wants to heal ordinary conditions that one narrative even reports a dog being healed. Maisie (SS) says,

> I was a very new Christian. I was asked to pray for the pet dog of several very young children. The children and their parents were very upset. The dog recovered. It proved to me that God is real and that he heals today. He hears our prayers and answers them even for a little dog.

To require a healing miracle, it can be assumed that there must be something wrong with the individual's health and that they need intervention. Furthermore, it might be assumed that the ailment or pain that the individual is suffering with is beyond medical care and thus requires something more, something drastic, something unimaginable, such as divine intervention from a higher being - a miracle. However, this was not what this study found. Although many reported being healed from a major ailment, the majority of narratives reported being healed from something minor. Thus, it can be concluded that many people in Wales talk about their healing experience in an everyday way and this

even comes down to the nature of the condition they were healed from, that is, an everyday condition.

Language Used

Individuals described their healing experience in a colloquial, conversational, and informal way. They did not use official church teaching or language to describe their experience. It was rare that narratives showed a sophisticated or refined explanation of a healing miracle but instead the descriptions were frequently casual, making use of familiar phrases and metaphors. For example, Giana (SS) says,

> Where one of them had her hand hovering I felt a great heat. And then all of a sudden, my stomach started churning around like a washing machine. I was trying to concentrate on the praying but realised something odd was happening. I didn't say anything to them, but they kept praying for a few more minutes and still there was this strange sensation in my stomach - the upper part not the lower part. I was even thinking as they were praying, 'I wish I had not had that UHT milk with my cornflakes this morning.

As discussed above in the traditional narrative category, when people are healed, some experience a physical reaction. The majority of these narratives use traditional and religious language to try to capture a strong physical experience. However, for some, such as Giana, their description is everyday because they use non-religious language by talking about UHT milk and cornflakes, adding humour to an otherwise serious and religious reaction. She goes on to describe being healed from her condition which was deeply upsetting her, but yet her use of the metaphor 'churning around like a washing machine' gives a normal and everyday description to what she was experiencing. Another very descriptive and perhaps humorous metaphor is used by Oscar (SS) who says, 'I used to flap on the floor like a fish as God was touching me. Healing came at deep levels during

that period including physical and wonderful emotional healing'. Again, Oscar uses a non-religious metaphor to describe what he later calls 'wonderful emotional healing'.

Within the healing narratives, there are further examples of everyday language, such as Susan (Church 1) who says,

> I had blepharitis and weak eye muscles and had glasses since I was 14 […] I was prayed for […] Over the next few months, it seemed to get worse, they started stinging and I got really bad headaches and stuff. So I went to the opticians, and it turns out that the reason it was getting worse is because I no longer needed glasses. I no longer have weak muscles in my eyes, and all the infections I've had have all cleared up, and I've got perfect vision. Praise God. […] I don't need glasses which is a shame 'cause I love wearing them actually. But it's great that they're healed.

Amusingly, Susan seems almost disappointed at her healing because she loves wearing glasses. The language she uses perhaps suggests a lack of enthusiasm or gratefulness for receiving a healing miracle, or rather possibly implies that the miracle is simply a very ordinary and everyday occurrence for her. Other narratives like this include Linda from Church 1, who discusses her daughter's condition. She explains,

> Last weekend Evie was sick with a horrible stomach bug, and we took her to the Doctors; they told us we'd just have to ride it out for a few more days, it was probably going to get worse and then she would probably get three weeks of diarrhoea following. But we went home and we just decided not to accept that because that's not God's promise over our family. His promise is health for our family. Umm, and then the next day, Evie woke up absolutely bouncing, just running around playing, eating everything she wanted to eat without any problems and it's been a week and we've had no diarrhoea! Thank you Jesus!

Linda's very descriptive account of her daughter's bowel movements not only uses everyday language but also outlines what is arguably a common and everyday sickness for a young child. Additionally, Jackson, Church 1 says,

> So since I was a little child, I have been allergic to bananas. To the point where I couldn't keep them down if I would eat them. I probably hadn't eaten a banana in about 20 years. So we prayed. I went out shopping and I bought a banana, and I ate it. Nothing happened at all. And ever since then I've been eating bananas. I've

> been very blessed to have some banana bread as well. I've been told it's really really good. So yeah, I've been eating bananas everyday for about 2 weeks, and I also told that to my mother, who is also allergic to bananas. We prayed for her, and she likewise has been eating bananas ever since, with no ill effects at all. So praise God.

Jackson uses descriptive and everyday language to describe his relish at not only eating a banana, but also banana bread after being told 'it's really really good'. His focus on banana bread as opposed to the healing miracle gives the impression that he treats the miracle as an ordinary occurrence as opposed to the extraordinary event of eating a longed-for piece of banana bread.

Similarly, Helen, Church 1, 'Lord thank you for healing me. I've had terrible foot problems for about 3 or 4 years, and today I'm wearing shoes that I haven't worn for probably nearly 5 years, and its [sic] just amazing!' Likewise, Helen's excited language seems to be directed at wearing a new pair of shoes, as opposed to the healing miracle itself. Other everyday narratives include Barbara from Church 1 who says,

> I was about to go to my sister's wedding in South Africa, Capetown […] I had asthma and had to sit with a nebulizer before bed […] So before the wedding I prayed that God would heal me and take away my asthma as I did not want to have it in South Africa, at the wedding.

Barbara's narrative reveals a longing to be healed, not to live without her ailment, but so that she is well enough on holiday for her sister's wedding. It is arguably a normal and common feeling for someone to wish to be well for a special event. Thus, to include it in this narrative implies an everyday attitude towards a healing miracle. Lastly, Daniel from Church 1 also records,

> about two years ago, I started having heart palpitations. I went to the doctor's and they said 'sorry there's nothing we can really do for you, you're just going to have to deal with it, […] I was in Costa one day, and it was one of our live music events and someone brought a word of knowledge, and I knew that was for me. The word of knowledge was that someone had a problem with a valve in their heart, so I was like yeah that definitely is for me. So I went up for prayer and I just felt the

> peace of God come over me, I just felt like I was healed, I never really drank coffee, I could drink as much coffee as I wanted without my heart palpitating.

As opposed to describing life without heart palpitations, Daniel now describes life with coffee and celebrates that he can drink as much as he wants. This again shows an everyday attitude towards the healing miracle he claims to have received.

This list of narratives is just a glimpse of the 33% of people who spoke about the healing experience in an everyday way. They highlight the narrators' desire to explain their healing miracle in a plain, uncomplicated, and ordinary way. The use of colloquial adjectives and metaphors woven into people's narratives convey an everyday experience of a healing miracle. They are not complex, obscure or mysterious, but are used by individuals to explain their experience in a practical and matter of fact way. The narrators use common words and phrases to describe their healing experience, as well as long, everyday descriptions to convey what they went through. The descriptions are not particularly theological, supernatural, unusual, or shocking; instead they describe the experiences in a matter-of-fact manner.

Additionally, out of the reports emerged repeating narratives of people describing eating particular foods to 'test' their apparent healing of food intolerances. Likewise, these were narrated in an 'everyday' way. For example,

> [after healed of a serious gluten intolerance] I took a step of faith and ate the communion bread and no reaction. To test it again I ate a Twix and still no reaction (Teressa , Church 8).

> [after healed from dairy intolerance] [he was] looking at the cakes and thinking they look really good, dare I? do I believe God. And he felt God really challenge him to 'trust me', and so he had a big cream cake, much to his wife's shock, and had no ill effect and since then he has been able to eat anything that he wants (Caleb, Church 8).

> My intestines seemed to move in a physical way. I tested it and ate things I couldn't before and was fine (Leonardo, SS).

> After prayer, he didn't feel anything special but had to step out in faith. He believed and so he ate bread that night. Next morning, he ate bread again - nothing. He had been totally healed and has not had a food allergy since (Micah, SS).
>
> When I got home, I felt totally different in my body. Straight away I took a step of faith and tested my healing and ate a bowl of Shreddies with cold milk. I had been severely allergic to milk. I was totally fine. Since that evening, I was totally healed, and I can eat anything at all and have no allergies or intolerances to any foods. I am completely healed. (Macie, SS).
>
> I didn't feel anything while or after they prayed but decided afterwards that I had better test whether God had actually healed me. I took a step of faith and I started with small amounts of milk products, and soon progressed onto cheese on pizzas, magnum ice creams, and even regular milk on my breakfast cereal. […] all with no symptoms. 11 months later I am still able to eat and drink regular cow's milk all the time with no symptoms. (Aleah, SS)

Whilst talking about their healing experience, it appeared common for individuals to describe themselves as wanting to 'test their healing' to make sure they really were physically healed. Firstly, the desire to 'test' a healing is a very ordinary and human thing to do, as opposed to asserting blind faith in a supernatural healing. The desire to test, in and of itself, shows the ordinariness of these healings. Furthermore, the way in which people tested their healing was again very normal and popular. It was never an overtly spiritual or religious test, but always a practical and very human test. This popular testing is most commonly seen within the narratives of those reporting that they were healed of a food intolerance. These participants frequently describe in great detail the ordinary foods that they went on to enjoy. This naming of foods used to test healing is a very normal and popular thing to do after reporting a healing miracle from a food intolerance.

To summarise, this everyday category contains 33% of healing narratives collected. These everyday narratives are everyday because across all four components the individual talks about their healing experience in an everyday way. This means, they report that they have been healed from a minor condition, that is neither life-threatening nor serious, that could clear up with time. Additionally, they describe themselves as being healed in an

ordinary location outside of a church context and having been prayed for by an individual who is not a minister or a lay leader but someone familiar to them, such as a family member or friend. Lastly, the way they describe their healing miracle is in an everyday way because of the colloquial, conversational and informal language they use to narrate their healing experience.

Mixed Healing Narratives

Every piece of research has complexities, additional layers and data which does not quite fit the mould. This research is no different. From the narratives collected, 22% were traditional and 33% were everyday. This left 45% of the healing narratives which did not fit fully into either category. When looking across all four components, this 45% fit largely within the everyday narratives. However, it would not be satisfactory to simply place them in this category as they also contained one component that was traditional. Thus, a third category was added and dubbed ‘mixed healing narratives’. The narratives in this category contain three out of four components that are everyday but one that is traditional.

To add to the complexities, the placement of the traditional component varied from narrative to narrative. For example, a participant might describe three everyday components, such as, receiving healing prayer from someone other than a minister, for an everyday ailment and describe their experience using everyday language, but report that their healing took place in a church context, namely a traditional component. Alternatively, another participant may report a different three everyday components, such as, healed in a location outside of a church context, by a friend, using non-traditional

language, but the nature of the ailment was serious, which is, again, a traditional component.

All the narratives were similar and carried common elements and yet each were unique in the order and manner in which they described their experiences of a healing miracle. Thus, it was necessary to create this third category of mixed healing narratives. As evidenced above, this category of mixed healing narratives carries a heavier everyday weighting than traditional. This section will not account for all the categories above again, but instead will briefly present a number of the mixed healing narratives to provide examples of how a mixed healing narrative is discussed.

Some of the mixed narratives were everyday across all components apart from the location of their healing. For example, Summer (SS) was in a church meeting, making this element of her story traditional. However, the rest of her story is everyday as she complains of the minor ailment of a 'sore wrist' and describes herself as being healed by 'a random young lady'. She also uses everyday language to describe the pain saying it 'hurts from time to time' highlighting a casual and non-urgent attitude towards her pain and the healing miracle she claims to have experienced. Similarly, Declan (SS) describes praying for healing for a friend of his at church, a traditional component. The other elements are everyday because he healed his friend 'with our wives' (not described as ministers), from a 'frozen shoulder' (not serious ailment) and describes his friend's reaction as 'jumping up, waving his arm around' (everyday language as opposed to describing a traditional physical or spiritual reaction). Thus, this narrative is everyday apart from the location of the healing being in a church.

Other mixed narratives are everyday apart from the person who prayed for healing. For example, Maisie, Church 11, talks about a healing that took place after her and her husband, who is the pastor of their church prayed for a couple. This is therefore a traditional component. However, the rest of the narrative is everyday because it took place at the everyday location of a young couple's home, the ailment the young man had was a 'painful back' and not considered serious or life threatening, and Maisie used everyday language to describe the young man, saying he was 'a really tall guy - was over 6ft and was completely doubled over'. After praying for him she goes on to describe 'On Sunday morning I was making a cup of tea and through the doors walks this guy I prayed for - completely upright - all 6ft something of him'. Her description is normal and comments on his physical appearance as opposed to discussing spiritual or religious changes. Furthermore, she mentions the everyday action of making tea and adds slight humorous elements such as her description of his change in height after receiving healing. Thus, this is an everyday narrative apart from the detail that it was the pastor who prayed, which is the traditional component. Likewise, Josiah, who is a lay leader at Church 11 and works at a 'drop in' community centre for vulnerable or addicted individuals, describes a healing story like this,

> One Wednesday morning he came to the drop-in in pain. About 4 days earlier he had fallen from a wall while drunk and injured his neck and shoulder. He had significantly reduced movement and pain. We laid hands on him and commanded his neck and shoulder to be healed. The pain increased and spread to his chest. He became quite agitated and said that if he knew it would have gotten worse he wouldn't have let us pray for him. We told him we'd have another go, prayed for him and the chest pain disappeared but the neck and shoulder pain and lack of rotation remained. As I walked outside I saw him sitting on the wall after a probation appointment. I asked him how his neck was and he smiled and told me that as he had left the building right after we'd prayed for him the pain had disappeared and the movement had gone back to normal.

This narrative is everyday because the individual was healed of a minor ailment (injured neck and shoulders) and was healed outside of a church context at a drop-in centre. Furthermore, the way in which Josiah describes the healing story is everyday due to mentioning the individual was injured because he was drunk, as well as his attitude being agitated and, amusingly, not wanting prayer after it felt worse. The only traditional element is that Josiah, who prayed for the individual, is a lay leader.

Further, mixed narratives are everyday apart from the nature of the ailment described. For example, Rowan (SS) writes a healing narrative about his son and describes the serious and life-threatening condition he had. He says, 'my 6-year-old son was diagnosed with bowel cancer. He lost 25% of his body weight and was very ill. The emergency surgery removed it, but the cancer had spread in his body'. Despite the serious condition, the rest of Rowan's narrative was everyday because he talks about him and his wife praying for his son, as opposed to an official church leader. They also prayed outside of a church context in the hospital. Lastly, he does not use traditional language to explain the healing experience but instead talks about the doctor's response to the healing. He says, 'to the doctors [sic] surprise there was no cancer in the body anywhere. They were so unconvinced of his healing the consultant said they would take out a court order to ensure he had chemotherapy treatment'. Rather than use traditional language to describe his son's healing experience, Rowan uses normal and everyday language to discuss the argument between the doctor and themselves and a potential court case. Another example includes Jude (SS), who also talks about his serious ailment in an everyday way. During a head-on collision in a rugby game Jude was rushed to hospital and his 'first scan uncovered that I had three breaks in the top vertebrae of the neck as well as other injuries such as a broken jaw and cheek bone. It was expected that I would be paralysed'. This is

a serious and potentially life-altering ailment and therefore would be deemed a traditional component in this narrative. However, the rest of the narrative featured everyday components of 'friends and family' praying for his healing rather than official church leaders. Furthermore, they prayed in hospital rather than a church service. Jude uses everyday language as opposed to traditional language to describe his healing experience. Rather than talking about a religious or spiritual transformation he talks about the normal response of the doctor who 'could not explain how the first scan could match the results they saw'. Additionally, he discusses the practical details of 'being discharged in three days' and 'wearing a protective neck brace for just over a week' as opposed to discussing how he might have felt spiritually after his healing experience.

Lastly, other mixed narratives are everyday apart from the language used, which is traditional. For example, Joel (SS) talks about a healing miracle that he was involved in. Most of his narrative is everyday because he talks about himself (not a church leader) praying for a lady to be healed, on 'Whitchurch High Street' (non-church context) who had 'pain in her hips' (not a life-threatening ailment). However, Joel uses traditional language to describe the healing miracle. He comments that they 'laid hands on her and asked for the peace of God to fall on her and for God's shalom to wash over her'. The laying on of hands is a traditional method of healing as well as the specific prayers of asking for God's shalom, meaning peace. Furthermore, he describes receiving a prophetic word for Sue as well as feeling 'something happen supernaturally'. Thus, despite the narrative being largely everyday, the traditional language that Mark uses throughout means his narrative is mixed. Similarly, Maya (SS), has an everyday healing story but tells it using traditional language. Maya describes having a minor ailment of a bad 'back and neck' after slipping on a wet floor. She then explains that she is a self-employed

cleaner and her employer was the person who prayed for her healing. Moreover, she was prayed for in the house that she was cleaning and thus not prayed for in a church context with a church leader. However, the last component is traditional because Maya uses traditional language to describe her experience by explaining that 'she laid her hands on me and I initially felt a warm sensation envelope me and an air of peace surround me […] I felt that God loved me and felt quite emotional'. What makes Maya's story even more interesting is that she says 'I wasn't a Christian at the time but after this experience I wanted to learn more about God and so I went on an Alpha course that my employer's Church ran. After this experience I became a Christian and got baptised'. Despite describing herself as not a Christian, Maya still uses traditional language to talk about her healing experience and the desire to attend a church course following the experience.

To summarise, this mixed narrative category consists of the 45% of healing narratives that are neither solely traditional nor everyday. Three components out of four always contain everyday features, whether this might be that someone was healed from a non-serious ailment, they were healed by an everyday individual who is not a church leader, they were healed in an ordinary location outside of a church context or they used everyday language to describe their healing. However, amongst these narratives one of the components had a traditional element. This might mean that they were either healed in church, or by a church leader, or they were healed of a serious ailment or they used traditional language to describe their healing experience. It is this traditional component that, despite being mostly everyday across more than half of their narrative, meant 45% of the narratives could not be deemed entirely everyday but instead they were categorised as mixed narratives.

