

An ethnographic and theological  
study of places and boundary  
with specific reference to  
Methodist circuits in Bradford

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## Abstract

### ***An ethnographic and theological study of places and boundary with specific reference to Methodist circuits in Bradford***

The thesis tests the extent to which Christian ministry, understood as movement, is a meaningful form of engagement with the many boundary situations apparent in modern urban living. In the thesis opportunity is given for Methodists to revisit their own self-understanding, through looking at ministry in terms of its movement and as an everyday practice. The research also offers a more general investigation of ministry in terms of its spatial relationships and of the relationship of churches with place. The thesis is tested through an ethnographic and theological study carried out in the Metropolitan City of Bradford. The study is conducted ethnographically through exploration of Bradford as a place, and through a detailed study of some of the boundary spaces that help to give the city its character. The thesis also addresses a theological concern in giving consideration to a theology of place as it relates especially to these boundary spaces of movement.

The main finding of the research is that the extent to which a notion of Christian ministry understood as movement offers a means of engagement with situations of the boundary is a measure of its *connectedness*, with movements at, across, and along the boundaries of place. The study also concludes that movement is a form of *practised connectedness*, and that ministry as explored in the thesis operates through *everyday processes of moving and paying attention*. A further key finding is that this ministry of movement contributes to the making of places through *an itinerary set out as a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows*. Finally, it is argued that when *theology is done itinerantly*, it becomes a resource for producing *theology that is relational, motional and transformational*.

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## **Introduction**

### **Setting out the thesis**

#### **The purpose and scope of the thesis**

I am an ordained minister in the Methodist Church, and my itinerant calling has led me to the cities of Liverpool (1997-2002) and Cardiff (2002-2011) before moving to my most recent appointment in West Yorkshire. I arrived in Bradford in the summer of 2011, and from the outset I was aware that I would be working with boundaries. My appointment in Bradford was to spend time in two neighbouring Methodist circuits, Bradford North and Bradford South. Although the notion of a boundary in this situation was a fairly arbitrary one, the nature of the appointment was an encouragement to criss-cross between the two, which I did on an almost daily basis for the five years between 2011 and 2016. Living in the Shipley area also provided me with a different illustration of the impact of boundaries. Once a market town, with its own urban borough council, Shipley had been incorporated into the metropolitan area of Bradford in 1974. Nevertheless, it became clear from conversations that I had that there are still those who regarded Shipley as a separate place and disassociated themselves to a greater or lesser extent from their larger neighbour. In these conversations, the boundary emphasised the continuing existence of a limit rather than a crossing. I found myself asking what is the significance of these boundaries of places in relation to the exercise of church ministry? And what would be the means by which such a topic might be explored further? It was this growing awareness that spurred my urge to research more closely a ministry relevant to Bradford as a place of boundaries, and which resulted in formal entry into the research programme at the University of Leeds in the autumn of 2012.

In this thesis I seek to establish an expression of Christian ministry relevant to life in an urban environment of diversity and change. I view this environment through the dynamic of 'the boundary'. The thesis tests the extent to which a ministry understood as movement is a meaningful form of engagement with the many boundary situations apparent in modern urban living. The thesis is tested through ethnographic and theological research implemented in the Metropolitan City of Bradford.<sup>1</sup> Research carried out in an ethnographic manner has enabled an investigation of Bradford as a place, especially as it is constituted by its boundary spaces. There is also a theological intent to the study, as I look to answer the question as to how theology is conducted in these spaces of movement, and what kind of theology emerges from an engagement with place.<sup>2</sup> By taking as a starting point an understanding of ministry constructed from its movements, my intention is to give consideration to a form of ministry that actively contributes to the making of place.

In effect, I am seeking to ask questions about the ways in which the ministry of Christians is thought and conducted, and to ask again about the relationship of churches to place. More specifically, the thesis seeks to test proposals about movement at, across and along the boundaries of place. In the thesis I argue that ministry, when understood as movement, contributes to the making of these boundary spaces through processes of dwelling (movements at boundaries), crossing (movements across boundaries), and travelling (movements along boundaries). I also argue that when such boundary spaces are identified as zones of encounter, exchange and exploration, this ministry of movement has the potential to give expression to a notion of place that is connected and open rather than confined and closed.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

<sup>2</sup> The reader's attention is drawn particularly to Chapters 3 and 7.

The main body of the thesis is a study undertaken in Bradford in West Yorkshire, where I live and work as a Methodist minister. In the study, I seek to offer an understanding of the spatial relationships of Christian ministry when viewed as a part of everyday life and movement in the city of Bradford. Although this use of movement arises in part from my own Methodist tradition, the aim has not been to limit the applicability of the study, but to provide a methodology that can be used more generally. Therefore, although a key component of my task has been to reconnect Methodism with what I consider to be an important part of its own self-understanding, more broadly my endeavour has been one of offering an original way of investigating space and place that is of relevance to other settings (both denominationally speaking and in respect of other urban areas), and to those pursuing research of an ethnographic and theological character.

The methodology for the study is described in Chapter 4, with the results of the ethnographic fieldwork analysed in Chapters 5 and 6. The methodology provided for a broad approach with a number of different methods being utilized in the conduct of the research. The construction of the methodology meant that many of those studied were transient figures, with research focused on passing encounters (see Section 4.3.2 for further discussion of this topic). This is illustrated in some of the material contained in Chapter 5 (see, for example, Section 5.3 and especially Section 5.3.2.3). As a theme of the research, this sense of fleetingness is particularly apparent in the analysis of Chapter 6, which incorporates the research based on those passing through the grounds of churches (see especially Sections 6.4 and 6.5). One of the topics considered in the research is the significance of such transient and passing encounters in the making of places, and this forms an important aspect of my understanding of an everyday ministry that consists of 'a gathering of fragments' and 'a glimpsing of flows'. In theoretical terms, I view these relationships as indicative of the range of relationships that contribute to

the making of places and to the notion of place as ‘an entanglement of paths’.<sup>3</sup>

## **Key themes of the research**

### **Bradford boundaries as collage**

Boundaries have tended to be regarded first and foremost as dividing lines, distinguishing what lies on the one side in some way from what lies on the other. Recent academic work on this topic has offered new understandings of the boundary. One area of study has been to view boundaries as dynamic rather than static, rigid lines of division (Migdal, 2004: 5). Furthermore, boundaries not only separate, but also connect, being equally important as points of meeting and crossing. A second main emphasis has been on boundaries, not as lines, but as zones, hybrid in character (Hannerz, 2003: 7, 9). There is something about being ‘of’ the boundary that suggests that boundaries are not just the edge of something else, but rather places in their own right (‘Borderlands’), with particular meaning for those who find themselves in that position (Anzaldúa, 2007). A key factor in these developments in academic understanding has been the focus on boundaries not just in terms of lines on a map, but as social and cultural constructs, with contributions to the academic discussion being made from a growing number of social scientists in the fields of anthropology (Barth, 1969), sociology (Lamont and Molnar, 2002; Sennett, 2011) and geography of religion (Stump, 2000) taking a particular interest in social, cultural, religious and symbolic boundaries.

For myself, living in Bradford has brought with it an awareness of social and cultural boundaries, with Bradford’s own distinctive mix of cultural, ethnic and religious differences. These boundaries are apparent within

<sup>3</sup> The phrase is Ingold’s – see Section 2.4.3 for further explanation of this phrase.

the Bradford area, as are those boundaries of inequality, which separate rich from poor: to walk around the streets of Manningham, for example, has a very different feel to doing the same in Ilkley, although within any single locality it is often possible to identify variations of social and economic difference. Similarly, it is also possible to speak in similar terms about the boundary between Bradford and its bigger neighbour Leeds – not only in a geographical sense of an administrative boundary but also in terms of economic difference, and the impression that Bradford has suffered from underinvestment in comparison to its more successful neighbour.<sup>4</sup>

In presenting Bradford as a place of difference, I turn to the imagery of *collage*. In the first few months of travelling around Bradford, I frequently found myself having to stop and take in the scene. Having spent my ministry thus far in relatively flat cities, where it can be hard to see much further than the immediate surroundings, Bradford throws up a very different perspective as buildings in the foreground are flanked by vista in the near, middle and far distance. As can be seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2, landmark buildings can be seen clearly amidst their settings, whereas other views are partly obscured by a nearer hill or disappear into the valley. There is a contrast of old and new, as some locations have been developed whilst others stay the same, providing an imagery of juxtaposition. The cityscape is a layered scene, reflecting changes over time. The overlapped pieces are often either wholly or partially covered. Such description, with features of difference, juxtaposition and overlapping layers is resonant of an artistic sense of collage. Bradford is itself a collaged city.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 5 for an expanded description of Bradford as a place.



**Figure 1 Bradford as collage (1)**



**Figure 2 Bradford as collage (2)**

In the thesis I use this idea of collage in order to present a picture of the many boundary situations of life in Bradford, as a way of presenting boundaries that are clear, hidden, or partially visible. One important aspect of the study is my assertion that the form of collage offers a helpful understanding of these boundary spaces in their ‘*everydayness*’. In academic usage, the study of everyday life has formed a means by which social relationships, especially those that are all too readily taken for granted, have been investigated.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the term *everyday* as used in the research holds a particular scholarly weighting. In the thesis, the *everyday character of ministry* is investigated through themes of *collage* (ministry as situated in everyday life), and *movement* (ministry as everyday practice) and it is these motifs of movement and collage together that are central to characterising the nature and location of the boundary spaces of ministry.<sup>6</sup>

### **Methodist ministry as movement**

If collage offers a helpful depiction of the Bradford landscape, I also note that it has been my movements around the city that have allowed me to take up these differing collaged perspectives on the city. It is the movements of ministry that are my particular concern, and in looking to establish movement as a key theme in the research I take inspiration from my Methodist inheritance of a ministry which is *itinerant*. As a practice, itinerant preaching goes back to the earliest days of Methodism, and formed one of its most prominent characteristics.

The pattern of itinerancy has undergone changes through the course of Methodist history. To explore the history of itinerancy in the Methodist

<sup>5</sup> See Section 1.1 for an introduction to everyday relationships and the study of everyday life.