In conclusion, the 605 healing narratives collected indicate that a number of people across Wales claim to have experienced a healing miracle. As this chapter has shown, the first major finding of this research is that when people describe their healing experience, they use a four-part structure. They discuss the pain, the prayer, the healing event, and their response to the healing miracle. This four-part structure is used by all people who report that they have been healed. Furthermore, while 22% of the healing narratives collected can be described as 'traditional', 78% of them were either mostly or entirely categorised as 'everyday'. In other words, the second finding was that charismatic Christians tended to describe themselves as being healed from a minor non-life-threatening ailment; by someone in their everyday local context other than an official church minister, in their local context such as a shop or their home rather than in a church setting, and using informal, conversational and colloquial language to describe their experience.

Chapter 4. Everyday Enchantment. Healing Miracles and Notions of Secularity and Post-Secularity

Introduction

Across Wales today there is growing evidence of some individuals reporting that they believe themselves to have been physically healed after receiving prayer. As the results show, the way in which some people speak about their healing miracle is in an 'everyday' way. Mostly, they describe themselves as having been healed outside of a church context, prayed for by someone other than an official church minister, claiming healing from an ordinary ailment using common and colloquial language to describe their experience.

These findings suggest that, despite the secular context, people in Wales believe themselves to be engaging with God when it comes to their illnesses, pains and ailments. The implications of my findings contribute perhaps particularly to conceptions of secularity in the West. The major implication of my research for Western, secular Wales therefore, is that my findings show an 'everyday enchantment'. Some individuals in Wales have disenchanted their enchanting experiences leading to an everyday enchantment, which explains how 'sacred encounters' can be understood in the West as part of the 'secular age'.

The chapter begins with a brief presentation of the secularisation theory which is most commonly found within the sociology of religion debate. I then acknowledge the way secularisation theories have been nuanced and suggest what this means for characterising the 'secular age' and therefore how participants narrate their healing stories. I will give an exposition as to why I have chosen not to engage with this debate

but instead have embarked upon the cultural and philosophical route of secularism, building upon Charles Taylor's work to introduce the key term, 'disenchantment'. I use Taylor to clarify and define different definitions of the secular and disenchantment. The data collected contributes to Taylor's definition of what it means to be disenchanted. Drawing on scholars who critically engage with Taylor, such as William Cavanaugh and Josephson-Storm, I will argue that our environment is certainly more secular and mostly a disenchanted environment however on occasion, we experience 'everyday enchantment'.

I use this concept of 'disenchantment' to explain the major implications of my findings for a secular Wales. I investigate if charismatic Christians have 'disenchanted enchantment' in order to, as Anton Wessels argues, 'inculturate', into what Taylor calls, a secular3 society.[1] This is what I call 'everyday enchantment'. When there is engagement with the divine, this is described in an ordinary and secular manner which has resulted in the finding that people in Wales talk about their healing experience within our secular age in an everyday way resulting in, 'everyday miracles'. I reflect on the charismatic literature drawn upon in the first chapter to show that although the Welsh individuals are describing a typical charismatic Christian experience of which is unsurprising considering their religious context, their language and descriptions of how they talk about their healing experience can be described as a new form of 'everyday enchantment'.

The final section examines two major critiques of the notion of everyday enchantment. The first critique is based upon the idea that disenchantment is a myth, drawing upon Josephson Storm's work to argue that we have never been disenchanted.

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[1] Anton Wessels, *Europe: Was it Ever Really Christian*? (SCM Press Ltd, 1994), p.8

The second critique builds upon the theory of re-enchantment, which makes the point that sacred encounters can be understood in the West as part of the secular age, if the West has in fact become re-enchanted. This is based on the findings of scholars such as Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas who have discovered that practitioners of new spiritualities also report experiences of physical healing.[2] Moreover, I build upon the work of Christopher Partridge and Abby Day to show that there continues to be a popular belief in ghosts, spirits and angels amongst those 'believing without belonging'.[3]

I will conclude that Wessel's argument is the most convincing. That we do in fact live in a secular and disenchanted age as Taylor suggests. And although the individuals were part of the charismatic tradition, they still live in that secular age and the way they describe their healing event reflects that. The everyday miracles show that individuals today have disenchanted their enchanting experiences in order to inculturate into their secular age, resulting in an 'everyday enchantment'.

Section 1: The Nuances of Secularism

This section engages with the secularisation thesis to answer how sacred encounters can be understood today. I begin with a brief overview of the secularisation thesis within the sociology debate. I then show how the secularisation thesis is nuanced and that there is no one uniform process of secularisation. I then move on to the cultural and philosophical debate on secularism. I introduce Charles Taylor's definition of what 'our secular age' consists of, building upon his theory of disenchantment.

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[2] Grace Davie, Paul Heelas, and Linda Woodhead., *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures* (Taylor & Francis, 2017), Introduction, Section 1
[3] Christopher Partridge., *The Re-Enchantment of the West, Vol 2: Alternative Spiritualities, Sacralization, Popular Culture and Occulture* (A&C Black, 2006), p.47-52

Secularism and the Sociology of Religion Debate

When considering the implications of these findings within a secular age, there are two significant ways of responding to the debate on secularity. One is sociologically and the other is philosophically. I have chosen the latter because although the sociological debate is important, it is not as directly relevant to this study. The sociology of religion debate tends to assess religiosity on sociological factors such as modernity or religious attendance at services, whereas this study is interested in the way in which people narrate and describe their religious encounters and the reported healing miracles within a secular age. In other words, it is a matter of considering the philosophical and cultural debate which deals with matters of mindsets and belief. Therefore, this section will only briefly comment on the sociological debate before addressing the more philosophical and theological discussions about secularism.

The secularisation thesis is a feature of the sociology of religion debate. This theory argues that institutional Christianity is in decline due to a series of sociological factors such as the emergence of a modern world view.[4] This debate has been a long-standing and influential discussion which has shaped how many view religions and the individual's lived religiosity in our modern era, especially across Europe. Jeffrey Cox asserts that despite 'the efforts of doubters, sceptics and adversaries, the most influential general account of religion in modern Europe, and in the modern world, remains the

[4] Key scholars who have led the way in this debate include, Karl Marx in his *Marx on Religion* (Temple University Press, 2002), Sigmund Freud in his 'a religious experience', *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XXI (1927-1931): The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and its Discontents, and Other Works*. 1961. 167-172, Max Weber in his, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Routledge, 2013), and in more recent years, Steve Bruce in his, *Secularization: In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2015) and Callum Brown in his, *The Death of Christian Britain* (Routledge, 2009)

theory of secularization.'[5] Therefore, when discussing religiosity and spiritual happenings within a secular age, this debate has always been a crucial feature of the conversation.

Steve Bruce defines secularisation as, 'the decay of religious institutions' as well as a 'sequestration by political powers of religious agencies' and a 'replacement of religious consciousness.'[6] This, he believes, has led to a 'shift from religious to secular control of a variety of social activities and functions.'[7] Bruce claims that there are three sociological factors which have contributed to church decline in modern society: the end of community, social fragmentation and rationalization.[8] Bruce's 'secularization paradigm figure' demonstrates these sociological changes.[9] This paradigm has two strands. The first is the Protestant Reformation resulting in a domino effect of numerous different consequences and changes such as individualism, industrial capitalism, social and structural differentiation, religious diversity and compartmentalization, and privatization.[10] The other strand is monotheism, leading to rationality, science and technological consciousness.[11] Ultimately, his concluding argument is that 'the secularization paradigm argues that the decline of religion in the West is not an accident but is an unintended consequence of a variety of complex social changes that for brevity we call modernization.'[12] Bruce's theory here is what we might consider a classic line of

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[5] Jeffrey Cox, 'Master Narratives of Long-Term Religious Change' in *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe 1750– 2000* ed. by Hugh McLeod and Werner Ustorf (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.201
[6] Steve Bruce, *Secularization: In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2015), p.2
[7] Bruce, *Secularization*, p.2
[8] Steve Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World: From Cathedrals to Cults* (Oxford University Press, 1954), p.39-50
[9] See Figure 2.1. in Bruce, *Secularization*, p.28 for the full paradigm.
[10] Bruce, *Secularization*, p.28
[11] Bruce, *Secularization*, p.28
[12] Bruce, *Secularization*, p.56

argument within the sociology of religion debate which claims that as modernity increases, religion declines.

Callum Brown critiques Steve Bruce with a wider sociological framework to describe church decline. Unlike Bruce, Brown argues that Christianity survived the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution, 'by adapting to each new social and cultural context that arose.'[13] Instead, he argues that the death of Christian Britain began suddenly in 1963 with the women's liberation movement.[14] The domestic, pious and religious home-making wife suddenly switched her 'housewife' magazines for 'Cosmopolitan' chores for careers and stopped 'chaperoning' their husbands to church.[15] Therefore Brown argues, 'the keys to understanding secularisation in Britain are the simultaneous de-pietisation of femininity and the de-feminisation of piety from the 1960s.'[16] Despite the differences in how it occurred, both Brown and Bruce arrive at the same conclusion that church attendance and religiosity is in decline.

Critique of the Secularisation Thesis

Over the years, scholars such as Rodney Stark have attempted to combat the secularisation thesis with their own research on church statistics and sociological factors. Although sociologists rightly noted a separation from Church and State, community, lifestyle, and a reduction in institutionalised religion, some scholars, such as Stark, hold the position that not only is religion not in decline, but it appears to be growing and

[13] Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (Routledge, 2009), p.1
[14] Brown, p.170- 192
[15] Brown, p.170- 192
[16] Brown, p.192

thriving in particular areas. Stark states that the 'world is more religious than it has ever been.'[17] He argues,

> Around the globe, four out of every five people claim to belong to an organized faith, and many of the rest say they attend worship services. In Latin America, Pentecostal Protestant churches have converted tens of millions, and Catholics are going to Mass in unprecedented numbers. There are more churchgoing Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else on earth, and China may soon become home of the most Christians. Meanwhile, although not growing as rapidly as Christianity, Islam enjoys far higher levels of member commitment than it has for many centuries, and the same is true for Hinduism. In fact, of all the great world religions, only Buddhism may not be growing.[18]

He provides evidence for this argument in his book, *Triumph of Faith: Why the World Is More Religious Than Ever,* where through both qualitative and quantitative work, he finds that 'only 4.4 percent of the population identifies as atheist. The only reasonable conclusion that can be drawn […] is that the vast majority of people all around the world believe in God.'[19] He therefore concludes that, 'The world is not merely as religious as it used to be. In important ways, it is much more intensely religious than ever before; indeed, it is far more churched.'[20] He goes as far as claiming the secularisation debate is flawed, demonstrated by Peter Berger's recalibrated view based on recent evidence:

> I think what I and most other sociologists of religion wrote in the 1960s about secularization was a mistake […] Most of the world today is certainly not secular. It's very religious.[21]

Stark comments,

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[17] Rodney Stark, *The Triumph of Faith: Why the World is More Religious Than Ever* (SI Books, 2015), p.1
[18] Stark, p.1
[19] Stark, p.31
[20] Stark, p.9
[21] Peter Berger, 'Epistemological Modesty: An Interview with Peter Berger.' *Christian Century*, 114.30 (1997), 974

> Despite ample evidence of the persistence of religious faith in our modern, scientific world, Peter Berger is the only prominent member of the secularization faithful to have recanted. [22]

The majority of Stark's statistics come from his global assessment of locations such as Africa, China and Latin America where growing religiosity is often explained by growing population sizes in those areas.[23] It must be noted then that Stark does not include Wales or the UK in his study. However, he does research a few countries in Western Europe including Spain, Germany, Sweden and Ireland. Stark uses Sweden as a case study to represent Western Europe because,

> Sweden is almost always presented as exhibit A in the case for the triumph of secularization. Church attendance is very low there, and few Swedes have much respect for the Lutheran Church, which only in 2006 was cut loose from its privileged position as the state church, funded entirely by the government.[24]

In this study he discovers that,

> The majority of Swedes agree with the statement "I am a Christian in my own personal way," and 70 percent say they are concerned about the "meaning and purpose of life." The Swedes also think it is important to have a religious service at death (78 percent) and upon marriage (62 percent). Furthermore, large numbers of Swedes have embraced various forms of unchurched religion— a whole range of New Age and Eastern beliefs and even superstitions.[25]

Therefore, Stark uses the study in Sweden, alongside other Western European countries, to argue the same point: religion is thriving and not in decline or simply just surviving.

Stark also addresses the assumption that religious decline in Europe is impacted by declining fertility. He asserts, 'fertility rates are not declining uniformly across all segments of the population in Europe. On the contrary, religious Christian women in

[22] Stark, p.9
[23] Stark, p.65
[24] Stark, p.47
[25] Stark, p.48

Europe continue to have children well above the replacement fertility level.[26] He uses the 2008 Frejka and Westoff study to show that 'the most religious Christians— those who attend church at least weekly— continue to have large families.'[27] Stark concludes his assessment of religiosity in Western Europe by arguing that,

> My calculations show that for Europe as a whole, the religious population will outnumber the irreligious population in about four more generations. The timespan will differ from country to country depending on the current ratio of religious to irreligious, but the eventual outcome will be the same if everything else remains constant. If the fertility rate of religious Europeans is sustained at above the replacement level, and if most children of religious parents remain religious (as they usually do), the population will grow and the churches will be full. In this way, Europe, too, may join in the global religious awakening— if indeed it really lags behind.[28]

Although Stark does not include research on religiosity within the UK or Wales specifically, his line of argument is common among those who disagree with the secularization thesis.[29] Many Church denominations use their own arguments to contest claims of religious decline. For example, The CoE reported increased religiosity throughout the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in 2020. Speaking in 2021, the Archbishop of Canterbury reported that 'the Church of England's national online services alone attracted more than 3.7 million views since the first restrictions on gatherings for public worship to limit the spread of Covid-19 were introduced almost a year ago.'[30] Arguing that there has been a religious surge in the UK, the Archbishop commented that, 'all are

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[26] Stark, p.65
[27] Thomas Frejka, and Charles F. Westoff, 'Religion, Religiousness and Fertility in the US and in Europe / Religion', *European Journal of Population*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Springer, 2008), p.1-5
[28] Stark, p.66
[29] For a typical opposition argument to the secularisation thesis see Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*, (HarperSanFrancisco; 1st HarperCollins Pbk. Ed edition, 1997) and Rodney Stark, *Secularization, R.I.P.* (Oxford University Press, 1999)
[30] 'Millions Join Worship Online as Churches Bring Services into the Home in Pandemic Year', 16/03/2021, <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-releases/millions-join-worship-online-churches-bring-services-home-pandemic> [accessed 01/06/21]

coming together to worship online in ways that we just couldn't have imagined a year ago' and furthermore, 'many churches report that they have more people participating in their online services than used to meet in person.'[31]

However, Bruce recognises this complication and gives two explanations for religious increase in Western countries such as America or Canada. The first is cultural transition, which is 'where social identity is threatened in the course of major social transitions, religion may help negotiate such changes or help to assert a new claim to a sense of worth.'[32] Bruce notes for example that this is particularly evident in migrants where they often become more religious in a new country compared with their old country due to the desire to pass on their culture to spouses and children.[33] The second explanation Bruce offers is cultural defence. This is when religion 'can provide resources for the defence of a national, local, ethnic, or status group culture.'[34] For example, the role of Catholicism in Polish national resistance to communism, or Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. Yet, Bruce believes that both cultural transition and cultural defence have a time limit and once the cultural transition has been made or the conflict has been resolved, religiosity will once again start to decline. It must be noted that Bruce uses this to explain religious resurgence in countries of common migration such as America. Hence, it might be a different case in Wales, and so this argument, although important, cannot be applied globally.