<sup>6</sup> See Section 1.2 for the development of these two themes, and their relationship to the everyday. See Section 4.3 for further description of the two themes with specific reference to Bradford.

story is to recognise the way in which itinerant practice formed a means by which Methodist preachers broke the constraints of the parish system, in moving across and beyond the boundaries of the parish. It was viewed as an effective means of mission, 'in terms of place – putting people where they were most needed' (Heitzenrater, 1997: 31). To consider the history of Methodist preaching, the pattern was set by John Wesley's own manner of preaching in an itinerant fashion, travelling between the early Methodist societies, in what was known as a preaching 'round' or 'circuit'. By the 1750s some preachers were being allowed to remain with their home circuit (taking on the title of 'Local Preacher') (Haley and Francis, 2006: 13). Later, in the period following the death of Methodism's founder, John Wesley, the pattern of itinerancy developed into preachers being 'stationed' for a period in any one circuit before being moved on to another circuit to continue their ministry in a new station. Over time, the amount of travelling required became less as ministers related to a group of churches within the circuit rather than journeying around the whole of it (Cracknell and White, 2005: 33). More recently, there have been voices questioning the future of itinerancy, and its continuing role: 'Itinerancy will remain an important feature, but not a defining characteristic of the Methodist ministry, and will no longer 'go with the job'' (Richter, 2002: 48).

An important part of my task has therefore been to assert a reconnection between the Methodism of today and its own self-understanding. I am not, however, interested in simply reasserting the need for itinerancy amongst ordained ministers. Firstly, when I speak about ministry, I do so with a broad definition of the ministry of all Christians. As the Methodist Catechism expresses it, 'All Christians are called to continue Christ's ministry by serving in the Church and in the world' (The Methodist Church, 2000: 24). In churches, the work of ministry is not just focused on the single figure of the minister, but on the different and dynamic ministries of lay people, which have developed in varied and definite forms. In this sense, I am looking to make an assessment of how movement in ministry is a feature for all those who are called into the

service of Christ. Secondly, by bringing together my Methodist heritage of an ordained ministry which is itinerant in character with the day to day movements of those who live in the city, I look to re-envision this Methodist inheritance of a ministry of movement in terms of the everyday. As such, I am less concerned with ecclesiastical polity and rather more with everyday practice.<sup>7</sup>

In highlighting the characteristic of itinerancy in ministry, I have also drawn on the distinctive Methodist use of the term, *circuit*. The origin of the Methodist circuit was as a description for the preaching round (usually lasting a month or six weeks) travelled by itinerants between Methodist societies as a means of furthering the Methodist mission (Vickers, 2000). The language of circuit is apparent in such specialist labels (which still hold at the current time) as Circuit Steward, and Circuit Meeting.<sup>8</sup> As Methodism developed, the circuit became engrained as a key feature of Methodist organisation, and it remains an important part of the structure by which the life of British Methodists continues to be ordered. As expressed in Methodist polity, the circuit is defined as ‘the primary unit in which Local Churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help’ (Methodist 2014: 454, Standing Order 500). But if, in origin, circuits were a part of the dynamic of Methodist mission, leading to expansion, the problem has become the extent to which circuits represent retrenchment rather than growth. An important part of my argument is to reinvigorate an understanding of circuit in its original form as a description of a path of movement. It is my contention that ministry as it exists in and through the life of the Methodist circuit should be one that takes full account of the role played by movement in the exercise of that ministry. In this sense,

<sup>7</sup> See especially Section 1.2.1 for further consideration of Methodist itinerancy, and itinerant practice in everyday life.

<sup>8</sup> See especially Section 6.2 for further discussion regarding Methodist circuits.

my concern is with ways in which *the everyday life of the Methodist circuit* interacts with *circuits of everyday life*.<sup>9</sup> In my research, therefore, I take terms of traditional Methodist self-understanding (itinerancy and circuit) and seek to imbue them with fresh meaning.

### **Key aims and research questions**

With the establishment of these key themes of boundary and movement, the main aim of the thesis can be expressed as testing the extent to which a notion of Christian ministry understood as movement offers a means of engagement with the many boundary situations apparent in modern urban living.

The research also addresses a number of other questions deriving from this main aim:

- How does ministry as movement operate in the everyday spaces of urban life?
- In what ways does a ministry of movement contribute towards the making of places?
- What kind of theology helps to take account of these movements of ministry in relation to the boundaries of place?

### **Development and outline of the research**

The introduction so far has served to *set out the purpose and the scope of the thesis*, and this has provided the opportunity for a discussion of the key themes of the study and a naming of its key aims. Attention is now given to *the development and outline of the research*. This is achieved firstly in consideration of academic thinkers, whose work has been key to

<sup>9</sup> See Sections 1.2.1 and 2.4 for key discussions of circuit in relation to movement and the everyday.

the development of my study; and secondly in a summary section as I outline the chapters of the thesis and the main findings of the study.

### **Key scholarly conversation partners**

The theoretical basis of the thesis is given by the resources of the '*spatial turn*' and the subsequent '*mobilities turn*', as developments in social and cultural thought. These turns of thought offer proposals that human and social relationships can be understood in specifically spatial terms. The cross-disciplinary character of much of these theoretical discussions is also reflected in the construction of my own thesis, for which the main conversation partners are Henri Lefebvre (social and cultural thought), Doreen Massey (geography), Thomas Tweed (the study of religion) and Tim Ingold (anthropology).

A key part of my understanding of the *spatial production of social relationships* is taken from the work of Lefebvre (1991b). He argues that social relationships can be understood spatially in a threefold manner as perceived ('spatial practice'), conceived ('representations of space') and lived ('spaces of representation'). For discussion about the *connectedness* of spatial relationships, I have drawn significantly on Massey's (1997; 2005) thinking and the way she regards places as being continually constructed by their spatial relationships, which she views as being both local and global in character. Influenced by my Methodist heritage of 'living in connexion',<sup>10</sup> I have made particular use of Massey's ideas about the connectedness of place, and the significance she gives to a 'grounded, practised, connectedness' in the making of place. Looking

<sup>10</sup> The Methodist Church retains the use of the eighteenth century spelling of *connexion* (also *connexional*; *connexionalism*); because the discussion of connection as a theme in my thesis is wider than just its Methodist application, I have tended to use the more common contemporary form of spelling, except where it is in reference to specific Methodist usage or as quoted from Methodist and other sources.

more closely at connectedness in relation to movement, I have found Ingold's (2000; 2008) ideas about how places are made from the entanglements of many and varied 'paths' of movement especially insightful. His research has aided me to develop a picture of how the life and ministry of Methodist circuits might be understood similarly as an entanglement of paths. Continuing this emphasis on movement, Tweed's (2008) theory of 'religion in motion' has provided a key component in helping to situate ideas of movement in a setting of the study of religion. His key tropes of crossing and dwelling have been instrumental in setting out the boundary movements of spatial relationships as a significant part of my own research.

As a further step in interdisciplinary research, the thesis brings theorising from the social sciences into dialogue with theology. In the thesis I have sought to build on the various existing 'theologies of place' by developing a distinctive theology of place that is *relational, motional and transformational*. From this theological angle, my main conversation partners have been Tim Gorringer and Sigurd Bergmann. With regard to Gorringer (2002), I have followed his lead in looking to focus on a theology, which takes seriously social scientific perspectives on the construction of social relationships in the world of the everyday. Following Bergmann (2007) I have sought to develop a theology that takes account of mobility in constructing a theology of place. In addition, I have also drawn on the writing of Inge (2003) and Sheldrake (2001), who have also made important contributions to this theological aspect of the study. Finally, with a Methodist link in mind, and from the perspective of intercultural theology, Nausner's (2004; 2007) contribution to thinking about boundaries as zones of encounter, especially in the light of a Methodist sense of connection, has provided a particular point of resonance with my own aims and purposes. Having introduced these key conversation partners in the development of the thesis, I now offer an outline of my thesis, with a summarized introduction to each of the chapters and an indication of the main thesis conclusions.

### **Summary of the chapters**

In **Chapter 1** I introduce the idea of the everyday, consisting of routine and habitual practices, which I describe as *circuits of everyday life*. I set out the reasoning for viewing ministry as an *everyday practice*, focussed on its movements, and put forward the notion that Methodist circuits can be understood in terms of the movements of ministry made by Methodists in the everyday world. In this way, I argue, for a ministry of the everyday that is caught up with the everyday lives of others, *as the life of the Methodist circuit interacts with circuits of everyday life*. In this first chapter, I also explore the environment of the everyday in terms of collage, that is to say, as it is made up of overlooked pieces. Situated within the everyday, I indicate that the task of this everyday ministry of movement is to *pay attention to the overlooked*, through processes of *taking notice* and *taking care*.

**Chapter 2** is concerned with *spatialising the relationships of the everyday*, using Lefebvre's triad of social space as conceived, perceived and lived. Taking Massey's ideas about the connectedness of place, and my own Methodist inheritance of 'living in connexion', I re-posit Lefebvre's triad as the conceived space of connectedness, the perceived space of practised connectedness (as movement), and the lived space of grounded connectedness (as collage). By focussing on *the connectedness of spatial relationships*, I explore notions of connected relationships in terms of movement (Ingold's paths of entanglement), and boundary movements of crossing and dwelling (Tweed); and of collage (lived experiences of care), with boundaries that are negotiated through relationships of care.

In **Chapter 3** the discussion of spatial relationships is translated to the field of theology, with reference to the various theologies of place. I develop my own distinctive theology of place that is *relational, motional*

*and transformational*. I categorise this as a *theology of connected place*. The relational aspect is discussed in conjunction with a Methodist sense of connectedness and an ecumenical sense of unity in diversity. The motional aspect makes particular use of Bergmann's theology of mobilities in exploring experiences across and at situations of the boundary. As transformation, this theology considers a reordering of social space based on *an ethic of care*, understood in specific theological terms through consideration of *themes of brokenness and becoming*.

Having set out theoretical concerns in the first three chapters, methodological concerns are addressed in **Chapter 4**, in setting out the basis of an ethnographic study of the boundary spaces of the everyday. An introduction to a methodology, which is interdisciplinary, and follows a multi-method and multi-sited approach to ethnographic research, precedes a discussion of the methods themselves, namely walking practice, collage-making, interviewing and observing, and the use of documentary sources. The two subsequent chapters analyse the results of the study. For these chapters, I use an analytical framework offered by Stringer (2016) in offering top-down and bottom-up perspectives on the research.

In **Chapter 5** the focus is on movement as a form of practised connectedness, and asks what *everyday practices of movement reveal about the Bradford landscape understood as collage*. Official documents and histories present a narrative of decline and diversity, generally interpreted as a problematic discourse of division, which has resulted in a segregation of communities. The method of walking practice provides the means by which closer attention is paid to Bradford as a place, especially through a noticing of the unnoticed. The results offer an *alternative narrative of fragments and flows*, which I claim challenges the dominant discourse about Bradford. Categorised as *discarded fragments* and *hidden flows*, these features of the Bradford collage replace a reliance on

grand solutions (such as large scale schemes of regeneration or the search for cohesion), with small-scale gestures of care and hope. To this end, I describe a ministry of everyday movement in terms of *a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows*. Concerned with movements across and at the boundary, this ministry of everyday movement helps to identify the boundaries of place as markers of exchange and exploration rather than of division and segregation.

**Chapter 6** is concerned with a focus on collage as a form of grounded connectedness, and seeks to offer *a reading of the Methodist circuit understood as movement*. In the chapter I contrast the top-down view of the circuit as map (the circuit as *territory* and *network*) with the bottom-up perspective of the circuit as *itinerary* (the circuit as movement and entanglement). Through this process I propose an *itinerary for ministry*, which is situated in the lived space of everyday experience. *This itinerary consists of those fragments and flows, gathered and glimpsed in the movements of daily life*. By paying attention to pieces of the Bradford collage, as presented in the methods of collage-making and observing and interviewing in the grounds of churches, I highlight the processes of *taking notice* and *taking care* in constructing this itinerary for ministry in boundary spaces of movement and entanglement.

**In Chapter 7** I take up once more the theological aims of the thesis in asking how theology gets done in these spaces of movement. Continuing to build on a notion of itinerary, I explore *the relationship between theology and ethnography when seen as itinerary*. Beginning with an assertion of fieldwork as itinerary, I look at ways in which the theology that arises from the location of study can also be seen in terms of itinerary. I argue that in these situations of movement, *theology is done itinerantly*, as it emerges out of dynamic processes of moving and paying attention. My claim is that such an understanding is of relevance not only to those studying theology in relation to ethnography, but has a wider

application across a theological field that is itself best seen as an itinerary. I illustrate this with an example drawing on the practical theological model of the pastoral cycle. The theological assertion that *God is to be known itinerantly* helps to mark out a transformational journey *from neglected to connected place*.

### **Key findings and conclusions**

My thesis offers an ethnographic and theological study of places and boundary as spaces of movement. Using the resources of the spatial and mobilities turns, and a multi-method and mobile form of ethnography, my study explores ways in which places consist of the movements of everyday living, and are also actively constituted by them. The key findings of the research are:

- That the extent to which a notion of Christian ministry understood as movement offers a means of engagement with the many boundary situations apparent in modern urban living is *a measure of its connectedness, with movements at, across, and along the boundaries of place*;
- That movement can be understood as a form of *practised connectedness*;
- That ministry as explored in the thesis operates through *everyday processes of moving and paying attention*;
- That this ministry contributes to the making of places through *an itinerary set out as a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows*;
- That, *when done itinerantly*, theology becomes a resource for producing *a theology that is relational, motional and transformational*.

The thesis presents results that are reflective both of a particular interest and a general concern. In its particularity, opportunity has been given for Methodists to revisit their own self-understanding, through looking at: ministry in terms of its movement and as an everyday practice; circuit as

an itinerary that becomes caught up with the everyday movements of others; and Methodism's inheritance of 'living in connexion' as it relates more closely to spatial theory and ideas about the connectedness of place. The thesis offers an understanding of ministry in terms of spatial relationships and everyday movement that is of potential interest to others engaged in the academic study of Christian ministry, as well as demonstrating how a multi-method, multi-sited and mobile form of ethnography can prove to be a fruitful way of conducting research that is both novel and effective. As a distinctive and original approach to places and boundary, my thesis offers an ethnographic and theological resource as a contribution to the investigation of spatial relationships.

## Chapter 1 An everyday ministry

### 1.1 Introduction: ministry in the everyday

In this chapter I seek to explore further the everyday as the location for ministry. I do so by developing the two main tropes offered in the Introduction, namely movement and collage. The theme of *movement* is used to explore ministry as an everyday practice; and that of *collage* brings consideration of ministry in its everyday setting. Using the example of Methodist itinerancy, I set out the reasoning for viewing ministry as an *everyday practice*, focussed on its movements. I put forward the notion that Methodist circuits can be understood in terms of the movements of ministry made by Methodists in the everyday world. In this way, I argue for a ministry of the everyday that is caught up with the everyday lives of others, *as the life of the Methodist circuit interacts* with those habits and routines that I describe as *circuits of everyday life*. In the latter part of the chapter I explore the environment of the everyday in terms of *collage*, which uses scraps from the everyday world in order to present familiar objects in a strange way. Situated within the world of the everyday, I indicate that the task of this everyday ministry of movement is to *pay attention to the overlooked*, through processes of *taking notice* and *taking care*. In this opening section, these topics of movement and collage are introduced with a preliminary question relating to the constitution of the everyday: What is it that gives the everyday its character – and what are its implications for the exercise of ministry?

The everyday has formed the subject of study in several disciplinary fields, including sociology (Jacobsen, 2009), social and cultural studies (Certeau, 1988; Lefebvre, 1991a; Highmore, 2002a), literary criticism (Felski, 1999; Sheringham, 2006) and anthropology (Pink, 2012). By studying everyday life, researchers look to develop a window onto social relationships especially as they exist in the ordinary and the routine, in

other words those activities and interactions that are so often taken for granted. An initial stumbling block to the academic study of everyday life comes with trying to define the everyday. On the one hand it seems so obvious that it almost removes the need for definition: the everyday consists of those aspects of human living that give it a sense of the ordinary. As routine or habit, the everyday becomes a description of the mundane. Yet, as Jacobsen comments, as many problems as answers are raised by a definition such as 'everyday life is first and foremost something that is lived on a daily basis' (2009: 11). On the other hand, therefore, the everyday can be said to defy definition, being described by scholars variously as 'elusive' (Felski, 1999: 15), 'vague' (Highmore, 2002a: 2) or as the 'indeterminacy' of 'endless difference' (Sheringham, 2006: 22). Trying to pin down whether the everyday is best conceived in a generalised manner or by focusing on its particularities has proved to be an on-going challenge for scholars of everyday life. Highmore points out that everyday life studies 'sits uncertainly' across 'a range of dualities': particular/general, agency/structure, resistance/power, micro-analysis/macro-analysis. He offers the key question: 'is the everyday a realm of submission to relations of power or the space in which those relations are contested...?' (2002b: 5; see also, Jacobsen, 2009: 22).

As an illustration of this, reference might be made to two of the most cited authors on the subject of everyday life studies, Lefebvre (1991a; 2004) and Certeau (1988). Whilst Lefebvre viewed the everyday as being dominated by the forces of modernity, Certeau (1988: 41) regarded everyday practices as a source of resistance in the face of repression. Taking a Marxist approach, Lefebvre saw the everyday in a largely negative light, the daily grind, created as a consequence of capitalist production and which can only be changed through the transformation of those structures (political, economic, social and ideological) that dominate it. By contrast, Certeau regarded the everyday as containing resources to resist those same structures, through what he entitled tactical operations. His view of the everyday was therefore a more positive one, highlighting

the inventiveness and creativity of 'making do'. If Lefebvre has been criticised for offering a utopian (and thereby unachievable) vision for everyday life,<sup>11</sup> Certeau may also be criticised for laying out a romanticised notion of what can be achieved through the everyday.<sup>12</sup> Bringing these concepts of the everyday to a notion of everyday ministry, therefore, relates on the one hand to an exercise of power embedded in the religious structure from which it arises, and the extent to which this power is utilised; and on the other hand the degree of resistance shown when faced with the demand to conform. As has already been suggested, it is likely that these two tendencies will both play a role in the shaping of an everyday ministry.

In addressing the question of how the everyday is to be defined, equally one might ask about where it is to be encountered. In the light of the preceding discussion, this is clearly broad in scope, but it is helpful to focus on two of the most commonly studied locations of everyday life, which provide examples of the public and private aspects of the everyday: the street, including those who pass along it (Certeau, 1988), as highlighted by Walter Benjamin in his classic depiction of everyday life seen through his experience as a *flâneur* walking the streets of Paris; and the home, with its associated domestic activities (Felski, 1999; Pink, 2012), described by one writer as 'everyday life *par excellence*' (Jacobsen, 2009: 14). If the street, with all its goings-on, has been particularly identified with a spirit of modernity, and a capacity to cross and move beyond boundaries, the home has been seen as a secure base, closed and bounded, a respite from all that the modern world brings (Felski, 1999: 23). These differing sites of study reveal a tension between an interpretation, which makes a distinction between everyday life in its

<sup>11</sup> See the discussion in Gardiner (2006), although Gardiner himself defends what he calls Lefebvre's 'everyday utopianism'.