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[31] 'Millions Join Worship Online as Churches Bring Services into the Home in Pandemic Year', 16/03/2021, <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-releases/millions-join-worship-online-churches-bring-services-home-pandemic> [accessed 01/06/21]
[32] Bruce, *Secularization*, p.49
[33] Bruce, *Secularization*, p.50
[34] Bruce, *Secularization*, p.50

Other sociologists who critique the secularisation thesis include Grace Davie. Davie helpfully coins the term, 'believing without belonging' to explain the reason behind church decline amidst religious resurgence in some areas.[35] This phrase has rapidly spread across the world and has resonated with many as it describes 'the persistence of the sacred in contemporary society despite the undeniable decline in churchgoing.'[36] However, again Bruce combats this argument by proposing that the figures for belief will follow the figures for church affiliation. He suggests that any resurgence in belief or spirituality is simply a 'possible gap filler':

> When one religious tradition declines, another will fill the gap. The obvious evidential problem is that, in the British case, Christianity has experienced at least 150 years of decline, and each wave of possible gap fillers (the Pentecostal movements of the 1920s, the charismatic movements of the 1960s, the new religious movements of the 1970s, and the New Age spirituality of the 1990s) has failed to make even a small dent in the growing numbers of people free from any organized religious interest.[37]

Bruce summarises his main argument that 'there are now societies where relatively few people are religious, where religion has little impact on social life, and where religious affiliation and degree of commitment are matters of personal choice.'[38] He believes 'Christians now behave like a disadvantaged minority and make a fuss about their rights, they simply confirm the view of the secular or only nominally Christian majority that religion is more trouble than it is worth.'[39]

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[35] Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain, A Persistent Paradox* (Second Edition, Wiley-Blackwell 2015), p.78
[36] Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing without Belonging (Making Contemporary Britain*) (John Wiley &Sons; 1st Edition, 19 Sept. 1994), p.93-94
[37] Bruce, *Secularization*, p.54
[38] Bruce, *Secularization*, p.4
[39] Bruce, *Secularization*, p.223

Joan Wallach Scott offers a further critique on secularism which does not depend on church statistics and measuring the extent of religious decline.[40] Scott is in line with scholars such as Stark who 'question the historical account of the inevitable triumph of the secular.'[41] She agrees that 'the simple story of the decline of religion is no longer tenable.'[42] However, Scott critiques secularism, not for its assertion of religious decline, but for its assumption that it has encouraged equality. Scott, arguing from a second-wave feminist perspective, 'examines the ways in which gender has figured in the discourses of secularism.'[43] She uses a large body of literature examining the relationship between women's rights and secularism in order to argue that 'it is very clear that the gender equality today invoked as a fundamental and enduring principle of secularism was not at all included in the first uses of the term.'[44] She is in disagreement with Charles Taylor's 'progressive narrative of secularism' which assumes that 'secularism is synonymous with progress, emancipation, and modernity.'[45] Instead, the crux of Scott's argument is that 'secularism has a recent history' which has not, and is not 'the guarantor of equality between women and men.'[46]

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[40] For more critiques on the secularisation thesis from a feminist perspective see Saba Mahmood., *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report*, (Princeton University Press, 2016), Nilüfer Göle., 'The Gendered Nature of the Public Sphere', *Public Culture*, 10:1 (1997), 61–81, Mayanthi Fernando., *The Republic Unsettled: Muslim French and the Contradictions of Secularism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014). However, it must be noted that the scholarly discussion on secularism has been dominated by male scholars as acknowledged by Brereton and Bendroth who argue that, 'so far gender— although prominent in other scholarly areas—has not entered the discussion of secularization in any extended way', Virginia Lieson Brereton and Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, 'Secularisation and Gender: An Historical Approach to Women and Religion in the Twentieth Century', *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, Vol. 13, No. 2, (2001), 209-223, (p.212)

[41] Joan Wallach Scott, *Sex and Secularism* (Princeton University Press, 2008), p.9

[42] Scott, p.9

[43] Joan Wallach Scott, p.3

[44] Scott, p.3

[45] Scott, p.4-5

[46] Scott, p.8-10

These authors provide a brief overview of a few of the classic definitions and critiques of secularism within the sociology of religion debate. To summarise, those who counter the secularisation theory broadly fall into two camps: religion is in decline for other reasons than modernity, or religion is not in decline. However, over time, secularisation theories have been nuanced and it must be acknowledged that there is no one uniform process of secularisation. Kristen Aune, Sonya Sharmau and Giselle Vincent in their chapter, 'Women, Religion and Secularization: One Size Does Not Fit All', critique the secularisation thesis arguing that it,

> gives the impression of an inexorable and uniform process (across class, gender, nation and religion). Second, it does not explain the rise and continued health of certain forms of Christianity. Third, it is a theory that only fits a certain segment of western populations; that is, it fits white men, and especially white, Protestant men in Europe.[47]

Thus, Aune, Sharmau and Vincent encourage one to go beyond the 'one size fits all' theories to understand the complexities of characterising the secular age. Similarly, Davie further critiques the secularisation thesis by suggesting that there have in fact been multiple modernities. By this she means,

> a notion which implies that modernity is not a uniform idea; it takes different forms in different places. It is only in Europe, in fact, that the connections between modernization and secularization are relatively strong.[48]

Peter Berger goes even further than this suggesting that modernity has not caused secularisation but in fact, 'provoked powerful movements of counter-secularisation'.[49]

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[47] Kristin Aune, Sonya Sharma, and Giselle Vincett. 'Introduction: Women, Religion and Secularization: One Size Does Not Fit All.' *Women and Religion in the West: Challenging Secularization,* (Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 1-22.
[48] Grace Davie, 'New Approaches in the Sociology of Religion: A Western Perspective.' *Social Compass*, 51.1 (2004), 73-84 (p.74)
[49] Peter L. Berger, 'The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview." *The New Sociology of Knowledge* (2017): 61-76 (p.3)

He argues that, 'the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false.'[50] He maintains that the growth of some forms of Christianity (such as Pentecostalism) disproves the inevitably of religious decline as 'the world today […] is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever.'[51] The growth of this religiosity therefore means 'the relation between religion and modernity is rather complicated'.[52] Similarly Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas argue that 'religion is not one thing; modernity is not one thing.'[53]Instead they propose, 'diversity and coexistence, not uniformity.'[54] They speculate that religions which tend to focus on the person, individualised, 'subjective' self (such as charismatics) will continue to grow rather than decline. Heelas says,

> some thirty-five years ago […] the sociology of religion is exclusively concerned with church-orientated religiosity. Today, there is a much greater awareness of what lies beyond church and chapel: those beliefs which are religious, spiritual, super-natural, paranormal, or supra-empirical in that they transgress what the secular frame of reference takes to be 'obviously' factual, rational, reasonable, sensible, and convincingly in that they are not 'readily' demonstrable to the public in general.[55]

Thus, by building upon Woodhead and Heelas' argument here, this new form of individual religiosity pushes the boundaries of the secularisation thesis beyond church attendance decline. Instead, we can question, 'is 'religion' beyond church and chapel in decline, or does it show signs of sustainability, even vitality?'[56] If re-enchantment has

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[50] Berger, *The Desecularization of the World,* p.2
[51] Berger, *The Desecularization of the World,* p.2
[52] Berger, *The Desecularization of the World*, p.3
[53] Linda JP. Woodhead, and Paul LF. Heelas., '*Religion in Modern Times: An Interpretive Anthology'* (Blackwell, Oxford 2000), p. 6
[54] Woodhead and Heelas, *Religion in Modern Times,* p.6
[55] Heelas, Paul LF., 'Expressive Spirituality and Humanistic Expressivism: Sources of Significance Beyond Church and Chapel.' (2000): 237-254.
[56] Heelas, *Expressive Spirituality and Humanistic Expressivism,* p.237-254.

occurred, then we can argue that there are signs of sustainability or vitality and the healing narratives found in Wales support that.

Thus, these critiques highlight that modernity does not equal secularisation and secularisation does not equal religious decline. Secularisation is more nuanced than this, which is particularly shown in Paul Chambers work on *Religion, Secularization, and Social Change in Wales.* Chambers argues that,

> Theories of secularization ae necessarily tied to theories of what religion is. The more open and inclusive the definition of religion, the harder it is to identify secularizing currents. When allied to a belief that religion is a universal social and cultural imperative, secularization becomes, by definition, impossible.[57]

Chambers goes on to argue that organised religion is declining in Wales at a faster rate than anywhere else in the UK.[58] He attributes this to the collapse of social networks under the pressure of forces of modernization. Yet his case study in Swansea lists a diverse array of religious institutions, for example, Roman Catholics, Free Church, Presbyterian Church of Wales, Methodists, Baptists and Quakers, who are all 'operating, to varying degrees of success and failure, in conditions of quire marked secularization.'[59] He defines this secularization in Swansea as 'the abandonment by the overwhelming majority of the population of any significant commitment to religion, something common to most parts of Wales.'[60] Thus, it is important to acknowledge the changing religious context in Wales and how this might impact those who describe their sacred encounters of a healing miracle in secular Wales. Addressing the change in the religious context and how this might impact an individuals reported healing narrative is

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[57] Paul R. Chambers, *Religion, Secularization and Social Change in Wales: Congregational Studies in a Post-Christian Society* (University of Wales Press, 2005), p.25
[58] Chambers, p.2
[59] Chambers, p.44-45
[60] Chambers, p.45

what this next section will examine. I will engage with the philosophical side of the secularism debate to examine how we might understand and make sense of the everyday healing miracles being reported in Wales as part of the secular age.

This section has briefly presented some of the main arguments of the secularisation thesis within the sociology of religion debate as well as a few of its main critiques. Virginia Lieson Brereton and Margaret Lamberts Bendroth summarise the critique of secularisation well in their article on, 'Secularisation and Gender: An Historical Approach to Women and Religion in the Twentieth Century.' They argue that most sociologists would agree on these key points on secularisation,

> that religion is unlikely to disappear altogether; that important structural changes have occurred to delimit religion's role in society; and that secularization—whatever it is precisely—is not a straight-line phenomenon but rather operates at different rates and takes different forms in various parts of the culture[61]

The healing miracles found in Wales could contribute to the critique of the sociology of religion debate by joining scholars such as Stark, and Brereton and Bendroth. The finding of a population in Wales, some of whom claim to be experiencing healing miracles regardless of a church context, demonstrates that a statistical decline of institutional Christianity is not the only relevant measure for how individuals report engagement with God through experiences of healing. Moreover, the reports of healing miracles in Wales support the arguments of scholars such as Woodhead and Heelas who speculate that religions which tend to focus on the person, individualised, 'subjective' self (such as charismatics) will continue to grow rather than decline.[62] Although the healing narratives

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[61] Virginia Lieson Brereton and Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, 'Secularisation and Gender: An Historical Approach to Women and Religion in the Twentieth Century', *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, Vol. 13, No. 2, (2001), 209-223, (p.210)
[62] Woodhead and Heelas, *Religion in Modern Times*, p.451-453

do not aim to or specifically show if the charismatic movement is growing, they do show that belief in healing amongst charismatics is still active today. Thus, when characterising our secular age, it is not as simple to just address the question of religious increase or decline. As these critiques have shown, the topic of secularism is more nuanced than that, taking into account cultural changes, individual belief as well as societal change.

Therefore, the secularisation debate is unavoidable when discussing religiosity within our secular age. It is an important and influential debate. However, the aim of this research was never to prove or disprove that healing miracles were occurring, nor to prove or disprove the rise or decline of religiosity within Wales. Instead, the focus of the research was to capture what people say when they talk about their religious experience of a healing miracle. This is a matter of mindset, personal experience, and individual belief. Although the secularisation thesis is nuanced, and some critiques do focus on religions which research individual belief, overall, the sociological debate of secularism tends to focus on modernity and social change with the aim to measure the extent of religiosity. Measuring the extent of religiosity does not always address the questions of individual belief and experience. It is not its primary focus and therefore this is the reason why I have chosen not to engage with the sociological debate.

Instead, this chapter will examine and build upon the philosophical debate within secularism. I will explore the cultural and philosophical route in order to consider the broader implications of my findings on individual belief and experience within a secular age. The philosophical secularism debate is considerably more theoretical, considering ideas of mindsets and world beliefs. It is this debate which allows a critical engagement with not just a secular society, but with how and why people believe what they do, and the ways in which they live that out. This helps us explore the major finding of everyday

miracles and its implication of how everyday enchantment can be understood in the West as part of the secular age.

Philosophical Secularism

This next section will explore the cultural and philosophical side of the secularism debate in order to examine the implications of an everyday enchantment within secular Wales. Like the secularisation thesis, the philosophical secularist debates are also nuanced with competing theories, ideas and notions of a post-secular age. To give an overview of this side of the debate I have decided to engage with contemporary Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor as he is key to the philosophical secularisation debate. This is because I find his foundational work, *A Secular Age,* convincing and notion of 'disenchantment' significantly relevant for understanding the implications of the everyday healing miracles found in Wales.

Taylor's Secular1, 2 and 3

It is important to first define secularism to provide a central framework in order to understand the implications of the findings in Wales for this debate. Secularity has multiple meanings and therefore this section will address Taylor's three definitions of the secular and expound upon his leading ideas on what it means to live in a secular age today.

'Secular', 'Secularism' and 'Secularisation' have numerous definitions, historical meanings and implications. This chapter will adopt Taylor's threefold taxonomy of the secular. Taylor coins definitions for the three major arguments of secularism which he calls secular1, secular2 and secular3. Taylor understands secular1 in terms of 'public

spaces'.[63] He contends, 'if we go back a few centuries in our civilisation, we see that God was present in the above sense in a whole host of social practices.'[64] However, secular1 means that these public spaces have been 'allegedly emptied of God', meaning God is confined to the Parish and is separated from a functioning role in the local government, the political, economic and the social.[65] Philosopher, James KA Smith, in his *How (NOT) to be Secular,* provides a concise summary of Taylor's three definitions. He says secular1 is 'the "secular" of the purported sacred/ secular divide. The priest, for instance, pursues a "sacred" vocation, while the butcher, baker and candlestick maker are engaged in "secular" pursuits.'[66]

Taylor's understanding of secular2 refers to, 'the falling off of religious belief and practice, in people turning away from God, and no longer going to Church.'[67] Smith unpacks his interpretation of Taylor's secular2 by explaining that it is,

> a nonsectarian, neutral, areligious space or standpoint…the public square is secular [...] schools are secular [...] in the late twentieth century people will describe themselves as "secular" meaning they have no religious affiliation and hold no "religious" beliefs. It is this notion of the secular that is assumed both by the secularisation thesis and by normative secularism […] According to secularisation theory, as cultures experience modernisation and technological advancement, the (divisive) forces of religious belief and participation wither in the face of modernity's disenchantment of the world […] secularisation theory is usually a confident expectation that societies will become secular2- characterised by decreasing religious belief and participation.[68]

It is this secular2 which has arguably been the most prevalent understanding of secularisation, both now and in the past. José Casanova maintains,

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[63] Taylor, *A Secular Age,* p.2
[64] Taylor, *A Secular Age,* p.1-2
[65] Taylor, *A Secular Age,* p.1
[66] James KA. Smith, *How Not to be Secular* (Wm. B. Eermans publishing Co, 2014), p.20
[67] Taylor, *A Secular Age,* p.2
[68] Smith, *How Not to be Secular*, p.21

> Secularization, by contrast, usually refers to actual or alleged empirical-historical patterns of transformation and differentiation of the institutional spheres of "the religious" (ecclesiastical institutions and churches) and "the secular" (state, economy, science, art, entertainment health and welfare, etc.) from early modern to contemporary societies […] The thesis of "the decline" and "the privatization" of religion in the modern world became central components of the theory of secularization. Both the decline and the privatization theses have undergone numerous critiques and revisions in the last 15 years. But the core of the theory - the understanding of secularization as a single process of differentiation of the various institutional spheres or subsystems of modern societies, understood as the paradigmatic and defining characteristic of processes of modernization - remains relatively uncontested in the social sciences, particularly within European sociology.[69]

This is the secular2 that Taylor coins 'the subtraction theory' and believes to be misguided and which, for aforementioned reasons, will not be discussed further in this chapter.[70]

Instead, Taylor articulates his definition and overall argument of secularism within secular3. Secular3 is a

> focus on the conditions of belief. The shift to secularity in this sense consists, among other things, of a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace.[71]

Smith expands upon Taylor's description of secular3 summarising it like this,

> A society is secular3 insofar as religious belief or belief in God is understood to be one option among others, and thus contestable (and contested). But this will be an account, not of how religion will wither in late modern sciences, but rather of how and why the plausibility structures of such societies will make religion contestable (and contested). It is the emergence of "the secular" in this sense that makes possible the emergence of an "exclusive humanism"- a radically new option in the marketplace of beliefs, a vision of life in which anything beyond the immanent is eclipsed.[72]

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[69] Casanova, *The Secular and Secularisms*, p.1050
[70] Taylor, *A Secular Age,* p.26-29
[71] Taylor, *A Secular Age,* p.3
[72] Smith, *How Not to be Secular,* p.21-22

For Taylor therefore, secularity is not synonymous with unbelief or atheism. Secularism is the contestability of belief and hence, Taylor's main aim is to historically trace and demonstrate how we went from a 'society in which it was virtually impossible not to believe in God, to one in which faith, even for the staunchest believer, is one human possibility among others.'[73] Joan Wallach Scott notes this shift in society when describing the undertones of the ways in which the religious-secular divide was understood. She explains that throughout history, the secular acquired increasingly positive connotations.[74] As the term secular began to refer to the state, she argues that 'if once the secular had been subsumed within religious discourse (as its antithesis), now it was the other way around: the religious became the negative other of the secular.'[75] It is this change in belief and more importantly, how we came to allow this change to occur which is at the crux of Taylor's argument.

However, one critique of Taylor comes from James Miller, colleague of José Casanova and student of Alasdair MacIntyre. Miller, although grateful and challenged by Taylor's *A Secular Age,* remains unconvinced by its metanarrative and premise. He argues that 'we certainly live in interesting times. But 'a secular age?' What secular age?'[76] Miller questions, 'Why does Taylor assume that we inhabit A secular age? Is it really true, as the manuscript's second sentence puts it, that "almost everyone would agree

[73] Taylor, *A Secular Age,* p.3
[74] Scott, p.11-12
[75] Scott, p.11-12
[76] James Miller, 'What Secular Age?', *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society, Secular Imaginaries,* Vol. 21, No. 1/4, (2008), 5-10, (p.10)

that in some sense we do 'live in A secular age?'[77] He answers no, reducing Taylor's secular3 age to a 'sweeping generalisation.'[78] Miller reflects,

> I also have trouble slotting my personal experience into Taylor's account, not because I believe in a transcendent God - I do not - but because I grew up in a milieu in the Protestant Midwest where you were ostracized if you dared doubt the existence of God. In Lincoln, Nebraska where I spent my formative years, the presumption of belief was dominant in the 1950s. As a child in Lincoln, I was surrounded by God-fearing professionals and small businessmen, ardent Protestants who often preached hatred of the Pope, and certainly seemed to suffer no doubts at all about the righteousness of their views. When I visited Lincoln again 2 years ago, it did not seem to me anymore of a hotbed of dogmatic secular humanism today than it was 50 years ago. I am willing to bet that in many, probably most American milieux, the presumption of religious belief is dominant to this day, just as the polling data suggest.'[79]

As well as personal and anecdotal evidence, Miller also offers a critique of Taylor's secular1, secular2 and secular3. Miller's critique of Taylors' secular3 is linguistic and rhetorical. He asserts,

> By speaking of belief vs. unbelief, Taylor silently replaces the Enlightenment terminology that opposed faith and reason; moreover, by saddling those who doubt that God exists with the label of unbelief, he insinuates that those who hold this form of belief nevertheless suffer from some sort of lack, an otherwise unspecified epistemological limitation.[80]

Rather than a secular age therefore, Miller proposes that instead we inhabit a "religio-secular age."[81] He suggests that this term is able to 'emphasize the hybrid and pluralistic character of most modern societies, and also the hybrid character of the selves that inhabit these societies.'[82] Still, I would argue that Taylor proposes similar concepts to the 'religio-secular age', such as his immanent frame, the fragilization of our society and the nova

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[77] Miller, p. 6
[78] Miller, p.7
[79] Miller, p.7
[80] Miller, p.7
[81] Miller, p8
[82] Miller, p.8

affect.[83] Nonetheless, by using these concepts, Taylor is able to discuss the complexities of the remaining spirituality in our age whilst remaining concrete in his argument that we do still inhabit a secular age.