<sup>12</sup> Consider, for example, the dedication contained at the opening of his first volume, 'To the ordinary man. To a common hero'

public and private settings (and the perception of identifiable male and female arenas of activity) and those (especially feminist academics) who would hold such divisions to be less significant than they have been set out to be. Felski (1999: 22-26), for example, regards the home as a much more ambivalent setting for everyday life, a site of subordination but also of resistance, sharing a porous boundary with the modern world beyond. Similarly, Pink (2012) argues that homes and gardens are as much sites of potential change as they are expressions of normativity, and indeed possibly both at the same time.<sup>13</sup>

In making this comparison between the home and the street, there is a parallel to be made with the settings of church and community for an everyday ministry. In the same way that studies of everyday life might choose to focus on the home and the street, so a study of everyday ministry might be seen to focus on a discussion of church and community. In the modern world, where religion is largely viewed as a private matter, separated from the public concerns of the secular world, the church might be seen as fixed and unchanging, closed off from the community around. On the other hand, the church might view itself as an open institution, offering public worship alongside activities, which it regards as being offered to the community for its use and benefit. The church might be viewed as displaying either a public or a private character – or, more likely, a combination of the two. The character of an everyday ministry will be influenced not only by how porous or impervious the boundary between church and community might be, but also by the location of that boundary in relation to the public and private settings of everyday life.<sup>14</sup> Are church and community in an everyday setting best seen as one and the same, as separate entities, or as one located within the other?

<sup>13</sup> On the subject of an everyday ministry as a resource for change and renewal see the argument contained in Sections 5.3 and 5.4.

<sup>14</sup> See especially Section 6.5 for further discussion of this topic.

## 1.2 A framework for studying the everyday

Having introduced the everyday as the location for ministry, the intention now is to offer a framework for an understanding of the everyday that will allow for a focus on the boundaries of ministry, and on the nature and location of these boundaries. The aim in the following two sections (1.2.1 and 1.2.2) is to offer contrasting approaches to understanding the everyday. The first deals with *content*, and the second with *form*; the former offers *direct experience* of the everyday, whilst the latter highlights a *representation* of the everyday. In so doing, the contrast is between what Sherringham (2006: 15) refers to as a *phenomenology* of the everyday, and what Highmore (2002a: 22) calls an *aesthetic* of the everyday; a focus on *practice* contrasted with a focus on *art*. The result is a twofold understanding of the everyday: as *movement* and as *collage*. The argument presented here is that movement provides a lens through which to see ministry as an everyday practice, whilst collage provides a lens through which ministry might be understood in terms of its everyday setting.<sup>15</sup> The proposal, therefore, is, firstly, that ministry itself is helpfully characterised as an everyday practice, and that, secondly, ministry should be considered with respect to its setting in everyday life. These two propositions are investigated further in the remaining sections of the chapter.

### 1.2.1 Movement and everyday religious practice

In addressing the first of these two points, consideration is given to the argument that movement provides a lens through which ministry as an everyday practice might be seen. I offer that argument here by taking the

<sup>15</sup> In speaking of everyday practice and its everyday setting, I follow Pink's understanding of practice and the everyday, and the need to consider 'the activities and environments in which they are played out' (2012: 2, see also 14).

example of itinerancy as an everyday religious practice. The emphasis in everyday life studies has shifted towards a focus on practice as the basis on which everyday life is theorised. Pink (2012: 6) contends that the stress should be placed not on sets of practices as such, but 'everyday life in practice'. As Felski (2009: 31) comments, the variety of practices often differ between individuals, but the main aim is to offer insight into everyday life 'as a way of experiencing the world'; it is a phenomenology of the everyday. Attempts to investigate religion in everyday life have led to the introduction of terms such as *everyday religion* (Ammerman, 2006; 2013) and *lived religion* (McGuire, 2008), and both have sought to establish an understanding of religion through the concrete experience of the everyday as well as the practices associated with it.

For Ammerman, the arguments underpinning the concept of everyday religion stand in the face of prevailing theories of secularisation. She puts forward the position that the results of her research counter those suggesting that religious practice is diminishing under the weight of secular processes (2006: 4-6). Neither is she prepared to hold the position that the increasing diversity of everyday religious practices is best explained by the market place approach of rational choice theory (2006: 7-9).<sup>16</sup> In seeking to redefine religion in the light of a theorising of everyday life, Ammerman (2014: 190) tellingly highlights the continuing experience represented by organised religion; and although her argument acknowledges the ways in which organised religion has used its power to control expressions of everyday religion, she continues to view organised religion as an important component of the overall religious landscape. But, equally, everyday religious practice shows a resistance to the

<sup>16</sup> Ammerman's criticism is of Stark and Finke; see Stark, R. and Finke, R., 2000, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human side of Religion* (Berkeley, University of California Press). For similar criticism of Stark and Finke's proposals, and in relation to Methodist itinerant ministry, see Richter (2002).

influence of established religious structures, continually re-introducing a new dynamic into the practice of religion.

The other main theme emerging from research into religion in everyday life is the embodied nature of practice; as McGuire says, 'the world of everyday life is mainly affected by the experiencing body' (2008: 13). In this, McGuire's approach is similar to that expressed by other scholars interested in everyday life, for example the turn to the senses that forms a key component of Pink's ethnographic studies. Of particular relevance is the recognition given by Pink (2012: 27-28) to movement as an important aspect of embodied practice and the associated engagement of the physical senses as part of her phenomenological approach to everyday life. Following in the footsteps of Pink, one of the key aspects of my own research rests in understanding everyday life through the lens of movement, and in presenting ministry as a practice of everyday movement. For my own part, I turn to a form of movement more familiar to me in my capacity as a Methodist minister, and to the role that has been played by movement in the Methodist circuit model of ministry, namely the itinerancy of its preachers and ordained ministers.

#### **1.2.1.1 Movement as an everyday Methodist practice**

In the early days of Methodism in the eighteenth century, itinerant preaching<sup>17</sup> as an everyday practice was emphasised by the way in which many preachers kept journals. The word *journal* is derived from the French word, *jour*, for day. For Sheringham (2006: 364) 'the day' forms a starting point for investigating the configuration of the everyday: 'What sort of vantage point does the *journee*, the span of a single day, provide for scrutinising everyday experience?' (2006: 368). He later concludes that the everyday exists through the practices of the day (2006: 386). Our

<sup>17</sup> See the Introduction: Methodist ministry as movement for previous discussion of itinerancy in early Methodism.

consideration of itinerant preachers keeping journals allows us to press this argument further: *jour* is, of course, also the origin of the word *journey*; that is to say a journey can be seen to be formed from the movements of the day. The journeying of itinerant preachers can therefore be viewed as an everyday practice.

My argument concerns looking again at itinerancy, not in the narrow sense relating to the stationing of Methodist ministers to appointments in different parts of the country, but through offering a broader assessment of the significance of movement to the conduct of ministry in an everyday setting. One aspect of this reconsideration will place emphasis on the movements made by a minister on a daily basis rather than on the move made by ministers every few years from one circuit to another. A more far-reaching reassessment would include looking at not just the movements made by ordained ministers but also by lay people and those with whom they engage as part of their everyday lives. In the research, therefore, I am seeking to say something about the movements made by all Christians as they exercise ministry as part of their everyday lives, and in relation to the everyday lives of other people. This focus on movement forms a key part of the ethnographic study set out in Chapters 5 and 6.

Central to this proposal is the notion of circuit as an expression of everyday life. Academic explorations of everyday life, in their focus on the mundane,<sup>18</sup> indicate that the everyday is often made up of repeated actions, those habits giving shape to the routines of daily living and which can be recognised as *circuits of everyday life*. My assertion is that for Methodists, to live 'in circuit' should be a twofold experience. Firstly the experience of living in circuit relates to the organisation of Methodist life

<sup>18</sup> See Section 1.1 for an introduction to the academic study of everyday life.

and ministry.<sup>19</sup> Secondly, living in circuit might be considered as a much more generalised concern, relating to those repeated habits and routines that together constitute daily life. In this sense, of course, Methodists are no different to anyone else in having patterned practices that can be recognised as circuits of everyday life.

My contention is that from a Methodist perspective, circuit may be understood not only as an ecclesiastical structure but also as an everyday practice. Just as scholars such as Tuan (1979a) may choose to focus on such repeated practices as circuits of everyday living,<sup>20</sup> so the argument presented here is that a Methodist experience of living in circuit may be defined, not just in terms of the formal organisation of Methodism, but also in terms of the everyday practice of Methodists. It is the experience of ordinary Methodists as individuals and groups, as much as and maybe more so than the formal organisation and structure of Methodism, which shapes the life of Methodist circuits. In taking as its reference point an expression of ministry as it is arranged in the structure of Methodist circuits, the outcome of this research is intended to be the more general one of how ministry - of all Christians (not just Methodists, nor only of ordained ministers) - relates to *everyday circuits*.

<sup>19</sup> See *Introduction: Methodist ministry as movement*, for a description of the circuit as part of Methodist structures.

<sup>20</sup> For example, Tuan (1979a: 180, 182-183), uses the example of the home, describing how 'points of furniture such as a desk, an armchair, the kitchen sink, and the swing on the porch are points along a complex path of movement that is followed day after day' These points 'are markers in routine and circular time. Tuan's argument is that 'Most movements complete a more or less circular path'. This does not, however, rule out more complex 'circuits of movement'.

### 1.2.2 Situating ministry in everyday life

Having introduced movement as a means of understanding ministry as an everyday practice, the argument now turns to collage as offering a way of viewing ministry in its everyday setting. As a feature of everyday life studies, collaging finds its antecedent in the Surrealist movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the work of Surrealist artists gave inspiration to those studying everyday life.<sup>21</sup> Collage depicts a reordering of the everyday, a form of art in which the ordinary is presented in new and surprising ways.<sup>22</sup> This process of collage-making works with two different but related perspectives on the everyday: the first is that what is familiar may be viewed as strange; the second is that what is otherwise overlooked may now be noticed. In setting out these two perspectives, the aim is not to set out a too rigid distinction between them, but rather to highlight two facets of what might be described as (in one of the most oft used descriptions of the everyday) the 'taken-for-granted', and which can helpfully be discussed in these different ways. Here, each is taken in turn.

#### 1.2.2.1 Making strange

The first feature of the making of a collage addresses how something familiar might be presented as something strange. In his survey of

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, the chapters given over to discussion of surrealism in Highmore (2002a: 45-59) and Sheringham (2006: 59-93).

<sup>22</sup> A precursor to the recent use of collage in ethnographic study has been the work of Julian Trevelyan. As a young man in the 1930s, Trevelyan joined the Mass Observation programme on one of its main constituent parts, the Worktown Project. Whilst a large part this ethnographic study was conducted through volunteer diary-keepers writing about their everyday lives, the Worktown Project employed observers to record life in the northern industrial town of Bolton, especially through the medium of photography. Trevelyan, however, was a trained artist, and represented some of his observations through the medium of collage. Trevelyan's work is of particular relevance because of its collaged understanding of a northern industrial town. On the subject of Mass-Observation, see Highmore (2002a: 75-112), and for comment on Trevelyan's use of collage, see Jemison (2009: 11-14) and Farley and Roberts (2011: 148-149).

everyday life research, Highmore highlights the role played by Surrealist art, in particular its expression as collage and montage, in 'making strange' (2002a: 23). Everyday objects are removed from their context and placed into a different one. As an activity, collage is an expression of the everyday, and seeing the everyday in a new way. The emphasis is on difference, contrast, and how one piece of a collage might be viewed in the light of another; the pieces are related yet distinct (Hoffman and Levin, 1989: foreword, 5). This use of juxtaposition adds to the strangeness of the finished collage and of the pieces within it. As a result, everyday objects are to be viewed with a fresh intensity, which gives a new level of recognition to what would otherwise have remained ordinary and familiar.

Not all commentators on the everyday are in agreement with this process of seeking to make the familiar strange. As Felski (1999: 18) argues, both art and academic criticism alike can turn the everyday into something exceptional so that in effect it is no longer of the everyday. However, for her, there is something more important at stake in recognising the everyday for what it is, as she concludes, 'It is time, perhaps, to make peace with the ordinariness of everyday life' (Felski, 1999: 31). What has changed in Felski's eyes is the way that the ordinary or familiar is perceived; taking issue with those theorists who tend 'either to excoriate the everyday for its routine, mundane qualities, or celebrate the everyday by pretending that such qualities do not exist', she argues for '[taking] seriously the ordinariness of everyday life without idealizing or demonizing it'.

Jacobsen opts for a different approach, seeing the work of scholars of the everyday as being part of a twofold process, the first part of which is a making strange (what he calls the 'defamiliarization' of the everyday) but followed by a second, equally important, step of 'refamiliarization', 'the purpose of which is to elucidate everyday life as a sphere in which

countervailing tendencies struggle – the familiar and the unfamiliar’ (2009: 18). It is this latter approach that is of particular interest to me. Especially helpful is Jacobsen’s definition of this second part as ‘making the strange less strange’. Figuratively speaking, the collage pieces are reformed into a further new arrangement, in a way that is, as it might be expressed, strangely familiar. There is that about the everyday that is familiar and strange, ordinary and extraordinary, alike, although it may take a process such as forming a collage to reveal it.<sup>23</sup>

### **1.2.2.2 Paying attention to the everyday**

The second feature of collage is a noticing of the unnoticed. One of the key characteristics of collage work rests in its use of leftovers. Collage takes materials from a variety of sources, such as pieces of newspaper, found or everyday objects (Waldman and Solomon, 1992: 9-11). As an art technique it is characterised by the use of fragments, which are pieced together, alongside one another, sometimes overlapping, built up in layers. Often the pieces attached would otherwise be regarded as waste, ‘the unwanted and the overlooked’ marks of modernity, ‘what is left over after the feast of consumption has ended’ (Taylor, 2006: 8-9). In its use of residual pieces, there is a resonance between the technique of collaging and the depiction of the everyday offered by Lefebvre (1991a: 3), whose understanding of everyday life is based on a theory of alienation. For Lefebvre (1991a: 31-32, 85-88), everyday life is both a ‘totality’ (of work, leisure and family or private life,) and a ‘residue’ resulting from the alienation of what Lefebvre calls ‘higher’ and ‘specialised’ activities (which may be social, economic, political, ideological or philosophical in nature). This residual character compounds the insignificance of the everyday; even if it is not hidden, it is unnoticed. Lefebvre’s assessment of the residual quality of the everyday is therefore a somewhat negative one; in

<sup>23</sup> See especially Section 6.4.2 for how Jacobsen’s and Felski’s ideas on collage and the everyday impact on my research.

the absence of its transformation, he regards the everyday as being of little value.

As a creative process, the pieces gathered together into the making of the finished collage are transformed into something very different; in this, at least, collaging reflects Lefebvre's requirement that the everyday be transformed. However, the fragments of material, which have been incorporated into the collage, are still to be recognised as fragments. The collage does not hide the fragmentary nature of its composition, but represents a valuing of those leftovers, which make up the substance of everyday life. That which would otherwise be disregarded is now identified as being of significance; the overlooked is noticed.

My claim is that the starting point for the exercise of ministry in everyday life, like that of the everyday life researcher, or an artist compiling a collage, is *to notice the unnoticed*. In a further parallel with everyday life studies, and echoing Sheringham's conclusion that 'the everyday comes into view...when it receives attention' (2006: 398), a ministry conducted in the setting of everyday life is *to pay attention to the everyday*. To pay attention, then, is to take notice; but lest there be a danger of only understanding this as being the work of a detached observer, I would argue that there is need to press this understanding further, and that to pay attention (to take an alternative meaning and with respect to an exercising of ministry) is *to show care and concern for that which is noticed*. To be in ministry is to engage with the noticed everyday in a more active way, as an expression of such care and concern; it is both a *taking notice* and a *taking care*.

The making of collages brings combines a sense of making strange of the familiar with a paying attention to the overlooked. Both of these aspects of collage-making form an important feature of the ethnographic results presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

### 1.3 Conclusion to Chapter 1

This chapter has set out the groundwork for seeing ministry in relation to the everyday. By taking everyday life as a focus of study for social scientific researchers, the everyday has been presented as an analytical tool for exploring the practice and setting of ministry. Movement and collage have been offered as appropriate means for viewing the practice of everyday ministry within the setting of everyday life. The emphasis put on movement has served to highlight ministry as an everyday practice. When this movement becomes an expression of ministry shared in the life of the Methodist circuit, it offers a distinctive means by which this ministry of everyday movement might interact with the everyday lives of others.<sup>24</sup> The potential for such interaction arises through paying attention to the everyday through processes of taking notice and taking care.<sup>25</sup> Later in the thesis, movement and collage are used as interpretive keys in the ethnographic analysis contained in Chapters 5 and 6.

Collage and movement are also helpful as concepts for understanding *boundaries* in the everyday. Up until now, the themes of collage and movement have been taken as lenses for helping to understand everyday life; but focusing on the everyday as movement and collage also provides resources for exploring understandings of boundary situations. The everyday as movement is a lens for seeing the dynamic of boundaries in terms of everyday encounters, as paths cross, ways meet and journeys are shared if only for the briefest of times. The everyday as collage is a lens for seeing boundary zones, as pieces of the collage join, creating an overlap or a space in between. These boundaries are made apparent as

<sup>24</sup> See especially Section 5.4 for further discussion of this topic.

<sup>25</sup> See especially Section 6.4.2 for a focus on processes of 'taking notice' and 'taking care'

pieces of collage material are placed in relation to one another, and as movement is enacted and resulting encounters made.<sup>26</sup> Boundaries can be helpfully and necessarily understood in spatial terms.

In other words, both collage and movement are expressions of spatial relations. They are *spatialisations* - *ways of producing space* and as such helpful in comprehending *the spatial character of social relationships*. The lenses of collage and movement help to identify everyday relationships and practices as spatialisations; they are spatial arrangements of everyday life. In the following chapter, I focus on processes of spatialisation, as I concentrate on offering an understanding of the spatiality of Methodist relationships.

<sup>26</sup> For comprehensive treatment of collage and movement as boundary themes, see Chapters 5 and 6.

## Chapter 2 Spatialising Methodist relationships in the everyday

### 2.1 Introduction: the spatial character of the everyday

This chapter focuses on the relationships of *spatialisation* and lays down the theoretical basis for understanding the construction of social and material space. In a general sense, the chapter seeks to address the *spatial character of the everyday*, in considering the development in spatial thought to be found in disciplines across the social sciences and humanities, and which comes under the general heading of *the spatial turn* (Hubbard et al., 2004; Warf and Arias, 2008). This theoretical turn of thought demonstrates how space is socially produced and organised, both materially in terms of the built environment and ideologically as structures of power (Lefebvre, 1991b). Equally, it shows how space ‘plays an active role in the formation of society’ (Cresswell, 1996: 12), addressing questions of how space is used and what meaning is given to it (Low, 2016). These developments in social scientific theory have encouraged those engaged in studying religion to incorporate insights from the spatial turn into their own thinking. Knott has sought to establish a spatial analysis of religion through the study of everyday spaces, ‘in order to discern the location of religion within them, by considering its dynamic relations with the other features of those spaces (social, cultural, physical, political, economic), the place of religion in their structure, its active and passive modes, and its possibilities for dominance, resistance and liberation’ (2005b: 2). Tweed has drawn on the ‘reassertion’ of space to offer a theory of ‘*religion in motion*’ (2008: 9, 58) through the spatial metaphors of confluence, flow, dwelling and crossing.

More specifically, the following chapter seeks to investigate the *spatiality of boundaries* in the everyday. The language of spatiality lends itself to the description of social division, including ‘references to class (*upper*,

*middle, lower*), to social place and ideological position, to *high* and *low* culture, to *insiders* and *outsiders*, to those at the *centre* of power or on the *margins* of society' (Knott, 2005b: 6). According to Sen and Silverman, space, as socially constructed, 'necessarily entails very real and often contested divisions, borders and boundaries' (2014: 3). With reference to the study of religion, whereas much previous work on religion and space focused on notions of sacred space and the fixity of boundaries which separated the sacred from the profane,<sup>27</sup> this new work has contributed to new understandings of the boundary in specifically spatial terms: in Knott's case, viewing the boundary in terms of a continual negotiation between religion and the secular context which provides its location; for Tweed, a theorising of religion defined by its movement, primarily as a crossing of boundaries.