Taylor is correct in arguing that we inhabit a secular age in as much as evidence of our beliefs and behaviours do indeed reflect a secular age, as opposed to the enchanted world that our ancestors inhabited 500 years ago. Furthermore, the option of living and believing in something other than God reveals the changes and choices that individuals have today. To explain this, Taylor describes his *A Secular Age* as a story. He offers a narrative to counteract 'subtraction stories' to explain his reasonings of how we have come to live in a secular3 age.[84] For Taylor, one of the distinct features of our secular3 age is that we are disenchanted. His story is therefore the explanation for how we went from inhabiting an enchanted non-secular age, to now existing within a disenchanted, secular age. Taylor argues that it is the buffered self which has allowed disenchantment to take hold of our environment.[85] The buffered self and disenchantment is therefore one of the key features of our secular age. It is this concept of disenchantment and enchantment which the healing miracles found in Wales can build upon to answer the question how these sacred encounters can be understood in our secular age. Therefore, I propose that we adopt Taylor's main theory - that we inhabit a secular age. This is because his narrative of how we came to live in a secular age is overall convincing. Thus, accepting Taylor's premise, and the story which has led to it, allows a thorough examination of the implications of the reported healing miracles within said secular age.

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[83] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Immanent frame- p.543-548, Fragilization- p.304, Nova Affect- p.209-304
[84] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p.29
[85] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p.37-38

This next section explores Taylor's meaning of the term disenchantment and his argument that we do still inhabit a mostly disenchanted age, in order to understand why the healing miracles in Wales are spoken about in an everyday way, and how these sacred encounters can be understood in our secular age.

Disenchantment

To explore the implications of finding everyday healing miracles within a secular age, I have adopted Taylor's terms disenchantment and enchantment to explore the notion of everyday enchantment within secular Wales.

The term 'disenchantment' can be traced back to the 1800s to theorists and sociologists such as Max Weber, Karl Marx and J.G. Frazer. It is important to consider when it was first conceptualised because it indicates at which point in history the evolution from enchantment to disenchantment began. For many, disenchantment occurred after modernisation and was the belief that the rise of reason, technology and the Enlightenment explained our world sufficiently enough for magic to vanish into fairy-tale. Josephson-Storm contends,

> Modernisation is often equated with the rise of instrumental reason, the gradual alienation of humanity from nature, and the production of a bureaucratic and technological life world stripped of mystery and wonder. Scholars often pin this narrative to Max Weber's phrase *die Entzauberung der Welt,* the disenchantment (or literally de-magic-ing) of the world.[86]

Max Weber is often associated with the first use of disenchantment in 1913. His main concern was around the topic of rationality and irrationality. His famous pronouncement, 'The fate of our times is characterised by rationalisation and

[86] Jason A. Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment* (The University of Chicago Press 2017), p.4

intellectualisation and above all, the disenchantment of the world' has caused many to believe that religion had already started to decline.[87] Yet, Josephson-Storm argues that, 'both specialists and nonspecialists often assert that the expression, "the disenchantment of the world", actually came from Weber's reading of Schiller's, whose original lament, 'de-deified nature' can be seen in Weber's 'godless Mechanism of the world.'[88] Josephson-Storm instead suggests that the theory of disenchantment was referenced even before Weber. He believes it was James George Frazer's, *The Golden Bough,* which first spoke of the concept and in fact was a 'large influence on subsequent theorists from Freud and Weber to the Frankfurt School and the Vienna Circle.'[89] Josephson-Storm believes that the classical theory of disenchantment, 'that cultures evolve through successive stages from magic to religion to science is found in these terms in Frazer's work.'[90]

However, it is precisely this evolution through successive stages which I want to contribute to. It could be considered that perhaps, we do not go through stages, but rather at all points there is a fluidity disguised behind the predominant train of thought of the day, which is only obvious now in a time where both religion and science are advanced. Still, it is this original view of disenchantment which has led scientists, sociologists, political and philosophical theorists to argue that as science and technology advance, the need for religion declines. Charles Taylor, however, also rejects this simplistic view of disenchantment, arguing,

> A common "subtraction" story attributes everything to disenchantment. First, science gave us "naturalistic" explanation of the world. And then people began to look for

[87] Max Weber, 'Science as a Vocation', in *Collected Essays on Science Teaching,* ed.by Weber, Max., (Tübingen: Mohr, 1982), "*Science as a Vocation*", trans. H. Gerth and CW Mills, From Max Weber (London: Routledge, 1991), p.194
[88] Josephson-Storm, p.271
[89] Josephson-Storm, p.127
[90] Josephson-Storm, p.127

> alternatives to God. But things didn't work that way. The new mechanistic science of the seventeenth century wasn't seen as necessarily threatening to God.[91]

Taylor makes use of Weber's phrase, explaining that, 'Disenchantment in my use (and partly in Weber's) really translates Weber's term "Entzauberung," where the key kernel concept is "Zauber," magic.'[92] However, he goes further than just the explanation that modernity removed magic. Instead, Taylor lays out five elements of our secular3, which highlight the difference with those who lived in the period of pre-modernity and their daily beliefs, thoughts and assumptions. Taylor's five elements include: the 'buffered' modern self; living social; 'lowering the bar' for flourishing; the fullness of time, and from Cosmos to Universe.[93] It is these elements which Taylor believes have led to disenchantment characterising our secular3 age.

Taylor argues that in the West, one of the main illustrations of our secular age is that we are buffered individuals living in a disenchanted milieu.[94] In an earlier work, Taylor famously writes that everyone 'can agree that one of the big differences between us and our ancestors of 500 years ago is that they lived in an 'enchanted world' and we do not.'[95] According to Taylor, this previously enchanted world, where people believe in, rely on and live accordingly to a higher spiritual being, magic and miracles, has gone. We are now disenchanted, and it is this disenchantment which is one of the main contributing factors to 'our secular age'.

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[91] Taylor, *A Secular Age,* p.26
[92] Charles Taylor, 'Buffered and Porous Selves', *The Immanent Frame*, (ssrc.org, 2008), <https://tif.ssrc.org/2008/09/02/buffered-and-porous-selves/> [accessed 5.4.21], p.1
[93] Element titles taken from Smith, *How Not to be Secular,* p.26-35
[94] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p.1
[95] Charles Taylor, 'Western Secularism' in, *Rethinking Secularism*, ed.by Craig J Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, Jonathan VanAntwerpen (Oxford University Press 2011), p.1

Taylor's broad and comprehensive narrative of how we came to live in a secular age is far more complex than this. Alongside disenchantment being a major contributing factor to secularisation, Taylor also notes other significant influences and indicators of what it means to live in a secular age. They are, the option of exclusive humanism, the immanent frame which we all inhabit, the fragilized world in which we dwell, the cross-pressure that individuals feel, the effect of Reforms and the secular social imaginary that society has adopted.[96] I will not discuss Taylor's terminology here in great depth, however I begin with Taylor because I have chosen to employ his terminology 'enchantment' and disenchantment' to think about secularism and post secularism. I find his argument of our secular age convincing and provoking when answering how sacred encounters can be understood in our secular age. Thus, by beginning with Taylor and his definition of our secular3 age and its disenchanted features, I have a context in which to explore the finding of everyday miracles within secular Wales. I use Taylor's term disenchanted to explain the major finding of my research. That is, there is still enchantment (through a healing miracle) within our disenchanted West. However, people are describing their experience of enchantment in a secular and disenchanted way. This leads me to the major implication

[96] It must be noted that Taylor argues that Reform includes multi causes for shifts in society and must not be reduced to just the Protestant Reformation. Although he does argue that the Protestant Reformation has had a major impact on disenchantment. Taylor calls the Reformation "an engine of disenchantment" which drained the world of its spiritual energies by focusing on the Triune God. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p.63-66, 75-79, 265-266. The Reformation has played a key part in the decline of healing miracles as argued by Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth Century England* (Harmondsworth, 1973; first ed, 1971), pp. 88, ix, chs. 3, 21–2, Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* trans. Talcott Parsons (first English ed, London, 1930), pp.105, 125. Taylor argues that 'enchantment is essential to some forms of religion; but other forms- especially those of modern Reformed Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant- have been built on its partial or total denial.' Taylor, *A Secular Age,* p.566. Despite this, reports of healing miracles have been found within Wales. Although an important discussion, this chapter is primarily concerned with Taylor's conditions of beliefs, and more specifically, how we have moved from being porous to buffered and the implications of this for the healing miracles reported in Wales. As opposed to analysing the reports of healing miracles in discussion with the Reformation. Therefore, a fuller discussion of the Reformation is outside of this chapter's main aims and thus not directly relevant to this enquiry of study.

of my findings. Some individuals in Wales are experiencing and talking about enchantment in a disenchanted way.

Section 2: Everyday Enchantment

This next section investigates how these everyday healing miracles found in Wales can be understood in our secular age. I argue that the secular milieu that individuals inhabit has led them to disenchant the enchantment or engagement that they might claim to have had with God. A larger term that encompasses 'everyday miracles', then, could in fact be, 'everyday enchantment'. I will use Anton Wessel's theory of inculturation to argue that individuals today have disenchanted their enchanted experience to inculturate into a secular age. This has led to an 'everyday enchantment', which articulates the way in which these sacred encounters are understood and conveyed in our secular age.

Disenchanting Enchantment

To adapt to a secular age, whether consciously or subconsciously, some individuals have disenchanted their enchanting experiences into 'everyday miracles'.[97] Everyday enchantment raises the question: what has caused the healing narratives to have an everyday description within a secular age? Not only do the healing miracles cause a stir because individuals claim that they are occurring in a secular age, but the way they are described is also peculiar. Josephson-Storm hints at this when he comments that,

[97] Some individuals might have subconsciously adapted their healing narrative because of their secular cultural milieux, others might have consciously edited and refined their healing narrative to describe it within a secular age.

> the disenchantment thesis has always been a source of controversy and even puzzlement. The process it names is putatively inexorable, which leaves observers scrambling to explain all manner of still-enchanted belief and behaviour.[98]

I would argue that the data collected in Wales has shown that individuals are 'scrambling' to explain their enchanting miracle experiences within a secular age and this has led to the language of 'everyday enchantment'.

Furthermore, Sara Lyons in her article on 'The Disenchantment/ Re-Enchantment of the World', critiques Taylor's revision of the secularisation theory and instead argues for 'the value and plenitude of thoroughly secular forms of enchantment.'[99] She asserts, 'Jane Bennett, Simon During, Joshua Landy, George Levine, and Michael Saler have suggested in various ways that modernity does not disenchant so much as yield new, often paradoxical, and perhaps superior varieties of enchantment.'[100] Likewise, individuals in Wales have created a new paradoxical everyday enchantment. They have done this in order to fit into their secular age which Anton Wessels argues has been a main feature of Christianity throughout history. This next section will explore Wessels' theory of inculturation, which helps us to understand the implications of the everyday miracles in Wales because some Christians today have disenchanted their enchantment which has resulted in an everyday enchantment.

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[98] Josephson-Storm, p.151
[99] Sara Lyons, 'The Disenchantment/Re-enchantment of the World: Aesthetics, Secularization, and the gods of Greece from Friedrich Schiller to Walter Pater', *Modern Humanities Research Association*, Vol.109, No.4, (2014) 873-895 (p.874)
[100] Lyons, p.874

Wessels' 'Inculturated Christianity'

Wessels believes that Christianity changing and adapting to its current environment is a common characteristic of Christianity.[101] In his *Europe: Was it Ever Really Christian?*, he calls this process 'inculturation'.[102] Wessels believes, 'the secret of the success of the spread of Christianity in Europe has been the church's success in taking over the images and myths of Europe and raising them to a higher plane.'[103] Wessels illustrates the process of inculturation by examining the interaction between the new element, the gospel, and the original religion and culture: the old myths and stories, within the Graeco-Roman context, the Celtic context and the gospel in the Germanic World.[104] For example, he demonstrates how Christians in the Graeco-Roman context came to combine the birth of Jesus with the feast of the Indo-Iranian God, Mithras.[105] He explains,

> Mithras is the Sol Invictus who as an incarnation of the divine light is born in the night of the solstice. The 25th was chosen as a feast day because in the Julian calendar the winter solstice fell on this day and it was regarded as the paramount date for the sun [...] The festival which was the first that of Sol Invictus on 25 December, now became the date for the festival of the birth of Christ [...] The church wanted to gain control of this popular day of light by proclaiming Christ as 'the new light', the 'true' and 'only' sun. He was in truth 'unconquered'. He himself has conquered death. He was the 'sun of righteousness' [...] That became the slogan with which the church sought to convert worshippers of Sol Invictus.[106]

This led to elements of the Greek celebrations of the Greek mysteries being adopted in the way in which the sacraments were celebrated. In this way 'pre-Christian' elements were clearly preserved and raised to a new level.[107] Similarly,

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[101] Wessels, p.8
[102] Wessels, p.8
[103] Wessels, p.8
[104] Wessels, p.8
[105] Wessels, p.41
[106] Wessels, p.41
[107] Wessels, p.47

> In Wales, the eves of 1 November and 1 May were known as 'ghost nights'. Chaos prevailed around that time. Fairies were particularly active at that moment, witches were busy with their spells, and the future was foreshadowed by all kinds of signs. The Celtic religious notions emphasised the transitions between seasons. On all four dates the original Celtic significance remained in one sense or another in the Christian take-over and was from then on given a Christian interpretation.[108]

These examples highlight Wessels' main argument that 'it was the general tendency of the Christian church to adapt as much as possible to indigenous customs and institutions, as a result of which there was a remarkably peaceful transition from 'paganism' to Christianity.'[109] It is these tendencies of the Christian Church which causes Wessels to propose the question, 'are lessons to be learned and stimuli to be derived from the history of the early Christianisation of Europe which will help in the translation, practice and dissemination of Christian faith in modern Europe?'[110]

The data found in Wales answers this question- yes, there are lessons to be learned. The lesson learnt is that Christianity has continued to evolve and adapt to its culture like it did in its early stages. Christianity now inhabits a secular age, which has forced it to continue to adapt. This can be shown in the way that individuals talk about their healing experience. Traditionally, the healing experience would be a divine and religious experience occurring in a sanctified location, with a representative of the Church using religious language to describe the experience. But as the data highlights, this traditional method is not as common, but instead describing the experience as an 'everyday miracle' has become the dominant experience for most of the people in the narratives of healing that I gathered and analysed. Individuals are claiming to have been miraculously healed after an encounter with God and yet for some it is described as taking

[108] Wessels, p.81
[109] Wessels, p.95
[110] Wessels, p.262

place in ‘profane’ locations, with ordinary people who have secular jobs, using informal and non-traditionally religious language. Our secular age has caused individuals to disenchant their enchanted experiences which has resulted in an ‘everyday enchantment’.

Charismatic Healing Context

However, the context of these individuals’ religious beliefs must be considered. As discussed in chapter 2, the target sample of this research was charismatic churches who believe and practice healing. Therefore, the answer to how sacred encounters can be understood in the West as part of the secular age, might not be surprising, given the literature on the charismatic tradition is explicit in showing that the tradition values and practices healing, even today. Healing miracles are being reported amongst charismatic Christians because they are a distinct group within society who believe and practice praying for healing.

From the healing narratives collected in Wales, 483 healing narratives were written by those who described themselves as charismatic or who wrote that they were affiliated to a charismatic church.[111] It therefore might not come as a surprise that these individuals reported healing miracles, despite living in a secular age, because that is what the literature explains charismatics believe and expect. Mark Cartledge says, ‘Healing is a central aspect to Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity’ and that, ‘Pentecostals believe not only that God is able to heal but that he does actually heal today.’[112] He goes on to comment that ‘it is very easy to get Pentecostals to talk about

[111] Out of the 605 healing narratives collected, 483 stated that they were from a charismatic church, 61 did not record an answer and 61 said ‘other’. Out of those who did not say or said ‘other’, some of those narratives were written by non-church going participants.
[112] Mark J. Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Re-scripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology* (Routledge, 2017) Chapter 6- Healing, section 2

their healing experiences because it supports their worldview that God is active in their world today.[113] Similarly, Daniel E Albrecht in his, *Rites in the Spirit. A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/ Charismatic Spirituality,* argues that

> the Pentecostal realm envisions a world subject to invasions by the supernatural element. Pentecostals teach adherents to expect encounters with the supernatural. For the Pentecostal the line between natural and supernatural is permeable, but the two categories are radically separate. Claims of signs, wonders and miracles are not limited to the regions of the Sunday ritual. They are to be a part of daily life.[114]

The merging of the everyday and the spiritual is further supported by Nigel Scotland in his *Charismatics and the New Millennium.* Scotland's reflection that 'the growing interest in Celtic spirituality on the part of charismatics also reveals an emerging need to set religious experience in a framework which relates to the business of everyday living' is equally applicable to the healing narratives. [115] Therefore, the experience of sacred encounters demonstrated throughout the 605 narratives of everyday healings in a secular context is entirely consistent with charismatic expectations of healing as part of 'daily life', as demonstrated by the literature.