In this chapter the aim is to set out a spatiality of everyday Methodist relationships based on Lefebvre's trialectic of space (1991b: 38-39). Lefebvre's work was key to the early shaping of the spatial turn, and, indeed, is viewed by some as the starting point for it (Sheller, 2017: 2). His trialectic (see Section 2.2) has been applied by other scholars of the spatial turn<sup>28</sup> and now forms the framework for the discussion contained in this chapter. The publication of *The Production of Space* marked a carrying forward of Lefebvre's thinking on the everyday into a new concern for social space as the setting for the everyday. In Lefebvre's analysis, the possibility of the transformation of the everyday through a process of radical change could not be separated from the social relationships that underpinned it. In other words, the spatiality of the everyday should not itself be taken for granted (Hubbard et al., 2004: 210).

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, discussions of the work of Eliade in Gorringe (2002: 11, 36-40) and Knott (2010a: 479-480).

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Soja (1996) and Knott (2005b); also see the commendation given by Low (2016: 32).

## 2.2 The relationships of social space

Lefebvre (1991b: 38-39) set out his understanding through a trialectic consisting of three aspects of social space: spatial practice ('perceived space'), representation of spaces ('conceived space') and representational spaces<sup>29</sup> ('lived space'). Spatial practice is closely associated with the routines of everyday life, and how space is perceived during its conduct. This perception works at the level of 'commonsense' (Shields, 1999: 163), a 'practical perception' rather than a fully thought out understanding. Lefebvre describes such spatial practice as being (practically) 'cohesive' without necessarily being (intellectually) 'coherent' as it brings together 'daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, 'private' life and leisure)' (Lefebvre, 1991b: 38). This aspect of space is the one most readily identifiable with the theme of *movement*, which was discussed in Chapter 1 in terms of everyday practice. The second aspect, representations of space, is for Lefebvre conceived space, articulated for example by city planners, and which constitutes the 'dominant' space of modernity; it is associated with systems and ideologies. As such it can be categorised as 'official' space in contrast to the 'popular' space of spatial practice' (Hubbard et al., 2004: 210). Representational spaces make up the third aspect of Lefebvre's triad. It is associated with the imagination, and shows how space might be when it is fully lived (Shields, 1999: 161). As such it is to be experienced (Lefebvre emphasises the passivity of this experience), often as a momentary glimpse of what is possible. This aspect of space is the one that might be most clearly associated with the impact of *collage*, as an artistic and imagined

<sup>29</sup> Shields (1999: 165) criticises the phrase 'representational spaces' used in the English translation of *The Production of Space*, preferring the more literal 'spaces of representation'.

representation of the everyday. The themes of movement and collage can be mapped onto Lefebvre's trialectic as shown in Table 1 below.

Lefebvre's triad	Space as conceived (Representations of space)	Space as perceived (Spatial practice)	Space as lived (Spaces of representation)
Thesis lens/trope		Movement as everyday practice	Collage as setting of everyday life

**Table 1 Theoretical mapping onto Lefebvre's trialectic 1**

It is a key assertion of Lefebvre's trialectic that all three aspects needed to be considered equally in offering an analysis of spatial relationships. Lefebvre's formulation has been criticised in that the three aspects are not easily distinguishable when discussing concrete examples. For example, space, as experienced and lived, terms used by Lefebvre in reference to representational spaces, might also be equally applied to the space of practice. What is practice, after all, if not experienced and lived? Shields (1999: 165) points out that for Lefebvre, 'lived' meant 'fully lived', and as such is about a totality including future possibility as well as present reality. Despite Shields insistence that, 'All three aspects operate at all times' (1999: 167), he also recognises the way that Lefebvre's analysis might be read as privileging lived space (as the ideal) at the expense of the other two aspects. This criticism may be pointed at those who have developed Lefebvre's ideas into a notion of 'Thirdspace', as if this is a space apart, and separate from the other aspects.<sup>30</sup> The blurring

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, the criticism of Soja's notion of 'Thirdspace' in Goonewardera et al (2008: 10); Knott (2005b: 36 footnote 5) also suggests that Soja has over-interpreted Lefebvre's trialectic.

of the three aspects serves as a reminder that each of the aspects is a window onto the same (social) space, rather than offering understandings of three distinct spaces.

Lefebvre's triad	Space as conceived (Representations of space)	Space as perceived (Spatial practice)	Space as lived (Spaces of representation)
Thesis lens/trope	Connectedness of everyday relationships	Movement as everyday practice	Collage as setting for everyday life

**Table 2 Theoretical mapping onto Lefebvre's trialectic 2**

In this chapter, the three aspects of space are discussed in a different order to the one used by Lefebvre himself. This is to allow the introduction of a new theme, alongside those of collage and movement – that of *connection*. If collage is related to lived space, and movement to perceived space, then connection is to be associated with conceived space (Table 2). The theme of connection has a particular Methodist resonance (the Methodist Church describes itself as a *connexional* church) and provides the principle by which the Methodist Church is organised. The next section forms an exploration of spatial relationships, viewed through the Methodist lens of connection.<sup>31</sup> As a key conversation partner, I also introduce the work of geographer, Doreen Massey, who summarises social space as a ‘simultaneity of stories-so-far’ (Massey, 2005: 9), a definition which includes her three introductory propositions: that space is relational (the product of interrelations), plural (allowing for a

<sup>31</sup> The Methodist sense of being ‘in connexion’ is, in origin, closely related to the itinerancy of its preachers. See Heitzenrater (1997: 23-38). On the spelling of connexion, see footnote 10.

multiplicity of difference), and always under construction. For her, *connectedness* is a significant part of her consideration of space and her proposal for 'a global sense of place'.

## **2.3 The conceived space of connectedness**

### **2.3.1 Methodist connexion**

My argument is that Methodist relationships as a representation of space can be conceived in terms of their connectedness, and the Methodist tradition of 'living in connexion'. First of all, connexionalism provides the system by which Methodism finds its coherence. With its emphasis on mutuality and interdependence, it has come to be regarded as the principle that gives coherence to Methodism as a whole (The Methodist Church, 1999a: 47-48). The use of the term goes back to the earliest days of Methodism when the preachers sharing in John Wesley's preaching ministry were said to be 'in connexion' with him. Later, the term became descriptive of the organisation of Methodism in Britain as a whole, with a *connexional* structure; in contemporary Methodism, *connexionalism* is to be expressed in the life of the whole Church, in its decision-making, mission strategy and as a means of sharing resources. As an overarching system of organisation it is an illustration of Lefebvre's conceived space.

Secondly, connexionalism has more recently become the focus of theological interest. In the early 1990s, former President of the Methodist Conference, Brian Beck, argued that connexionalism was not just something for Methodism but, in an ecumenical age, could be regarded as a gift to the whole Church (Beck, 1991a; 1991b). For Beck, living in connexion was as much a theological statement as an organisational one. The report on Methodist ecclesiology, *Called to Love and Praise* (The Methodist Church, 1999a) contained, as one of its distinctive

features (wholly absent from its 1937 predecessor<sup>32</sup>), a section on *The Connexional Principle*. This principle ‘witnesses to a mutuality and interdependence which derive from the participation of all Christians through Christ in the very life of God’ (The Methodist Church, 1999a: 48). In this, it may be seen how Beck’s point of view became representative of wider discussions on Methodist self-understanding apparent from this time, amongst them the assertion that connexionalism is indeed ‘an idea whose time has come’ (Shannahan, 1999: 34). For example, this line of thinking is mirrored in my own assertion that the concept of connection ‘resonates in a world where much is made of networking within organizations, internet links on the world wide web and relational dimensions of human living’ (Drake, 2004: 136). In terms of Lefebvre’s trialectic, this is conceived space as ideology.<sup>33</sup>

Methodist connexionalism can therefore be interpreted as the conceived space of ideology and systems, of theology and official structures. But in considering connection as a conception of spatial relationships, the main difficulty is that it creates not only connectedness but also *disconnectedness*. An awareness of this problem is apparent in Methodism’s own consideration of the subject: ‘It is feared...that grassroots Methodism sees the Connexion as something other than itself...a separate entity disconnected from local church and circuit’ (The Methodist Church, 2015: 90). This I interpret to mean that there is a

<sup>32</sup> *The Nature of the Christian Church* (The Methodist Church, 1937)

<sup>33</sup> That ideology is spatial in character is an argument emphasised by Lefebvre himself: ‘Ideology per se might well be said to consist primarily in a discourse upon social space’ (1991b: 44). For the argument that theology is a form of ideology, and as such implicated in the shaping of social space, see Gorringer’s discussion of theology and spatial relationships, through which he seeks to ‘bring into conversation Christian and non Christian ideologies, or theology and secular theory’ (2002: 7-8, 26-29). For further analysis of the subject of theology and spatial relationships in this thesis, see the following Chapter 3.

mismatch between local ('grassroots') and wider understandings of Methodist connexion. In the next section (2.3.2) this mismatch is addressed and a solution offered with particular reference to Massey's 'global sense of place'.

A further consideration rests with continuing to see the conceived space of connection within the framework of Lefebvre's overall framework of space as conceived, perceived and lived. As has already been argued, all three aspects are of equal importance in giving understanding to spatial relationships. Methodist connectedness cannot be interpreted only as conceived space without reference to space as perceived and lived. An indication of this might be glimpsed in Methodism's own reporting. For example, going back to a previously quoted report, further reading reveals the following two statements: 'For Methodists connexionalism is not an abstract principle or a piece of historical baggage, but a way of life'; later, in the same report comes the following: 'questions and issues arise as to how the connexional principle is embodied and demonstrated' (The Methodist Church, 2015: 88). In this latter statement, I want to suggest that there is a resource for beginning to view Methodist connexionalism not only as a conceived principle, but also in terms of perceived and lived space.

The first statement needs to be read not as a negative but as 'a more than' (as the second statement concedes that connexionalism is indeed a *principle* of Methodism); in other words, connexionalism is more than the conceived space of an abstract idea. The question then becomes, what is meant by 'a way of life'? I suggest that this is answered in the second statement, in terms of *embodiment* and *demonstration*: that it is through such embodiment and demonstration that Methodist connexionalism is made concrete. Here, then, is a resource for ensuring that space conceived as Methodist connectedness does not remain as abstract connection but is made concrete in the world of everyday relationships.