However, although it might not be unusual to collect healing narratives from charismatic Christians, the way in which the participants in this study described their healing experience was novel, differing in healing methods to the charismatic literature. It is this significant difference which highlights that some individuals in Wales have inculturated into their secular age by disenchanting their enchanting experience, resulting in an everyday enchantment. For example, it was clear that individuals were

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[113] Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, Chapter 6 Healing, section 2
[114] Daniel E. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), p.241
[115] Nigel Scotland, *Charismatics and the New Millennium* (Eagle, 2000), p.324

not always reporting being prayed for by official church ministers. 14% of the narratives commented that it was an official church minister who prayed for them and 81% of individuals commented that it was ordinary people who prayed, i.e. their friend, colleague, spouse, or someone who was not in an official church role. This is acknowledged in the charismatic literature, for example, Christopher J. Scobie writes that, 'it is recognized that the Spirit inspires gifts in all believers.'[116] Moreover, William Kay argues that,

> Pentecostals prepared the ground for answers by establishing that miracles of healing could indeed take place in the modern (and post-modern) world […] By insisting that spiritual gifts are supernatural he was able to argue that they are available, through the grace of God, to any Christian. In this sense his argument implies a democratization of the Church.[117]

However, there is very little research on the ordinary charismatic individual which supports what the charismatic literature explicitly states. Although the literature claims charismatics expect to witness and pray for healing, the literature more often than not, still focuses on the 'official healing minister'. For example, in his *Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies A Reader*, the entirety of William Kay's chapter on healing within the charismatic tradition is a presentation of charismatic healers famous for their healing ministry. He discusses the healing miracles and ministries from individuals such as Oral Roberts, Smith Wigglesworth, George Jeffreys, Harold Horton, F.F Bosworth and Kathryn Kuhlman, amongst others.[118] Likewise, Stanley M Burgess and Eduard Van Der Mass in their *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, describe

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[116] Corneliu Constantineanu, and Christopher J. Scobie, *Pentecostals in the 21st Century: Identity, Beliefs, Praxis* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018), Chapter 8, section 2
[117] William K. Kay, and Anne E Dyer., *Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies: A Reader* (SCM Press, 2010), Part 4 Healing, Section 3
[118] Kay and Dyer, *Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies*, Part 4 Healing

charismatic healing using a long list of its famous healers and their ministries, also referencing Kathryn Kuhlman, Oral Roberts and John Wimber.[119] When documenting the healing ministry of Kathryn Kuhlman, Burgess and McGee report that, 'Kathryn Kuhlman filled auditoriums across America in her "miracle" services. Here she stands with a crippled boy who had received prayer.'[120] Moreover, they include reports of healings after 'the best known evangelist in the salvation-healing movement Oral Roberts' prays for people in his healing crusade.[121] The charismatic literature therefore tends to record healing stories from famous individuals with a particular healing ministry, as opposed to the everyday charismatic Christian praying for the healing.

Although the literature asserts that all charismatics believe God to be intervening in their regular day to day life, it predominantly focuses on the few, famous healing ministers as opposed to the many, ordinary, everyday Christians. Thus, this is where my study is an addition to the literature. Its scope and focus centres on the everyday charismatic Christian, what they say and how they talk about their experience of a healing miracle. The healing narratives do in fact support what the charismatic literature says, that they believe God will intervene in their everyday life, through a healing miracle. However, I build upon this charismatic literature by providing further insight into the description of that intervention. It is the description of the way in which the individuals in Wales report themselves to be healed that differs slightly to the charismatic literature. 81% of individuals in Wales talk about someone close and personal to them praying for their healing, as opposed to the focus on significant

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[119] Stanley M. Burgess, and Eduard M. Van Der Mass, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Zondervan, 2002), p.353-374
[120] Burgees and Van Der Mass, p.363
[121] Burgees and Van Der Mass, p.359

individuals with a healing ministry in the charismatic literature. This description of an 'everyday' and ordinary person praying for the healing shows that some individuals in Wales have inculturated into their secular age. By talking about an 'everyday individual' who prayed for them, as opposed to the official church leader, their description of the healing miracle is more secular in nature. The shift in who prays for healing suggests that some individuals in Wales have inculturated into their secular age by moving away from the 'enchanted' practice of an official church leader or famous ministry practising healing, towards a 'disenchanted' practice, whereby an ordinary charismatic Christian praying for healing becomes the norm.

The major finding of my research was that some individuals in Wales talk about their healing miracle in an everyday way, as opposed to talking about it in a traditional way. Therefore, the finding of the everyday miracle description is a significant difference between the charismatic literature which is a further example of participants disenchanting their enchantment to inculturate into their secular age. For example, many of the healing stories reported in the charismatic literature take place in a traditional location such as a church, using traditional language for the prayer for healing, praying for a major ailment, by an official church minister; for example all of Nigel Scotland's healings stories take place in traditional locations, using traditional language, prayed for by official church leaders. One example of this is Chantalle who 'attended the Bognor Bible Week' and was prayed for by 'the leader' which resulted in her 'totally healed by the Lord Jesus.'[122] Similarly, Andrew was 'prayed for at the Church's Easter Guest service' by 'the vicar, Tony Higton.'[123] Scotland documents

[122] Scotland, p.176
[123] Scotland, p.176

healing stories which have occurred in a church context which is what I consider a traditional location. This differs from my research which documented individuals reporting that they were healed in everyday locations such as a coffee shop, a gym or a friend's home. Moreover, Scotland reports that, 'others have trivialised miracles down to the level of 'God healed my headache.'[124] This highlights the underlying emphasis within the charismatic literature that healing miracles are usually required for major ailments as opposed to minor and everyday conditions.

The collection of charismatic literature reports healing miracles taking place in what I consider a traditional manner. That is, individuals being healed in traditional locations (churches, Christian events), being prayed for by a traditional individual (the official leader), being healed of major as opposed to minor ailments, and using religious language to describe the healing event (laying on of hands). Thus, although the healing narratives in Wales support the charismatic literature that charismatic Christians expect to be healed in their everyday lives, they differ in their content and description of how the miracle was performed. Therefore, to understand the implication of finding reports of everyday healing miracles in Wales and thus to answer the question, how these sacred encounters can be understood in the West as part of the secular age, the answer cannot simply be that these reports are explained within their confinement to a unique group of charismatics. The healing narratives collected in Wales have shown that although the context of the narratives sits within the charismatic tradition, these individuals in Wales are not separate to the secular world that surrounds them and they have still been influenced by their secular milieux. This is shown through the narratives

[124] Scotland, p.291

being sacred in nature and purpose, but secular in description. This poses the question, why do individuals in Wales describe their healing experiences in a different way to the charismatic literature? One possible explanation is that, because they live in a secular milieux, and this has affected the way in which they describe their sacred encounters. Thus, individuals in Wales have disenchanted their enchanted experiences to fit into their secular age resulting in an everyday enchantment.

The phenomenon of everyday enchantment within a secular age can be seen not just in how individuals in Wales talk about their healing experiences, but in also other 'spiritual experiences', for example, the recent popularity of Yoga and mindfulness. Jacqueline Siven and Joanna Mishtal in their study on, 'Yoga as Entrée to Complementary and Alternative Medicine and Medically Pluralistic Practices', say 'yoga is becoming increasingly ubiquitous in the United States- yoga classes are offered at fitness and private centres around the country, yoga-related clothing has established a significant market niche, and the media even track celebrities' yoga routines.'[125] Here in the UK, the NHS now recommends that individuals practice yoga 'at least 2 times a week' because 'there's some evidence that regular yoga practice is beneficial for people with high blood pressure, heart disease, aches and pains – including lower back pain – depression and stress.'[126] The NHS guide acknowledges yoga began in India 5000 years ago, but records none of its spiritual heritage. Likewise, Siven and Mishtal discovered that, 'the underlying

[125] Jacqueline Siven, and Joanna Mishtal, 'Yoga as Entrée to Complementary and Alternative Medicine and Medically Pluralistic Practices', *Human Organization*, Vol. 71, No. 4, (2012) 348-357 (Society for Applied Anthropology, 2012), (p.348)
[126] *A Guide to Yoga*, <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/guide-to-yoga/> [accessed 07/06/21]

perspectives that drive yoga practitioners to engage in particular health practices are poorly understood in anthropological and public health literature.'[127]

Yoga has therefore been disenchanted to make it 'commonplace in leisure centres, health clubs, schools, hospitals and surgeries.'[128] Despite yoga's spiritual roots, it is an accepted form of exercise within education and medicine with the intention to boost not spiritual wellbeing, but physical and mental wellbeing.[129] This is common amongst other spiritual practices also. Individuals can now access regular yoga classes, tarot card readings on their iPhone apps, and a healing miracle at their local nail parlour. [130] These spiritual events have been inculturated into our society because they have been de-spiritualised and de-religionised. Modernity has removed the mystery and Christians have not rejected this but joined in by allowing twenty first century culture to change the way they experience and access God in a modern world. They have also begun to explain their healing experiences in an everyday manner. The natural modern world has overshadowed the supernatural enchanted world meaning individuals now claim to experience a divine encounter in a 'naturally supernatural' way. Individuals have disenchanted enchantment resulting in the paradoxical experience for individuals of an everyday enchantment within our disenchanted secular age.

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[127] Siven and Mishtal, p.348
[128] *A Guide to Yoga*, p.1
[129] *A Guide to Yoga*, p.1
[130] Apple Store Tarot Card Reading & Horoscope, <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/tarot-card-reading-horoscope/id491892796> [accessed 08/07/21], See Nina, Church 4, healing narrative in chapter 3.

Disenchanted Religion and Secular Enchantment

Joshua Taft, in his article on 'Disenchanted Religion and Secular Enchantment in a Christmas Carol', complements Wessel's position on inculturation. He argues that our secular environment has caused us to 'downplay' religiosity, labelling the outcome of this process as, 'disenchanted religion and secular enchantment'.[131]

Taft comments that the secularisation theory, as we have discussed so far, 'makes the "enchanted" world fall apart, changing it from a realm of "mysterious incalculable forces" into an empty space governed by nothing more than "technical means and calculations".'[132] The impact of this on religion, Taft argues, is that religion either fades or 'it may attempt to survive disenchantment by downplaying his supernatural roots, but this rationalised religion nevertheless gives way to secularism.'[133] As Taft points out, 'Charles Taylor, most influentially, has argued that disenchantment need not mean "the end of religion", pointing to ways religious faith can survive within a secular age.'[134] However, Taft critiques this and explores 'forms of enchantment that linger within secularism itself.'[135] He says that we live in a complex age where 'belief, scepticism, enchantment, and disenchantment all thrive' and that the position of 'disenchanted religion and enchanted secularism' has been seriously overlooked.[136]

Taft believes these positions can be seen to co-exist together in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, where 'Dickens offers a disenchanted and humanistic Christianity' as

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[131] Joshua Taft, 'Disenchanted Religion and Secular Enchantment in "A Christmas Carol"', *Victorian Literature and Culture,* Vol. 43, No. 4 (Cambridge University Press Stable, 2015), p.659
[132] Taft, p.659
[133] Taft, p.659
[134] Taylor in Taft, p.659
[135] Taft, p.659
[136] Taft, p.659

well as ‘a variety of secular enchantment’.[137] Due to being a ‘secular story with a spiritual theme’, the ‘power of *A Christmas Carol* comes from its ability to achieve humane but entirely secular feelings of goodwill.’[138] Taft views *A Christmas Carol* as a secularised version of Christianity, ‘because the explicit religious content of *A Christmas Carol* occupies a position at the fringes of disenchanted faith, as close to secularism as possible. Its narrative never overtly rejects Christianity; typically, it pays a brief tribute to religious belief and then quickly diverts its attention to the secular world.’[139] Taft argues that this can be seen in Scrooge’s interaction with the ghosts of Christmas. He asserts,

> *A Christmas Carol* uses a genre whose conventions require the triumph of enchantment over disenchantment. And yet Dickens takes pains to limit this particular sort of supernatural belief. Ghosts and spirits occupy a position in A Christmas Carol much like that of divine activity in the text’s Christian humanism: in both cases, their presence is affirmed but minimized. The miraculous encounter with the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future is not repeated; Scrooge, after his conversion, "had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards". As with the supernatural elements of Dickensian Christianity, Scrooge’s brush with ghosts and spirits is a once-in-a-lifetime exception to a largely disenchanted world. And as in Dickens’s Christian humanism, the exceptional nature of the supernatural focuses attention back on everyday life. Scrooge’s “conversion” does not see him eagerly propagating his belief in spirits - those remain merely powerful memories - but rather treating other human beings with generosity and compassion. The supernatural becomes a vehicle for moral transformation, not something valued for its own sake.’[140]

Likewise, the healing narratives, intentionally or subconsciously were written in an everyday way which also appeared to downplay the religiousness of the language in which it is couched. The narrative was supernatural by default meaning enchantment also triumphed over disenchantment. However, in describing the miracle, like Taft’s critique

[137] Taft, p.600
[138] Taft, p.661
[139] Taft, p.662
[140] Taft, p.665

of *A Christmas Carol*, it could be argued that the narratives seemed to affirm but normalise the transcendent activity within the reported miracle. It is the everyday nature of the healing narratives which suggests that individuals in Wales today have disenchanted their enchanted experiences.

Moreover, when describing Scrooge's garbage, Taft highlights that the narrator draws powerful attention to this 'everyday' detail. Taft maintains,

> Even garbage has the power to compel the narrator's attention. This sort of fascination with the everyday is the sort of secular enchantment Scrooge learns to develop through his experience with the spirits, and the narrative's investment in description - even of the least appealing and most mundane things - reinforces its importance.[141]

Equally, when individuals in Wales describe their healing experience in an everyday way, not only does it show they have disenchanted their experience, but paradoxically the everyday detail carries enchanting and powerful detail of the claimed miracle. This complex discussion is summarised when Taft concludes his article by explaining that, '*A Christmas Carol* combines the disenchanted faith it offers thematically with a secular enchantment created through its form.'[142] Therefore 'by juxtaposing disenchanted religion and secular enchantment side by side, *A Christmas Carol* serves as a reminder that very different religious beliefs coexist at single historical moments.'[143]

This is what the data in Wales also reveals; that the everyday enchanting miracles can be reported within a secular and disenchanted age. Taft is correct to critique that the healing miracles support the view that our secular age can have coexisting beliefs of

[141] Taft, p.669
[142] Taft, p.664
[143] Taft, p.671

disenchanted religion and secular enchantment. It is this disenchanted religion which has led to the both-and age.

The Both-And Age

The finding of everyday healing miracles in Wales has implications for our secular society and on the discussion of our post-secular society. This next section discusses if the notion of everyday enchantment means that as scholars, we now must consider thinking in terms of a post-secular age.

Reflecting on Wessels' history of Christianity inculturating into new societies when considering how sacred encounters can be understood in a secular age, one suggestion would be that the healing miracles might 'transform' culture and its secular social imaginary. Wessels explains that there are different attitudes in the history of early Christianisation. He suggests, 'one is more that of Christ against culture, the other more that of Christ the transformer of culture.'[144] Secular2 theorists would argue that modernisation has abolished the need for Christianity and therefore it would have been 'secular against the Christian culture'. On the one hand, it could be argued that the healing miracles (and thus, enchantment still being a concept even in a secular age) might transform the secular culture. Building upon Saba Mahmood's argument in her 'Secularism, Hermeneutics, and Empire: The Politics of Islamic Reformation', this might look like the case of a both-and as opposed to either-or. In her essay, Mahmood calls for a 'critical analysis of what has been assumed to be the truth of secularism.'[145] She argues

[144] Wessels, p.13
[145] Saba Mahmood, Secularism, Hermeneutics, and Empire: The Politics of Islamic Reformation, *Public Culture* 18:2 (2006), <doi 10.1215/08992363-20 347>, p.347

that many scholars 'concede too much in accepting at face value the claim that secularism is about the banishment of religiosity from the public domain.'[146] Likewise, I suggest that the healing miracles found in Wales contribute to the argument that the post-secular does not have to be a society which is either secular or divine, enchanted or disenchanted, buffered or porous, but that a post-secular society might allow our social imaginaries to imagine a society where both-and is possible.

It is not being suggested that a small population of individuals getting healed in Wales is necessarily representative of a transformative shift out of the secular age in the West in its entirety. However, this small subset of people in Wales demonstrates the possibilities for transforming our secular age in other locations across Wales, the UK and further in the West. The reports of healing miracles found in Wales could be an indicator that the unconscious social imaginary and culture has shifted already. Therefore, these reports gathered mean that as scholars we should think in terms of a post-secular age, rather than a secular age.

Rajeev Bhargava contributes a chapter to the influential book, *Global Secularisms in a Post-Secular Age* and would critique this view and argue that there has never been a shift because in his context, 'We (In India) Have Always Been Post-Secular.'[147] By this he means that there has always been an option of 'both-and'. When describing this phenomenon, he argues,

> The religious and the non-religious should coexist and because both have their distinctive value, people do and ought to have meaningful options between them. In a sense, post-secular marks a stage on way to a condition where the religion-

[146] Mahmood, p.326
[147] Rajeev Bhargava, 'We (In India) Have Always Been Post-Secular' in *Global Secularisms in a Post-Secular Age*, ed. by Michael Rectenwald, Rochelle Almedia, George Levine (De Gruyter Inc, 2015) p.109-110

> secularity bipolarity is overcome and both are treated as species of the same, at present unnamed, genus. The post-secularist, therefore, seeks a rectification of hitherto mistaken or lop-sided secularist self-understanding and moves to a stage that recognizes religion's immanence and the transcendental qualities of the secular.[148]

It is important to acknowledge that India is a completely different context to Wales and Western Europe, with significantly differing cultures, histories, and levels of religiosity. Bhargava recognises this as one of his main arguments. He says, 'For Taylor, enchantment and exclusive humanism simply do not go together. Exclusive humanism is possible only for buffered selves. But Vedic selves are porous through and through.'[149] Thus, it is difficult to compare Welsh Christians to Indian Vedics as the starting place is entirely different. Taylor would argue Welsh Christians are buffered living in a disenchanted milieu whereas Bhargava argues in India they have always been porous and able to engage with multi-religions whilst also believing there is nothing beyond this world.[150]

However, something might be learnt from India which the West might be able to take into its post-secular age. That is, the phenomenon of the both-and. Bhargava contends,

> A post-secular society is one that is moving towards the cohabitation of religious and non-religious perspectives, where there exists both a self-reflexive secularity and an equally self-reflexive religiosity, and every member of the society has a meaningful option between the two, because there are no political biases in favor of one or the other. The state is as impartial as it can be between all these perspectives and life-experiences.[151]

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[148] Bhargava, p.109-110
[149] Bhargava, p.114
[150] Bhargava, p.114
[151] Bhargava, p.110

On the other hand, Cavanaugh argues in his chapter, 'The invention of the Religious-Secular Distinction', that a 'more accurate way of understanding what it means to live in a secular age is to say that we live in an age in which the religious-secular distinction has been invented.'[152] The invention of the religious-secular divide results in certain kinds of social arrangements. For example, one social arrangement is that it 'creates a different kind of world in which power is arranged in a manner quite distinct from the way it was arranged in the medieval period or in non-European contexts.'[153] Another social arrangement is 'to separate a realm of enchanted, otherworldly, non-rational belief and behaviour from a realm of disenchanted, mundane reason.'[154] Cavanaugh goes onto explain this with the following example,

> One common Western trope is the idea that "religion" is essentially more prone to violence than "secular" ideologies and institutions. Violence done in the name of "religion" is considered irrational and always reprehensible, whereas violence done in the name of "secular" interests — the nation, freedom, oil, and so on — is sometimes necessary and even praiseworthy. The religious-secular divide is one way of delegitimating certain kinds of violence and legitimating others.[155]

Cavanaugh uses this to critique Taylor by comparing this religious-secular divide to Taylor's distinction between enchantment-disenchantment. Cavanaugh explains,

> I remain unconvinced that the two distinctions track each other as closely as Taylor seems to indicate. For Taylor, the development of more interior forms of piety in the late medieval and early modern periods led to a disenchantment of the external world, a repression of magic and superstition. With the Protestant Reformation's emphasis on faith and de-emphasis on ritual came the evacuation of spirits from the external world; for example, the powers inherent in relics and places of pilgrimage faded in importance […] There is no question that things have changed in the last five hundred years. I am not sure, however, that

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[152] William Cavanaugh, 'The Invention of the Religious-Secular Distinction' in *At the Limits of the Secular: Reflections on Faith and Public Life*, ed. By Barbieri, William A., (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), p.96
[153] Cavanaugh, p.106
[154] Cavanaugh, p.108
[155] Cavanaugh, p.108

> describing the change is as simple as describing the way people experience the world.[156]

Cavanaugh goes on to propose why he thinks we are not as disenchanted as Taylor suggests using a modern analogy of shopping on Black Friday. He reflects,

> We may learn that the experience of shopping is a "secular" experience, one having nothing to do with demons or gods or supernatural powers. An empirical observation of the behaviour of U.S. shoppers on Black Friday, however, may indicate that the boundaries between the self and the world of material goods is not as buffered as Taylor describes it. There is a sense in which, as argued elsewhere, consumerism detaches the modern, affluent, Western self from production of the goods we consume and the people who manufacture them; there is even a sense in which consumers are detached from the products they consume because their desires constantly move from one product to another. But to describe this process as "disenchantment" is to miss the "magic" that is associated with products in a world made of marketing, and to miss the fantasy construction of self as one that transcends and consumes the material world. The very construction of the self as transcendent — and, in this sense, "buffered" — in other words, can be itself a kind of enchantment. It is certainly not the case that everyone can agree that we live in a disenchanted world.[157]

Therefore, Cavanaugh recognises that there are secular elements within our society that carry traits of the enchanted and, if this is not acknowledged, there is also a danger of not acknowledging that we have created the religious-secular divide. This means that if we allow the belief that, 'religion and non-religion are standard features of all societies at a certain stage of their development, [it] allows for the kind of secularist narrative that presents their separation as the proper sorting out of two essentially distinct aspects of reality that have been, at an earlier stage of development, mixed.'[158] Furthermore, Cavanaugh argues that,

> To obscure the way that the religious-secular divide is a modern Western invention also allows this divide to be seen not as a parochial and contingent phenomenon with limited applicability, but rather as the universal fate of every

[156] Cavanaugh, p.108
[157] Cavanaugh, p.109
[158] Cavanaugh, p.96

> society that reaches the same advanced stage of development as Western civilization.[159]

Hence, we deduce that 'the boundaries between the religious and the secular are fluid.'[160] Cavanaugh suggests 'then every instantiation of such a boundary must be interrogated for the kind of power it reflects and reinforces.'[161] Thus, the healing miracles found in Wales also help us to consider and 'interrogate' the boundaries of what it means to be disenchanted whilst living in a secular age.

Moreover, the reported healing miracles found in Wales support Cavanaugh's theory that living 'in a secular age is to say that we live in an age in which the religious-secular distinction has been invented.'[162] This is because the healing narratives are both religious and secular. They are religious in nature because the individual is talking about a miracle caused by God. However, they are secular in the sense that they are 'everyday' – integrated into the quotidian aspects of people's lives. This is what I have labelled 'disenchanted enchantment'. This is especially true for the mixed healing narratives. Some of the religious encounters are described as taking place in secular locations, in the context of a secular age and using secular language to describe the event. The healing narratives thereby indicate that there is not a strong secular/religious divide. This is an example of how the healing narratives help us consider and interrogate the boundaries of what it means to live in a secular age.

Although Christians in Wales have disenchanted their enchantment to fit into a secular society, the everyday enchantment is still having a small transformative shift on

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[159] Cavanaugh, p.96
[160] Cavanaugh, p.113
[161] Cavanaugh, p.113
[162] Cavanaugh, p.96

Welsh culture. The environment is still mostly secular, nevertheless the social imaginary has started to change as healing stories are shared amongst friends, wider communities and even in the media.[163] Thus, the healing miracles found in Wales might be an indicator of the start of a 'transformation' (to use Wessels' term), of culture and the social imaginary in Wales. The secular age has not influenced the individuals reporting healing miracles so much that they are immune to spiritual help. But it also has not left them vulnerable or naive that they only seek spiritual help over medical help. These findings contribute to Bhargava's argument that they are indicators of what a post-secular age looks like. The action of disenchanting the enchantment provides a gauge that in Wales, individuals are trying to express their everyday enchanting experiences within a secular environment. This explains how these sacred encounters can be understood in a secular age. This expression of everyday enchantment is a result of living in a disenchanted secular age, however it might also be an indicator that there is a seeping out of the mould of what it means to live in a secular3 age, and instead suggests that as scholars, we now must consider thinking in terms of a post-secular age.

Section 3: Re-Enchantment, Critiques of a Disenchanted Enchantment

There are two major critiques of the theory that individuals in Wales have disenchanted their enchantment in order to fit into a secular age. The first is that we have never actually been disenchanted. This critique comes from Jason Ã. Josephson-Storm. The second is that our secular age has been re-enchanted. This theory builds upon the work of Linda Woodhead, Paul Heelas and Christopher Partridge. This next section will examine these

[163] See documentary 'Young, Welsh and Pretty Religious' BBC documentary for religion and Christianity in Wales, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p078lg9j> [accessed 20.06.20]

two critiques to provide an alternative answer to the question how the sacred encounters reported in the healing narratives can be understood in our secular age.

The Myth of Disenchantment

A critique of disenchanted enchantment comes from Jason Ã. Josephson-Storm who argues in his, *The Myth of Disenchantment,* that we have never been disenchanted. This next section will therefore evaluate the extent to which we are disenchanted by engaging with Josephson-Storm, which will help consider the implications of finding everyday healing miracles reported in Wales.

Josephson-Storm engages with Taylor to challenge his theory of disenchantment in its entirety. He does this by offering an alternative historical narrative to Taylor's narrative of disenchantment, which instead argues that we have always been enchanted.[164] The finding of reports of healing miracles in Wales lends some weight to Josephson-Storm's position that the disenchantment theory is a myth. However, this section will evaluate Josephson-Storm's position to argue that there is a more fluid middle ground between Josephson-Storm's enchanted age and Taylor's disenchanted age. That is, we are much less enchanted but not fully disenchanted. Instead, we disenchant our enchantment.

Josephson-Storm begins by explaining the position of most secularists from secular2 (and perhaps secular3) saying,

> Scholars -moderniser and postmodernists alike- often contend that what most makes the modern world modern is that people no longer believe in magic and spirits. The

[164] Josephson-Storm, p.3

> age of myth is allegedly over, the gods have died, vibrant nature has been subjugated and instrumental rationality and mechanistic materialism rule in their place.[165]

He believes these scholars to be wrong and argues throughout his work 'that we have never been disenchanted.'[166] He demonstrates this by tracing the history of the myth of disenchantment in philosophy, anthropology, sociology, folklore, psychoanalysis, and religious studies. He claims,

> The majority of people in the heartland of disenchantment believe in magic or spirits today, and it appears that they did so at the high point of modernity. Education does not directly result in disenchantment [...] Secularisation and disenchantment are not correlated. Moreover, it is easy to show that, almost no matter how you define the terms, there are few figures in the history of the academic disciplines that cannot be shown to have had some relation or engagement with what their own epoch saw as magic or animating forces.[167]

It must be noted here that I do intentionally group magic and Christian healing into one category of enchantment, despite acknowledging the differences between the two. I am not suggesting that magic and healing are the same. Neither am I suggesting that if we are not as enchanted as our ancestors were 500 years ago, that the majority of people are engaging in magic and superstitious thinking. I agree with Taylor that disenchantment has meant the removal of a reliance on magic and superstition from our society, resulting in it becoming more secular. Thus, people no longer think or behave in a manner relating to spiritual beings or superstitious actions like they used to. However, for the sake of this critique, I am categorising healing and magic together in order to present the modernist perspective. Secularisation theorists would also categorise healing and magic together, as neither depend on scientific thought. Secularisation is the removal of magic and engagement with the transcendent from the public and therefore when this

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[165] Josephson-Storm, p.304
[166] Josephson-Storm, p.3
[167] Josephson-Storm, p.304

section explores Josephson-Storm's argument, it is acknowledging that the 'myth of disenchantment' relates to both magic and Christian healing.

Modernists and Miracles

Presenting historical, academic figures who engaged with magic as well as modernity is one of the main ways in which Josephson-Storm supports his argument for the myth of disenchantment. Throughout his work, Josephson-Storm highlights the 'theorists of disenchantment who were entangled with enchantment' showing how 'different magic and spiritualists revivals entered the lives of modernity's main theorists.'[168] He notes,

> while we know that wonder still dwells in the counterculture and it is probably a truism that scientists often hold to strange ideas outside of their specific domain of expertise, I want to investigate the least likely people- the very theorists of modernity as disenchantment- and show how they worked out their various insights inside an occult context, in a social world overflowing with spirits and magic and how the weirdness of the world generated so much normativity.[169]

He goes on to describe a number of individuals of this ilk:

> What we might think of as the orthodox or establishment disciplines have been hardly less magically inclined. Spiritualism and theosophy have appealed to biologists like Alfred Russel Wallace and inventors like Thomas Edison. Nobel Prize-winning physicists from Marie Curie to Jean Baptiste Perrin to Brian Josephson have often been interested in parapsychology. Even computer scientists like Alan Turing believed in psychical powers. Moreover, despite the laments of the new materialists, panpsychism has been a persistent counter-current in philosophical circles as well-known thinkers- including Spinoza, Leibniz, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Margaret Cavendish […]- all argued that the material universe should be thought of as thoroughly animated or possessed of mind and awareness.[170]

Josephson-Storm argues that,

> this list barely scratches the surface. When combined with survey after survey that suggests popular belief in the supernatural, miracles, witchcraft, spirits and the

[168] Josephson-Storm, p.304
[169] Josephson-Storm, p.6
[170] Josephson-Storm, p.305

> mysterious, it makes it hard to countenance the idea that disenchantment is the central feature of the history of the industrialised "West". [171]

Many of the main theorists that Josephson-Storm investigates are involved in magic, seances, witchcraft and other 'black magic', with which the Christian Church would dissociate itself. Although this research deals with healing miracles within Christianity as opposed to magic, Josephson-Storm's main argument is still applicable to this research.[172] His main argument is that these theorists were the pioneers of science, rational thought and disenchantment and therefore should have completely rejected enchantment rather than be directly involved in it. Similarly, like Josephson-Storm's findings, it was quite common for those within science and medicine to contribute a healing story of their own. Those who should have rejected healing miracles, according to Taylor's logic, conversely admitted to praying for them.

If we align ourselves with modernists and disenchantment theorists, claims about healing miracles would not be believed to be true at all, let alone from those within the field of medicine and science who apparently led the way in the argument for disenchantment. C.S. Lewis also critiques this view in his 1944 *The Abolition of Man.* He contends,

> The fact that the scientist has succeeded where the magician failed has put such a wide contrast between them in popular thought that the real story of the birth of science is misunderstood. You will even find people who write about the sixteenth century as if magic were a medieval survival and science the new thing that came in to sweep it away. Those who have studied the period know better. There was

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[171] Josephson-Storm, p.305

[172] Both Charles Taylor and Josephson-Storm argue it was Frazer who first distinguished between magic and religion. Arguably it was not until the Reformation that there was a clear and distinct separation within the official Church and its teaching on what is magic and what is religion. However, secular humanists and modern theorists would organise healing miracles and magic as one category which has been disenchanted. Therefore, I acknowledge the differences between magic and Christian healing/ the religion of Christianity. Despite this, against the arguments of secular humanists to which Josephson-Storm's work is aimed, his argument still applies to this.

> very little magic in the Middle Ages: the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are the high noon of magic. The serious magical endeavour and the serious scientific endeavour are twins: one was sickly and died, the other strong and throve. But they were twins. They were born of the same impulse.[173]

Lewis' reflections thus align with Josephson-Storm's finding that modernity's main theorists dabbled in magic. Likewise, the healing narratives collected in this study also reveal that professionals in the field of modern science, including some senior doctors and physicians, also believe in, pray for and claim to receive healing miracles. Within the sample of healing narratives collected, there were reports of healing from senior consultants, surgeons, professors, businessmen and businesswomen - individuals who secularists might not consider would contribute stories of healing and engagements with God in addition to modern medicine. These narratives reinforce the idea that the healing miracle described by these individuals was not a rejection of medical science but a case of 'both-and' for them. In fact, 33% of healing narratives collected spoke about a healing miracle alongside seeking medical help for their ailment.

John Burke in a similar study in the US found comparable results. Burke researched 1,000 stories of those who had claimed to have had 'Near-Death Experiences' (NDEs) and shares his fascinating results of those around the world who gave startling commonalities when describing what they saw in their glimpse of the afterlife.[174] His research is similar to the healing miracles found in Wales because he also includes testimonies from those who modernity's theorists would argue would not believe in 'fairy tales' such as heaven, an afterlife and spiritual encounters with Jesus on their death bed. Burke explains, 'I've tried to choose stories from people with little to no profit motive:

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[173] Clive S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (Golden Keys Success publisher 1943), p.38
[174] John Burke, *Imagine Heaven* (Baker Books 2015), p.11

orthopaedic surgeons, commercial airline pilots, professors, neurosurgeons- people who probably don't need the money but have credibility to lose by making up wild tales.'[175] Similarly, the research in Wales found that those within the field of medicine, education and politics, were also claiming a healing miracle. Like Burke and Josephson-Storm's research, it was the least expected who also experienced something of the enchanted. This finding continues to add to the debate of considering the limits and boundaries of our disenchanted and secular age.

On the other hand, Taylor may counter Josephson-Storm's position, arguing that he has never claimed that we are entirely disenchanted. It is a nuanced position because although Taylor's main emphasis is that 'our ancestors lived in an enchanted world, and we do not', he caveats this statement by adding 'at the very least, we live in a *much less* "enchanted" world.[176] This statement from Taylor was in response to the editors of the website *The Immanent Frame,* when asked to summarise his *A Secular Age.*[177] The fact that this caveat made it into the very brief summary shows Taylor's ambivalence about the extent to which we have been disenchanted, and his subtlety despite his ambitious overall argument. He acknowledges that there are still elements of the magical and mystical as well as engagement with the transcendent. Instead, the purpose of Taylor's historical narrative is to show a general overview of how we have gone from being completely enchanted to (almost totally) disenchanted.

Thus, his position is far more complex than Josephson-Storms' critique.

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[175] Burke, p.17
[176] Taylor in Alan Jacobs, 'Fantasy and the Buffered Self', *The New Atlantis,* No. 41, (2014), 3-18 (p.3) Italics not my own.
[177] Jacobs, p.3

Moreover, a further critique of Josephson-Storm is that he does not engage with Taylor within the realm of critical theory to address Taylor's main emphasis of his argument- the contestability of belief in our secular3 age. Josephson-Storm examines what individuals have believed in the past and what they believe today. He explains,

> My main point is that beliefs of this sort have clearly not suffered an irrevocable and precipitous falling off. Anthropologists have argued that acceptance of some form of paranormal- and especially belief in spirits-- is the contemporary global norm rather than the exception […] so at the very least if magic has been in decline since the sixteenth century; it does not seem to have declined much.[178]

Josephson-Storm's focus here is on what people believe. Even when he caveats his statements, his main aim is to reveal that people's beliefs have changed very little. For example, he states,

> To be clear I am not arguing that belief in phenomena such as ghosts has remained unchanged throughout modern European history; there have clearly been significant shifts in the terms meaning as a conception of "spirit" has globalised and to the extent absorbed other conceptions of the supernatural.[179]

While these points are significant to the debate, for Taylor, the crux of his argument rests not on what people believe, but *how* they believe. Taylor argues that different options of beliefs have created a fragilization.[180] This fragilization changes the way in which people believe what they believe. For example, Taylor puts forward the view that,

> The fact is that this kind of multiplicity of faiths has little effect as long as it is neutralized by the sense that being like them is not really an option for me. As long as the alternative is strange and other, perhaps despised, but perhaps just too different, too weird, too incomprehensible, so that becoming that isn't really conceivable for me, so long will their difference not undermine my embedding in my own faith. This changes when through increased contact, interchange, even perhaps intermarriage, the other becomes more and more like me, in everything else

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[178] Josephson-Storm, p.34
[179] Josephson-Storm, p.33
[180] Fragilization- 'In the face of different options, where people who lead "normal" lives do not share my faith (and perhaps believe something very different), my own faith commitment becomes fragile- put into question, dubitable.' Definition from Smith, *How Not to be Secular*, p.141

> but faith: same activities, professions, opinions, tastes, etc. Then the issue posed by difference becomes more insistent: why my way, and not hers? There is no other difference left to make the shift preposterous or unimaginable.[181]

Thus, for Taylor, fragilization affects not just what we believe, but the mind and thought process behind how we believe. On the contrary, Josephson-Storm argues that what we believe has not changed tremendously. He argues,

> It would seem that despite being in some sense less Godly, Britain seems to be no less haunted. This is worth highlighting because it suggests that increasing atheism is not necessarily correlated to a decline in enchantment [...] the death of God does not necessitate the death of magic, and if anything, secularisation seems to amplify enchantment. [182]

Although referring to the death of God here rather than healing through the Christian God, Josephson-Storm implies that having the option of atheism has made no significant impact on an individual's belief in magic. However, he does not consider the ways in which one believes. A prevailing belief in enchantment, despite 'the death of God', still proves Taylor's point that the way in which we believe has changed; in contrast to 500 years ago when enchantment was intrinsically linked to God. Therefore Josephson-Storm's focus on what people believe does not consider Taylor's main argument of the contestability of belief in our secular age. Thus, Taylor goes beyond a summary of our current state of society, and also philosophically analyses what he believes to be the state of individuals' minds and their beliefs.