My argument is that spatial relationships, which are conceived as connexion, are *embodied* in the *perceived space* of spatial practice, and *demonstrated* through the *lived space* of the everyday. This suggests the following mapping,<sup>34</sup> in Table 3 below:

Lefebvre's triad	Space as conceived (Representations of space)	Space as perceived (Spatial practice)	Space as lived (Spaces of representation)
Thesis lens/trope	Connectedness of everyday relationships	Movement as everyday practice	Collage as setting for everyday life
Methodist Connexionalism	The Connexional principle	Connexionalism as embodied	Connexionalism as demonstrated

**Table 3 Theoretical mapping onto Lefebvre's trialectic 3**

It is this possibility of viewing Methodist connection as conceived, perceived and lived space that remains the subject matter of the chapter as a whole.

### 2.3.2 Connected place

The theme of connection has become apparent in the discourse of the spatial turn since the time of Lefebvre, for example in the works of Castells (2000a) and Massey (2005), both of whom have been instrumental in offering a global perspective on spatial knowledge. Largely, this has developed in the light of on-going conversation relating

<sup>34</sup> In presenting this information in tabular form, I am not suggesting the categories are an identical mapping, but rather indicating that there is an extent of overlap between them as discursive spaces.

to processes of globalisation, as an interconnectedness of the world, presented by Castells metaphorically as *flow* and *network*, and by Massey as *a product of interrelations*. Castells, looking at processes of globalisation, including the growing influence of information technology, and the movement of resources and people, presents the connectedness of a 'space of flows' as 'becoming the dominant manifestation of power and function in our societies' increasingly to be distinguished from a 'space of places' (2000a: 408-409, 501). Massey, however, is sceptical of 'a conception...of globalization as some other kind of realm' and looks for an 'alternative globalization', based on relational space as 'the sum of all our connections' (2005: 185).

The difference in thinking here is about the local and the global. In Castell's notion of a space of flows, economic resources are organised and managed with little reference to territory, other than the requirement for an 'infrastructure that operates from certain locations' (Castells, 2000b: 14). In this depiction of connectedness, the global dimensions of economic processes overwhelm and threaten to erode social life at a local level; network rather than locality is the main characteristic of the space of flows. The outcome is that whereas a space of flows brings greater freedom of movement to some with greater resources at their disposal, a majority of people (of more limited means) remain confined to their localised setting: 'elites are cosmopolitan, people are local' (Castells, 2000a: 446). Therefore, whereas what Castells calls the network society brings new points of connection, it only does so by creating disconnection, the result of an uneven allocation of resources and unequal exercise of power. Massey, however, rejects any notion of globalisation that is disconnected from locality, and seeks instead to bring together both the local and the global as part of the totality of inter-relational space. To this end, she posits 'a global sense of place' (Massey, 1997), as constituted by both local and global relationships. It is the '*throwntogetherness*' of these local and global relationships that is distinctive of the connected character of place (2005: 140-142).

With the definition that Massey gives to it in terms of its connectedness, *place* becomes an important notion. Massey's work has been important for my own thinking on Methodist connection, because I suspect that recent conceptions of Methodist connexionalism have been strongly linked to notions of connection abstracted and separated from an understanding of place. It is a mismatch that I claim can be helpfully addressed by drawing on Massey's thinking on the connectedness of place. From a Methodist perspective, her conception of a global sense of place might be thought of in terms of what I call *connected place*, that is to say (and following in Massey's footsteps), *a notion of place as constituted by local and wider connections*. From this point on, the use of the phrase 'connected place' is always used with reference to seeking a Methodist application of Massey's notion of a global sense of place.

I therefore follow Massey in her rejection of definitions of connectedness and place that leave each disconnected from the other. In this she is not only critical of the kind of connectedness represented by Castell's space of flows (as network), but also of phenomenologists, whom she sees as offering a notion of place that is too closed and bounded (Massey, 2005: 183). The problem of disconnection, as Massey would see it, stems from an understanding which sees space in opposition to place; that whereas space is understood to be abstract, place, by contrast, is real and lived: 'My argument is not that place is not concrete, grounded, real, lived etc. etc. It is that space is too' (2005: 185). She goes on to say, 'Perhaps it is not 'place' [that is, as closed and bounded territory] that is missing, but *grounded, practised, connectedness*' (Massey, 2005: 187, my italics). Problems of disconnection, that is, those realities of social difference identified by Massey within the framework of her 'power geometry', would be best addressed through a connectedness that is, in Massey's own terms, both *practised* and *grounded*. Once again, it is possible to offer a mapping of these terms onto Lefebvre's trialectic of space: spatial relationships that are conceived as connectedness (Massey's 'global

sense of place') might be *perceived* as *practised connectedness* and *lived* as *grounded connectedness*. Table 4 gives form to these proposals:

Lefebvre's triad	Space as conceived (Representations of space)	Space as perceived (Spatial practice)	Space as lived (Spaces of representation)
Thesis lens/trope	Connectedness of everyday relationships	Movement as everyday practice	Collage as setting for everyday life
Methodist Connexionalism	The Connexional principle	Connexionalism as embodied	Connexionalism as demonstrated
Massey	'A global sense of place'	Practised connectedness	Grounded connectedness

**Table 4 Theoretical mapping onto Lefebvre's trialectic 4**

In sections 2.4 and 2.5, these two descriptions – of practised connectedness and grounded connectedness – are taken and used as approaches to a discussion of perceived space and lived space, respectively. These two sections therefore consider the *perceived space of practised connectedness* (*practice* as everyday movement), and the *lived space of grounded connectedness* (that is, *grounded* in the local and wider connections which constitute everyday life).

## **2.4 The perceived space of practised connectedness**

### **2.4.1 Mobilities and movements**

Carrying forward the thinking from the previous section on spatial relations conceived as connectedness, attention is now given to the

second aspect of Lefebvre's spatial triad, that of perceived space, which he also entitled spatial practice. In this section, spatial practice is considered in terms of its connectedness. This may be referred to as the *perceived space of practised connectedness*. The focus on connectedness is explored through specific practices of everyday movement. Themes of practice and embodiment, set out in the preceding chapter in addressing the topic of everyday movement, are now to be seen in specifically spatial terms. These movements of the everyday are, of course, not restricted to the local, but in line with Massey's understanding of relational space, reflect a whole range of movements from the local to the global.

One of the notions that Massey cautioned against was a too fixed and bounded idea of place. Amongst those who take such a phenomenological view of place is Edward Relph, who sought to spell out the meaning of 'an authentic sense of place' (1976: 65-66), characterised by a deep sense of belonging. Relph's thesis argued that this deep sense of place was being undermined by a *placelessness*, which he associated with the anonymous spaces of many modern developments (for example, shopping malls), and with increased levels of mobility. My own aim is to offer a more positive view of the role of movement and mobility in the analysis of spatial relations.

An important contribution to the study of movement has come from that area of research, especially in the fields of sociology and geography, known as *the mobilities turn* (Cresswell, 2006; Sheller and Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007; Cresswell and Merriman, 2011). Broadly, this has emerged out of the work of the spatial turn, building especially on those lines of thought relating to a 'borderless' world of globalisation, and its associated metaphors of flow and network. Sheller and Urry, noting the significance of travel and communication in the modern world, comment,

Social science has largely ignored or trivialised the importance of the systematic movement of people for work and family life, for leisure and pleasure, and for politics and protest...Even while it has increasingly introduced spatial analysis the social sciences have still failed to examine how the spatialities of social life presuppose (and frequently involve conflict over) both the actual and the imagined movement of people from place to place, person to person, event to event (Sheller and Urry, 2006: 208).

In researching mobilities of all kinds, one of the key insights of the mobilities turn has been to show attentiveness also to immobility; that the freedoms of mobility related to global processes are also implicated in the restrictions faced especially by those in positions without power. But equally, it has looked to emphasise the importance of 'moorings' (for example the continuing significance of territory) in a world of mobilities (Hannam et al., 2006; Cresswell, 2006: 6). As such, it has been asserted that the aim of this 'new mobilities paradigm' (Urry, 2007: 18) has not been to see static or sedentarist interpretations of society replaced by dynamic and nomadic ones, but to understand more clearly (in an interdisciplinary manner) the ways in which these differing interpretations interrelate. It is this perspective which forms the context for the discussion that follows on churches as places of movement and Methodists as a people of movement.

Churches are places of movement. This may be the case for congregations set in areas of changing population, and consisting of a significant numbers of migrants. But even in the most 'settled' of congregations, the movements of people are apparent, most obviously in coming together week by week for purposes of worship and fellowship. For some congregations, this means travel from outside of the immediate vicinity, maybe passing other churches in order to arrive at the church of their choice. This in itself, as a model of gathering and dispersal, offers a

different model to that of the Anglican parish. This focus on the movement of lay people especially, represents a different relationship to locality as understood in the parish model.

The movements of people coming to church is mirrored by the movement of people around church buildings; the experience of coming to church is not just about sitting down but will involve a whole variety of movements, not only within acts of worship but in other activities besides.

Congregations embody movement in a variety of ways, growing in faith, reaching out in service, changing over time, even moving location.

Buildings themselves can be described in terms of movement. As Bergmann, in his study of church architecture and liturgy, comments (adapting a quote from architect, Zaha Hadid), 'Churches can fly' (2007: 373).<sup>35</sup> Arguably this is less true of many Methodist churches, although even structures erected with function more than form in mind are erected with an eye to the movement that will happen within it.

#### **2.4.2 A people of movement**

What Methodists do have, is an underpinning of movement in their tradition, which can be noted both theologically and sociologically. Associated with the itinerancy of early preachers, at least in the eyes of some scholars working within Methodism, was the understanding of movement as a theological construct, to be identified in the aspirations of the Methodist people to journey towards perfection:

it would be a mistake to miss the fact that itinerancy in the Methodist tradition is really a theological concept, and not just an administrative tool for deployment. John Wesley constantly emphasised the dynamic character of the Christian faith. His notion of 'going on to perfection' is best and rightly understood to mean that the Christian life is lived in procession with movement towards

<sup>35</sup> Bergmann records the original quote as 'Houses can fly'.

the goal of fulfilment in Christ. The Christian is never static, but always moving forward (Campbell, 2011: 276).