Despite not addressing the contestability of belief, Josephson-Storm still has a valid argument proposing an alternative narrative of an enduring enchanted age. If he is correct and disenchantment is a myth, then this assumes that our age is still enchanted. Nonetheless, Josephson-Storm's argument only takes us so far. Taylor is correct to argue

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[181] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p.304
[182] Josephson-Storm, p.31

that there has been a major and undeniable shift in society in which individuals are no longer as enchanted as they used to be and the result of that has led to those in the West living in a disenchanted milieu. This is because we do indeed live in a world of more advanced science and technology that allows us to better rationalise events or the world around us, rather than assign them solely to a spiritual interpretation. Therefore, if arguably the change is not in the environment (i.e., we do still live in a disenchanted, secular age) then the shift must be within the individual as Taylor claims. Therefore, it is the individual who has disenchanted their enchanting experiences in order to fit into their secular surroundings. This has resulted in an 'everyday enchantment'.

A Re-enchanted Secular Age

The second critique of individuals disenchanting their enchantment comes from those who argue that instead our society has been re-enchanted and this explains how we are to understand sacred encounters within a secular age.

Christopher Partridge in his, *The Re-Enchantment of the West Volume 1 Alternative Spiritualities, Sacralization, Popular Culture and Occulture*, argues that 'whilst disenchantment theory cannot be dismissed, it is by no means the whole story. There is some evidence to suggest that 'a rising tide of spirituality [...] is producing a re-enchantment of the world.'[183] He defines re-enchantment as

> Spiritualities […] that are not only quite different from the dying forms of religion, but are often defined over against them, and are articulated in ways that do not carry the baggage of traditional religion. Unlike those forms of religion which are in serious decline, the new spiritual awakening makes use of thought-forms, ideas and practices which are not at all alien to the majority of Westerners. They emerge from an essentially non-Christian religio-cultural milieu, a milieu that both re-

[183] Christopher Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West, Vol 2: Alternative Spiritualities, Sacralization, Popular Culture and Occulture* (A&C Black, 2006), p.38

> sources and is resourced by popular culture - the 'occult milieu', what I refer to as 'occulture'.[184]

Partridge evidences this re-enchantment throughout his book with statistics of growing interest in alternative religiosity. For example,

> the percentage of 'occult' books published since 1930 has more than doubled, 50 and, according to a report in The Economist in 2001, 'sales of books about yoga and reiki [...] have exploded in the past 18 months', 51 is indicative of the steady increase of popular interest in alternative religiosity.[185]

Moreover, he includes research on ways in which people describe their religiosity. For example, '31 per cent describe themselves as "spiritual", compared with only 27 per cent who say they are "religious"'[186] A further way in which Partridge evidences his claim for re-enchantment in the West is through New Age Healing. He explains,

> an example of what I would understand to be 're-enchantment' is the way a typically modern, science-based profession such as medicine is now witnessing a rise of interest in what used to be called 'New Age healing'. Manuals such as the Nurse's Handbook of Alternative and Complementary Therapies (produced by medical professionals) are being published and alternative, holistic approaches to illness and 'the spiritual' are increasingly being explored and utilized within mainstream medicine.[187]

Again he uses statistics to evidence this claim, arguing that in 'the UK in 2000 […] 39 per cent of the population had tried alternative medicines; 32 per cent had tried aromatherapy; 22 per cent had tried meditation.'[188] From these statistics, Partridge concludes that 'beyond the empty pews there is a spiritual revival […] Although the British are undoubtedly staying away from church, they are not abandoning spirituality.'[189] Thus there are practitioners outside of the Church, such as contemporary

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[184] Partridge, p.4
[185] Partridge, p.47
[186] Partridge, p.48
[187] Partridge, p.52
[188] Partridge, p.52
[189] Partridge, p.50

Goddess worship and contemporary Paganism who are reporting healing experiences within the 'secular' West. Partridge therefore explains these encounters by urging us to change the way in which we consider the Western world. He asserts that 'while disenchantment is part of an accurate interpretation of the Western landscape, and for many years has been the dominant interpretation, it is time to move on and recognize the emergence of new realities.'[190] For Partridge, these new realities include 'Occulture, alternative spiritualities and 'soft religion'' which he has deemed 'the re-enchantment of the West'.[191] Therefore, rather than interpretating the implications of finding healing miracles in Wales as a new disenchanted enchantment, they can be explained as a continuation and evidence of the re-enchantment of the West.

Similarly, Abby Day in her, *Believing in Belonging: Belief and Social Identity in the Modern World*, builds upon the argument that we are re-enchanted as opposed to disenchanted. Day researches individual beliefs of those who 'believe without belonging' and finds that many who reject religion, still believe in the 'transcendent or paranormal.'[192] She explains that during her interviews, 'informants related experiences that may be described as 'supernatural', or 'metaphysical', or 'paranormal', although they did not use those terms. Mostly, they told me about feeling the presence of a named, deceased relative.'[193] For example, she introduced Chris who 'positioned himself from the beginning of the interview as an atheist.'[194] However, Day goes on to report that Chris, 'As it transpired, he believed in aliens, multiple universes, and ghosts, although not in

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[190] Partridge, p.57
[191] Partridge, p.188
[192] Abby Day, *Believing in Belonging: Belief and Social Identity in the Modern World* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p.72
[193] Day, p.99
[194] Day, p.99

God, the legitimacy of the church, or other religious ideas and institutions he had initially associated with 'belief'.'[195] Day's interviews lead her to question, 'why do we have, for example, near silence within the sociology of religion about individuals' beliefs and yet a near-obsession with societal secularization?'[196] Day concludes that her 'findings therefore complicate theories of modernity by showing how 'belief' does not disappear, but is shifted to the social, where belief becomes the ultimate 'project' of modernity: always changing and being improved upon.'[197] Thus, the finding of everyday miracles should not be surprising because 'belief' and spiritual experiences, according to Day, have not disappeared. Instead, they have 'shifted, resulting in a continuation of spirituality as opposed to its decline.

Likewise, Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas also recognise a decline in religion and yet a growth in spirituality. They say in their introduction to the collection of essays in, *Predicting Religion Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures,* that,

> Religion might be in decline, but spirituality – perceived to be less dogmatic, more tolerant and flexible, and better suited to the pursuit of personal inner quests – is waxing. At one extreme such spirituality has given rise to new movements such as those called New Age; at the other it shades off into a quest for the healing and energization of body and mind which is catered for on the high street rather than in designated sacred spaces.[198]

In their earlier work, *Religion in Modern Times,* Heelas discusses this concept, labelling it 'spiritualities of life'.[199] He says, 'spiritualities of life focus on what already lies within the order of things. Teachings and practises dwell on the intrinsic spirituality of the person

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[195] Day, p.99-100
[196] Day, p.4
[197] Day, Conclusion, section 1, abstract.
[198] Grace Davie, Paul Heelas, and Linda Woodhead, eds. *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures* (Taylor & Francis, 2017), Introduction section 1
[199] Linda JP. Woodhead, and Paul LF. Heelas., '*Religion in Modern Times: An Interpretive Anthology'* (Blackwell, Oxford 2000) p.110

or the integral spirituality of the natural order as a whole.'[200] Heelas believes that spiritualities of life are found in all parts of the world, but in the West, it is manifested in what is known as 'New Age' or 'Paganism/Neo-paganism'.[201] An important characteristic of spiritualities of life is that 'authority is taken to lie within' as opposed to 'relying on dictates of tradition.'[202] Thus, 'spiritualities of life are detraditionalized forms of religiosity.'[203]

Woodhead and Heelas map four trends of thought concerning religion in our modern world. These include, 'Secularization', 'Detraditionalization', 'Universalization' and 'Sacralization'.[204] What is fascinating about this body of work is that they suggest that 'both secularization and sacralization appear to be occurring in different parts of the world.'[205] Sacralization theory is the most relevant to this thesis because it provides an explanation to how sacred encounters can be understood in the secular West. Woodhead and Heelas argue that,

> Secularization theory at least in its strongest form, maintains that modernisation inevitably involves the withering away of religion. In stark contrast, sacralization theory focuses attention on religion gaining in strength in modern times.[206]

Sacralization involves the growth of religion through 'conversion', 'deprivatization' (religion playing greater role in the public sphere), and 'intensification' (nominally religious individuals making greater, more intense and public declarations of faith).[207] Woodhead and Heelas point toward the spiritualities of life for this sacralization because

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[200] Heelas in *Religion in Modern Times*, p.110
[201] Heelas in Religion in Modern Times, p.111
[202] Heelas in Religion in Modern Times, p.111
[203] Heelas in Religion in Modern Times, p.111
[204] Woodhead and Heelas, *Religion in Modern Times*, p.305-429
[205] Woodhead and Heelas, *Religion in Modern Times*, p.1-2
[206] Woodhead and Heelas, *Religion in Modern Times*, p.429
[207] Woodhead and Heelas, *Religion in Modern Times*, p.429-430

it ‘caters so well for the widespread cultural turn to the self’, alongside, ‘their strong emphasis on freedom, appear to appeal to many in the Western world […] attracting the previously non-religious.’[208] Therefore, it is not just healing miracles which are being reported in the secular West. Instead, under the term ‘spiritualities of life’, sacred encounters are being recorded, causing sacralization to be as feasible and believable as secularisation. Woodhead and Heelas comment, ‘quite a fundamental change has taken place whereby many scholars now believe that religion is far from incompatible with modernisation.’[209] Heelas describes what these encounters look like in our modern times when he discusses ‘growth beyond the church and chapel’.[210] He states that ‘there has been an increase in the numbers of those who are religious (in an apparently wide variety of ways) without (or rarely) going to church or chapel.’[211] These sacred encounters in modern times, outside of a church/chapel contexts, can therefore include, ‘magical or occult powers, found in connection with astrology, card-reading, palmistry, clairvoyance, mediumship, parapsychology, and in connection with many superstitions. For Heelas, sacred encounters in the West can therefore be understood in ‘a secular age’ because secularism might not be the dominant theory anymore which explains our modern times. If sacralization was taken as seriously as secularisation then it might be understood that ‘religion’, whether inside or outside the church/chapel, is not in decline. Finding healing miracles in Wales is therefore consistent with evidence of growing sacralization in the West, whereby sacred encounters are becoming the norm in modern times.

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[208] Woodhead and Heelas, *Religion in Modern Times*, p.431
[209] Woodhead and Heelas, *Religion in Modern Times*, p.429
[210] Heelas, *Expressive Spirituality and Humanistic Expressivism,* p.451
[211] Heelas, *Expressive Spirituality and Humanistic Expressivism,* p.451

These counter arguments provide an alternative view to understanding the findings of healing miracles in Wales within the context of a secular age. If one is to broaden the parameters of what it means to be religious and in what forms sacred encounters take place, it is clear that there are many 'spiritualities of life' which occur in said secular age. The New Age movement, along with research on those who believe in the supernatural outside of a formal Christian belief, suggest that sacred encounters are occurring today in multiple forms and in fact our age can be described as re-enchanted or as sacralized as opposed to secularized. Scholars such as Woodhead, Heelas and Day have demonstrated how spirituality and the spiritual experiences that follow are individualistic. They are not bound or restricted to a particular religious or world view, a church doctrine or teaching. Instead, within our re-enchanted world, people can experience spirituality in a free and individualist way. Within this re-enchanted framework, the healing miracles found in Wales could also be evidence of individuals performing and receiving healing miracles in an individualist way which are not considered traditional healing miracles, but instead re-enchanted 'everyday' miracles. However, although this theory is plausible, it should be noted that the healing narratives were collected from charismatic churches. Individuals explicitly stated that they did belong to a church community, and the leaders of those churches taught, modelled, and encouraged a particular way of praying for and receiving a healing miracle. This discussion could contribute to further research on this topic, examining whether the reporting of 'everyday' healing miracles is evidence of individuals' belief in a re-enchanted age, or is connected to denominational beliefs and teachings about healing found within particular church communities.

Moreover, Taylor argues in his later article, 'Disenchantment-Reenchantment', that,

> the process of disenchantment is irreversible. The aspiration to reenchant (or apprehended danger this threatens) points to a different process, which may indeed reproduce features analogous to the enchanted world but does not in any simple sense restore it.[212]

Thus, although there might still be sacred encounters occurring in a post-secular age, it is not a sign of re-enchantment. I would be inclined to agree with Taylor here, that the healing miracles found in Wales is not a sign of re-enchantment, but instead a sign of ongoing enchantment, which has been disenchanted to inculturate into a secular age.

In summary then, there are parallels between spiritualities of life within our re-enchanted age, with the everyday healing miracles found in Wales. Healing miracles in Wales, like other sacred encounters in the secular West, are examples of 'everyday enchantment', whereby in both cases individuals have disenchanted their enchantment in order to inculturate into their secular milieux. However, the parallels are not absolute. Thus, although this critique of re-enchantment is impressive, I remain convinced that because individuals have lived in what was predominantly considered a secular Wales, they have learnt to disenchant their enchanting experiences in order to inculturate into said secular age.

In conclusion, this chapter has examined the implications of finding reports of everyday healing miracles within Wales in our secular and post-secular age. Building upon Wessel's theory of Christianity inculturating into different contexts, I argue that individuals in Wales have disenchanted their enchanting experiences to inculturate into their secular age. I adopt Charles Taylor's definition of what it means to be disenchanted within a secular3 to build this argument.

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[212] Taylor, '*Disenchantment- Reenchantment*', p.287

I ensure the implications of these findings are firmly situated within their religious context. For the healing narratives collected in this research, most of the individuals described themselves as charismatic or affiliated with a charismatic church. Therefore, these sacred encounters can be understood as occurring because these individuals belong to a distinct and unique religious group who place a priority on praying for people for healing. Thus, it is not surprising to hear of reports amongst charismatics being healed, because it is the cornerstone of what makes this religious group distinctive, especially in a secular age. In many ways the healing narratives complement the charismatic literature and provide evidence on what is frequently missing regarding how charismatics live out and practise healing. However, what was unusual about my findings was that the way in which people were speaking about their healing experience was sometimes quite different to what was reported in the charismatic literature. Individuals were reporting getting healed in everyday locations such as coffee shops and being prayed for my friends, as opposed to healing ministers at a church service. This contributed to the charismatic literature by providing evidence of both the 'where' and the 'how'; i.e., that individuals are experience healing in an everyday setting and are also describing their healing miracles in an everyday way.

Lastly then, I critiqued this theory of everyday enchantment by examining theories of 'the myth of disenchantment' and 're-enchantment'. Josephson-Storm argues that we have never been disenchanted, which he supports by highlighting famous modernists who still believed in the supernatural or paranormal. Another critique comes from Partridge, Woodhead and Heelas, and Day who argue that our modern age is re-enchanted. They evidence this re-enchantment through 'spiritualities of life', revealing that there are

numerous individuals who believe in healing outside of a church context, citing sacred encounters through the New Age movement and other spiritualities.

The accounts of physical healing I gathered and analysed were mostly described in an everyday way resulting in an everyday enchantment within our secular3 age, suggesting that individuals have disenchanted their enchantment. Before concluding, post-secularist theorist William Barbieri, suggests that

> Secularity 3 envelops its occupants in an "immanent frame" constituting not a set of beliefs, but the "sensed context" in which we develop our beliefs, and in this frame naïve religious faith is eclipsed by the possibility of a self-sufficing, "exclusive humanism." It remains the case, however, that from the standpoint of the individual Secularity 3 can be experienced as closed — a state under which it is nonetheless still possible, even under conditions of immanence, to achieve a moral or spiritual experience of "fullness" — or, alternatively, as open to religious transcendence.[213]

Barbieri succinctly summarises Taylor's description of the composition of our secular3 age. The healing miracles found in Wales fit within this description of what it means to live in a secular3 age. Despite the secular context, it is possible to have an open perspective to the transcendence. Be that as it may, once the claimed interaction with the transcendent has occurred, it is the way in which people describe this experience that brings us to the boundary of what it means to be secular3. The 'everyday enchantment' is born out of a desire to inculturate into our secular3 age. Nevertheless, the description of everyday miracles is a sign that we are seeping out of the boundary of what it means to be secular3, toward a more fluid middle ground of a both-and, post-secular age.

In conclusion therefore, although individuals live in a disenchanted secular age, they are open to engagement with the transcendent in an everyday way, at their choosing

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[213] Barbieri, p.118

or when introduced by others. By describing ‘everyday enchantment’ in a secular3 age, individuals have disenchanted their enchantment to inculturate into their secular society. I argue this process of disenchanted enchantment is the major implication of finding reports of everyday healing miracles in Wales and understanding why and how people in Wales talk about their experience of healing miracles.

Conclusion

This research project investigated how people in Wales talk about their experience of a healing miracle. I discovered that most people speak about their healing experience in an everyday way. This finding has implications for our secular and post-secular age. The everyday miracles being reported in Wales indicate that charismatic Christians in Wales have disenchanted their enchanted experiences in order to inculturate into a secular age; I call this 'everyday enchantment'.

This thesis began with an investigation of the literature on healing miracles; of which there is a notable lack. I began by providing an overview of the historical literature to outline a contextual framework for approaching healing practices in Christian traditions. This proved important for considering my question, 'How charismatic Christians in Wales talk about their experience of healing miracles?' The historic literature indicated that healing practices are culturally bound within different contexts, affecting the way in which people understand and articulate a healing miracle. This lay a foundation for my later argument that charismatic Christianity in Wales today has disenchanted its healing miracles to adapt to a secular age.

Next, I discussed the literature on healing miracles in Wales. As the chapter demonstrated, there are few academic and contemporary studies on Christian healing in Wales. Some of the literature which discussed contemporary healing miracles in Wales came from advocacy and denominational literature. This specific and subjective body of literature is written by Church leaders with the aim of teaching their church congregations how to pray for healing. This body of literature was important because it offered an insight into contemporary practices of healing from those who were reporting a phenomenon of

healing. The other main body of literature which discusses healing miracles is the charismatic literature. The studies of charismatic churches alongside the theology and practices of charismatics also provided insight into the charismatic churches researched in Wales and the context of their beliefs and practices of healing. However, as demonstrated by the House of Bishops' report, the denominational literature was not necessarily reflective of the wider experience of the lived religion, meaning the actual practice, understanding and experience, of those connected to Christian churches.[214] This neglected area of investigation on the topic of healing miracles in Wales therefore led to my motivation to produce further research in this area. This study addresses the deficit in research by providing an academic and contemporary study on healing miracles in Wales.

The last section of the literature review examined contemporary sociological studies which addressed contemporary healing practices. These studies, however, mainly occurred in locations outside of the UK such as America, Canada and the Global South. Although helpful as a point of reference, the relevance of these studies to my own was limited owing to the different social, cultural, and theological contexts in which the studies were conducted. Moreover, these studies often researched a variety of approaches to healing practices, beyond the Christian tradition, including practices such as 'reiki', 'psychic healing', 'yoga and meditation', and 'inner healing'.[215] These studies therefore provide insight into a broad range of people's experiences of healing and lived religion across different beliefs and cultures, whilst my study has aimed to make its own contribution by offering an in-depth analysis of what people say about physical healing

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[214] A Time to Heal. *A Report for the House of Bishops on the Healing Ministry* (Church House Publishing, 2000), p.47-48

[215] Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*, (Oxford University Press, USA; 1st Edition, 2008), p.121-127

within Christianity. Thus, by limiting my research to physical healing miracles within Christianity, I was able to fill a gap in the literature and provide a volume of narratives which spoke about Christian healing in Wales. The 605 narratives I collected therefore offered a rich concentration of data. The data was not mixed with other types of healing and therefore allowed for a more focussed analysis within their particular context. This analysis enabled me to answer question on 'what charismatic Christians say when they talk about a healing miracle' in a detailed way.

The literature review raised many questions and opportunities for further research. As discussed, healing practices have been historically documented, however, as I have already noted, there is a lack of contemporary studies in Wales. Having filled this gap, an area for further research would be a comparison of how this study and others like it, compare to and contrast with the historic findings on healing. The limited time frame and scope of this research did not allow for comparison and analysis of the contemporary against the historical research. However, this would be an area for future study. At first glance, by comparing contemporary reports of healing miracles with those in the historical literature, they appear to strengthen the position that healing miracles are a prominent feature of Christianity. Moreover, by comparing the practices of healing miracles throughout history with those reported today, it would add to the argument that healing practices have been adapted according to the culture and context. Further research might shed light on the argument that healing practices are mouldable, adaptable and have the ability to change with culture, whilst remaining a key element of Christianity and how those who belong to the religion express their faith.

Chapter two of this thesis was devoted to providing a rationale for the project, describing the theoretical framework and adopted methodology. The aim of this

investigation was to conduct an academic and contemporary study of reports of healing miracles in Wales. Through the method of distributing questionnaires and conducting face to face interviews, I was able to collect 605 healing narratives and fourteen church leader interviews. I analysed this data using a structural analysis method to discover what people said when they spoke about a healing narrative. I chose to position my research within the sociological studies on 'lived religion'.[216] These studies prioritise individual experience and take their thoughts, opinions and actions seriously in order to analyse what their lived religion looks like. Building upon sociologists such as McGuire, this research sought to prioritise the individual in order to discover what they said when they spoke about a healing miracle.[217] There was no desire to prove or disprove the reality of an individual's healing experience, but instead to accept what they were discussing as important for them and thus important for this research. By adopting this position, I was able to build upon previous studies which have prioritised experience in order to analyse a particular phenomenon. For example, I likened my study to sociological studies which have researched the phenomenon of the experience of 'coming-out', which also aims to analyse an experience as opposed to proving its truth. As the literature showed, there were no contemporary academic studies in Wales which researched what individuals say when they talk about a healing miracle. By using the theoretical framework of 'lived religion', I was therefore able to contribute to theological and sociological studies by detailing and examining contemporary experiences of Christianity, Christian healing in particular.

[216] McGuire, p.1
[217] McGuire, p.13

The limitation of this methodology was in its focus at the start on South Wales, in the UK. Due to time constraints and practicalities of visiting churches, South Wales was chosen as the focus of research. The snowball sample did gather data from wider areas across Wales, which is why I refer to implications throughout Wales not just South Wales, however the study focussed on a sample of fourteen churches in South Wales. Extending the sample to cover a more representative subset of the country would strengthen and add further credibility to the findings. Moreover, further study with a wider geographical scope would shed light on whether this is a phenomenon unique to Wales or if healing miracles are also being reported elsewhere across the UK. This would have wider implications on our understanding of contemporary lived religion and the nature of secularism in the UK.

The third chapter of this thesis presented the findings from the research. There were two major findings. The first was that individuals in Wales talk about their healing experience using a four-part structure. This four-part structure consisted of pain, prayer, healing event and response. The second finding was that most people speak about their healing miracle in an 'everyday way'. This means that individuals described their healing experience using 'everyday' language to describe a healing which took place outside of a church context, being healed of a minor ailment and being prayed for by someone other than an official church minister. 78% of the healing narratives were described in this everyday manner. This is a unique finding, presenting an alternative picture to what is expressed in official Church documents on healing. The Anglican literature assumes that healing practices are a service primarily administered by a church minister, usually in the

context of a church service.[218] Additionally, healing is often associated with the administration of the 'last rites' and pastoral hospital visitations.[219] 22% of the healing narratives reflected the healing practices described in the Anglican literature and included reports from those who spoke about their healing experience in a 'traditional way'.

Lastly, the final chapter discussed the implications of these findings and how these sacred encounters might be understood in our secular age. After a brief discussion of the sociology of religion debate on secularism, I used Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* to define my understanding of secularism and build upon his theory of disenchantment.[220] Using the terms 'disenchantment' and 'enchantment' I built upon Anton Wessels' theory of inculturation to propose that individuals in Wales today have disenchanted their enchanted experiences in order to inculturate into our secular age. I argue that a broader term that encompasses 'everyday miracles', could in fact be, 'everyday enchantment'. Christianity now inhabits a secular age in Western societies, which has forced it to continue to adapt. This can be shown in the way that individuals talk about their healing experience. Traditionally, the healing experience would be a divine and religious experience occurring in a sanctified location, with a representative of the Church using religious language to describe the experience, as the Grove booklets described.[221] But as the data highlights, this traditional method is not as common, but instead the 'everyday miracle' has become the dominant experience for 78% of those who completed a questionnaire. Individuals are claiming to have been miraculously healed after an

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[218] Caroline Headley, *The Laying on of Hands and Anointing in Ministry for Wholeness and Healing,* (Grove Booklets Ltd, 2002), p.18-21
[219] Headley, p.12
[220] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p.1
[221] Caroline Headley, *The Laying on of Hands and Anointing in Ministry for Wholeness and Healing*, (Grove Booklets Ltd, 2002), p.18-21

encounter with God and yet for some it is described as taking place in secular locations, with ordinary people who have secular jobs, using informal and non-traditionally religious language. Our secular age has caused individuals to disenchant their enchanting experiences which has resulted in an 'everyday enchantment'.

I then move on to address the religious context the individuals are from. That is, that they are charismatic Christians affiliated with charismatic churches and therefore it might not be surprising that they report healing miracles. However, the way in which individuals talk about and describe their healing miracle differs slightly to the charismatic material. The charismatic literature tends to focus on the significant individuals from the movement, as well as the religious locations that people were reported healed at. Whereas my research reports individuals being healed in an everyday way. My research builds upon the charismatic literature because it supports the theory that charismatics believe God will intervene in their everyday life. Moreover, my research contributes by adding an additional layer of research which shows that some charismatics in Wales also describe their healing experience in an everyday way.

Lastly, I critique the view that individuals have disenchanted their enchantment, by examining the theories of 'the myth of disenchantment' and re-enchantment. The myth of disenchantment argues that we have never been disenchanted and therefore the healing miracles can be understood as a continuation of the underlying enchantment that has existed throughout the history of Christianity in the West. The second critique maintains the view that our modern age is actually re-enchanted and healing miracles are understood as a wider collection of sacred encounters within the 'spiritualities of life'. That is, outside of the boundaries of churches and chapels, others such as those within the New Age movement are also reporting sacred encounters within 'our secular age' which supports

the position that our age is actually re-enchanted. I conclude however, that I find the concept of 'disenchanted enchantment' most convincing when considering how to understand sacred encounters in our secular age. That is because individuals in Wales have lived in a secular milieu which has affected the way they talk about their healing experience. This has led them to disenchant their enchantment, resulting in an everyday enchantment in order to inculturate into their secular age.

Overall, this discussion contributes to the secular and post-secular debate today. The reports in Wales show that people are still regularly engaging with God through what they perceive to be miraculous healings. What is of particular note, and may defy expectations, is that they describe these healing miracles in an 'everyday way.' This shows their lived religion is still important to them and a feature of their lives despite living in a secular age. It demonstrates that they believe that God is still at work and changing their physical life by curing their ailments, despite the advances of modernity and improvement in modern medicine. This suggests that the area of the secularisation thesis which focuses on religious decline is outdated and mistaken. Instead, sacralization theory is gaining strength and momentum and these healing narratives found in Wales support its premise that religion is gaining strength in modern times.[222] Thus, individuals in Wales talk about their healing experiences is an everyday way, because they have disenchanted their enchanting experiences to inculturate into their secular age, which prompts us to consider thinking in terms of a post-secular or sacralized age.

[222] Linda JP. Woodhead, and Paul LF. Heelas., '*Religion in Modern Times: An Interpretive Anthology'* (Blackwell, Oxford 2000), p.429

Appendices

Appendix 1- Ethical Approval Form for Churches Researched

Raw data for the list of Churches chosen to research in Cardiff and the South Wales Valleys is available. Also available is their congregation size and split of male, female, and children ratio. The Raw data is available through the ethical process form below.

Section B: Authoriser assessment and approval

Where Applicants are students (undergraduate or postgraduate) supervisors should authorise this form; where applicants are staff members their line manager (or nominated si9natory) should authorise this form.

81: Name of Authoriser:	Professor Graeme Smith
82: Position of Authoriser: (e.g. supervisor, line manager)	Supervisor

AUTHORISER:

Please categorise the appHcation (A, A+ or B) ensure that the application form and all of the required documentation are complete before signing this application.

Authoriser assessment: (tick as appropriate - *see Section 1O of the Research Ethics Polic'{)*

Category A: Proceed with the research project. ***Undergraduate applications:*** Form and documentation retained at Department level. ***Masters, PhD and staff applications:*** Form and documentation forwarded to the Research Office *research/'mchi.ac.uk*	**X**
Category A+: (for placebo controlled studies or similar see Appendix 12) Proceed with the research project. ***Undergraduate applications:*** Form and documentation retained at Department level. ***Masters, PhD and staff applications:*** Form and documentation forwarded to the Research Office	

research/'mchi.ac.uk	
Category B: Submit to the Ethical Approval Sub-group for consideration. *research@chi.ac.uk* Proceed onlv when aooroval oranted by the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee	
Authoriser, please provide a comment on your assessment of the research project and for those projects involving vulnerable groups that you are authorising as Category A please justify this classification in the box below. As a further point, do make appropriate reference to any other codes of practice in your discipline **particularly if you think that the proposed research may be in tension with those codes.**	
Comment:	

Authoriser's declaration:

I have read the Research Ethics Policy and this has informed my judgement as to the category of assessment of this application.

I understand that the applicant has taken account of the Research Ethics Policy and other relevant University policies in preparing this application.

For Supervisors: I understand my responsibilities as supervisor, and will ensure, to the best of my abilities, that the student investigator abides by the University's Research Ethics Policy at all times.

Authoriser, please complete this table making it clear which version of the application form you are approving:

Version of the form (e.g. original version/ amended version followi REC sub- rou comments	**Signature of authoriser**	**Date**
		5/2/19

For RO use: IF CATEGORY 8: Signature of the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee. Signature: ..... Date: .....

Please note that the Research Office will retain all applications for ethical approval for 5 years after the research project has ended as stated in the University's Data Protection Policy.

Appendix 2- List of Churches Researched

The Churches chosen in Cardiff were:

1. **Church 1- Charismatic Independent Church, Cardiff**

   Church Leader- Alan[1]

   Approximate congregation size- 350

   Approximate split - 160 Male, 190 female, 76 children under 18

2. **Church 2- Charismatic Independent Church, Cardiff**

   Church Leader - David

   Approximate congregation size - 72

   Approximate split - 25 male, 35 female, 12 children under 18

3. **Church 3- Elim Pentecostal Church, Cardiff**

   Church Leader- Suzie

   Approximate congregation size - 105

   Approximate split - 40 male, 50 female, 15 children under 18

4. **Church 4- Charismatic Baptist, Cardiff**

   Church Leader- Edward

   Approximate congregation size -78

   Approximate split - 36 male, 42 female

[1] All Church leader names have been pseudonymised.

5. **Church 5- Charismatic Independent Community Church, Valleys**

   Church Leader – Frank and Beth

   Approximate congregation size - 34

   Approximate split - 9 male, 14 female and 11 children under 18

6. **Church 6- Assemblies of God (AoG) Pentecostal Church, Valleys**

   Church Leader - Gary

   Approximate congregation size - 272

   Approximate split - 84 male, 120 female and 68 children under 18

7. **Church 7- Charismatic Independent Church, Valleys**

   Church Leaders – Henry and Ian

   Approximate congregation size - 40

   Approximate split - 10 male, 20 female, 10 children under 18

8. **Church 8- New Frontiers Charismatic Church, Valleys**

   Church Leader - Jack

   Approximate congregation size - 46

   Approximate split - 22 male, 21 female, 3 children under 18

9. **Church 9- Charismatic Independent Church, Valleys**

   Church Leader - Kieron

Approximate congregation size - 25

Approximate split - 8 male, 13 female, 11 children under 18

10. **Charismatic Independent Church, Cardiff**

Church Leader - Lewis

Approximate congregation size - 38

Approximate split - 11 Male, 18 female, 9 children under 18

11. **Church 11- Charismatic Baptist Church, Cardiff**

Church Leader – Mark

Approximate congregation size – 130

Approximate split - 60 women, 40 men, 30 children under 18

12. **Church 12- Charismatic Church in Wales, Valleys**

Church Leader- Nick

Approximate congregation size -130

Approximate split - male 50, female 80

13. **Church 13- Church in Wales, Valleys**

Vicar - Patrick

3 services in the week:

-Sunday 8am (traditional communion) – Approximate split- 6 male, 9 female

-9.30am (Modern communion) – Approximate split- 22 male, 22 female, 20 children under 18

-Wednesday 10.30am Traditional communion – Approximate split- 10 male, 14 female.

14. **Church 14- Elim Pentecostal Church, Valleys**

Church Leader - Clyde Thomas

Approximate congregation size - 270 (Sunday attendance 215)

Approximate split - 150 female, 120 male, 40 children under 18

Appendix 3- Interview Questions to the Church Leader

1. What is your role in the church?
2. What is your theological view on healing?
3. Have you ever taught on healing to your church? (What did you teach?)
4. Have you ever been physically healed? (What happened?)
5. If yes- Has your healing had any significant effect on your personal faith?
6. Have you ever prayed for others to be healed? (What happened?)
7. How many people would you estimate have claimed they have been healed because you've prayed?
8. How often would you say you see healing miracles (personally, in your church, amongst your congregation)?
9. Have healing miracles had any significant impact on your congregation's personal faith?
10. Do you ever see healing miracles outside the church or with non-Christians?
11. Do you have a typical method of how you pray for the sick?
12. Any final thoughts?

Appendix 4- The Questionnaire

Healing Questionnaire

Name-

Age: 18-30[1]

31-40

41-50

51-60

61-70

71+

Sex- M/F

Ethnicity-

Church and Church denomination –

Location of Church/ healing in Wales-

1. Have you been physically healed? Yes/ No

   (if no- move to question 5)
2. Was it a full healing? Yes/ Partial healing
3. When were you healed? In the last 6 months/ 1 year/ 2-3 years/ 4-5/ 5+ years ago.
4. Did your healing have any significant effect on your personal faith? Yes/ No

   (if yes- please expand in the healing story testimony box-many thanks)
5. Have you ever prayed for someone else to be healed? Yes/ No

[1] Due to data protection I am going to collect questionnaires and narratives from adults only.

If yes, How often do you pray for healing? Weekly/ Monthly/ when the need arises

Please now share more details of your healing story in the box below:

Healing Story:

<tick box> I am happy for Chloe to contact me to hear more of my healing story ☐

Email-

Number-

Most suitable method for further interview:

A) **Personally record story via writing/audio/visual and email to chloerichards93@gmail.com**

B) **Phone Chloe on 07712422203**

C) **Face to face interview**

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