In this instance, the movement of the itinerant preachers is presented as being representative of the spiritual movement of Methodist people as a whole. Methodist use of journeying as a description of the inner life of holiness is an element of theology that has been present in the lives of generations of Methodists, through the words (written and sung) of Methodist hymnody. Coleman and Eade (2004: 17), in their study of pilgrimage, offer the notion of movement as metaphor, for example (and especially in relation to our discussion here), the physical journeying of pilgrimage as a metaphor for the pilgrim's inner journey with God. In the example looked at above, Methodists are depicted as a people who should metaphorically (and theologically) aspire to be 'a people on the move'.

To speak of movement is to reference the movement of ideas as well as people. Methodism had its origins as a social movement: its preachers were physically moving as they took to the road as a key part of their preaching ministry, but the Methodist people together formed a social and religious movement. As such, it was a movement of ideas as well as those (both metaphorical and physical) of people. One of the aspects of mobility that could be developed in Methodist terms is the relationship between Methodism as a discipleship movement and the physical movements of Methodists. Recently, Methodism has shown a renewed interest in rediscovering itself a movement. Shier-Jones has come to regard Methodism as a continuing movement ('Methodism was, and still is, a movement,' (2005: 271)), although we may wish to question whether this is more true of a spirit of Methodism than its structures.<sup>36</sup> A former

<sup>36</sup> For earlier calls for Methodism to rediscover itself as a movement in the wider Church, see Wainwright (1983: 189-221) in an ecumenical context and Percy (2004: 206-210) writing from an Anglican perspective.

General Secretary of the Methodist Church (Atkins, 2010), in his short study book, *Discipleship...and the people called Methodists*, uses the term more than fifty times in as many pages, as part of his call for a 'discipleship movement shaped for mission'. What Atkins does not do, however, is consider the relationship between Methodism as a movement alongside the physical movement of Methodists.

More broadly, this link between these two forms of movement has tended to be overlooked by scholars, although there are exceptions. Tsing, for example, exploring movement as both personal movement and as 'collaborative activities' (2000: 349) highlights movement as a preferable spatial metaphor to *flow*, for this very reason. She comments, 'the scholarship I am imagining would stress the concreteness of "movements" in both senses of the word: social mobilizations in which new identities and interests are formed and travels from one place to another through which place-transcending interactions occur. These two senses of *movement* work together in remaking geographies' (2000: 351). Cresswell (2006: 196ff) offers a similar analysis in his study of the travels of two suffragettes as part of the promotion of the suffragette movement, highlighting the way in which physical movement and political ideas each shaped the development of the other. Taking up the line of this argument, the idea of a discipleship movement shaped for mission should be considered in relation to the physical movement of those carrying the idea.

In these paragraphs movement in its differing forms has been brought together, in order to offer a dynamic depiction of Methodists as a people 'on the move'. Yet if, as Atkins seeks, Methodists are to be renewed as a people shaped for mission, should not reflection on the physical movement of Methodists be a part of the equation? Indeed, the term 'mission', as the result of a 'being sent' is itself a term of movement, incorporating both the message being carried and the movements of

those who carry it. The suggestion I am putting forward is that there is value in looking more closely at the everyday movements of Methodists. In the next section I develop an understanding of such movement through Tweed's work on crossing and dwelling at boundaries, as offering particular insight into Methodists as a people of movement.

### **2.4.3 Boundary movements of crossing and dwelling**

Tweed's (2008) study offered a theory of religion based on movement and relation. In seeking to theorise religion, theory itself, he argues, is about movement as an itinerary<sup>37</sup> or 'purposeful wandering', consisting of 'sightings from sites' (2008: 7-9, 13). Drawing on his study of the religious practices of Cuban refugees living in Miami, he develops a theory of religion using the tropes of dwelling and crossing. For Tweed both dwelling and crossing are about movement.<sup>38</sup> Even the term 'dwelling' he argues, has the sense of a temporary home, and therefore puts the emphasis on the *making* of a home (Tweed, 2008: 83; see also Urry, 2000: 132).<sup>39</sup> Whether it is in reference to the body, the home, the homeland, or the cosmos, religion allows the setting of boundaries but also accounts for their crossing. In the following paragraphs the

<sup>37</sup> He writes, 'Drawing on the three primary meanings of the term *itinerary* in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, I suggest that theories are embodied travels ("a line or course of travel, a route"), positioned representations ("a record or journal of travel, an account of a journey"), and proposed routes ("a sketch of a proposed route; a plan or a scheme of travel").' The parallel with the *practice* of early Methodist preachers is redolent. Tweed does not use the word *itinerant*; nor does Methodism use *itinerary*, although as a description of the Methodist circuit preaching plan, the term fits. For further development of this argument relating to theme of *itinerary*, see Chapter 7.

<sup>38</sup> In emphasising the dynamic of dwelling, Tweed uses the analogy from physics of "unaccelerated motion" as opposed to the "accelerated motion" of crossing.

<sup>39</sup> Tweed (2008: 74) views the making of a home as a spatial practice. For further discussion of the topic of the making of a home, see Section 3.4.3.

movements of crossing the boundary and dwelling at the boundary are given further consideration.

The historical starting point for Methodist mission involved a crossing of boundaries. Wesley's itinerant method cut across the established practice of Anglican ministry. The country was then (as now) divided into Anglican parishes and individual clergy would reside and make a living from their parish for an extended period of time, sometimes for the whole length of their active ministry. The parish offered a model of bounded place, which viewed place as territory. Wesley broke this model by seeking to preach in many different parishes, usually without the permission of the resident clergyman and often against their wishes. Wesley was not to be put off: 'I look upon the whole world as my parish...' he wrote.<sup>40</sup> His was a ministry of moving across established boundaries.

Some Methodist scholars have identified this spread of Methodism with this willingness to move beyond the boundaries (Hall, T.D., 1994; Hempton, 2005; Wilson, 2011). Wilson highlights 'a world without boundaries', showing the ability of the Methodist movement to cross not only parish boundaries, but also the boundaries of the state as it sent missionaries overseas, and also its capacity to transcend different cultures. For him, the best example of crossing boundaries is that given by Methodism in Ireland (that it is a single Methodist entity for the whole of the island of Ireland), whose activity has been consistently organised in a way that straddled the division between Protestant and Catholic and nationalist and loyalist. This transcending of boundaries, he argues, is underpinned by Methodist theology, especially its Arminian emphasis,

<sup>40</sup> Quoted from Wesley's Journal, 11<sup>th</sup> June 1739. The extended quote is, 'I look upon the whole world as my parish; thus far I mean, that, in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation. This is the work which I know God has called me to; and sure I am that His blessing attends it.'

with its concern to proclaim that the love of God extends to all people in every place regardless of background or origin.

Creswell (1996: 8-9, 22-23) focuses on the crossing of boundaries as *transgression*, and the way in which to be either 'in place' or 'out of place' is dependent upon the relationship between place and power and what is defined as ideologically normative place. Such normativity, he argues, is not immediately apparent in everyday life, but only when there is a transgression of place. Creswell is clear that although the transgression may not be intentional on the part of the transgressor (although it could be), it is noticeable by those who see it and regard it as improper, and it is this which gives the action its out of place definition. Amongst the examples he uses to illustrate his theme is that of graffiti, but the same reflection could be applied say, to the presence of a homeless person on the street. In origin, the Methodist mission sought primarily to take the message of the gospel to those who found themselves 'out of place', in newly developing settlements of industry, or for whom the established church had little interest or concern. These early Methodists saw the potential connections to be made in these situations, and people who were otherwise disconnected found new connection with others through the Methodist movement.

From the perspective of my own research looking at ministry in the everyday, the question becomes one of further response: that the responsibility becomes not only to take notice of those who find themselves 'out of place', but also to take care. As a crossing of boundaries it represents a breaking open of bounded place. It is this scheme of disconnection and potential re-connection and the relevance of crossing boundaries to the practice of an everyday ministry that is a key feature of my argument. Rather than making a response that might consist of ignoring or abusing the transgressor, the next step may be one that amounts to a crossing of boundaries on one's own part, in order to

exercise that ministry of care. What is required above all is an encouragement of those forms of movement, which represent a crossing of boundaries; a practised connectedness, which moves beyond the confines of closed and bounded place.

The second part of Tweed's formulation is that of dwelling, which, and as has already been noted above, he understands as a form of movement. In this it might be highlighted how he shares common ground with Ingold's anthropological work on dwelling as movement. Although seeking to take a phenomenological approach to what he calls the dwelling perspective, Ingold agrees with Massey that dwelling as a concept gives a too rigid and bounded definition of place. He illustrates his point in an exercise that involves drawing a circle on a piece of paper: what was in the first instance a line of movement has become an enclosed space. He comments:

In just the same way we tend to identify traces of the circumambulatory movements that bring a place into being as boundaries that demarcate the place from its surrounding space. Whether on paper or on the ground, the pathways or trails along which the movement proceeds are perceived as limits within which it is contained...My contention is that lives are led not inside places but through, around, to and from them, from and to places elsewhere (Ingold, 2011: 148; see also Ingold, 2008).

For him, it is preferable not to refer to *place-bound* but rather to *place-binding*. He continues, '[human existence] unfolds not in places but along paths. Proceeding along a path, every inhabitant lays a trail. Where inhabitants meet, trails are entwined, as the life of each becomes bound up with each other' (2011: 148). Here, then, is a view of movement as practised connectedness.

Ingold's definition of place as 'a zone of entanglement' is a helpful one, not least because of the way it makes criticism of notions of

connectedness, as highlighted by Ingold himself in a chapter entitled (in deliberate counterpoint to the title of Massey's volume, *For Space*) *Against Space* (2011: 144). Ingold, however, does not set up his dispute with Massey as a simple opposition. Although coming at the subject as an academic who takes a phenomenological approach, he finds common ground with Massey in seeing place as relational in character, but he maintains that space is too abstract as a concept to be helpful. There is a helpfulness about this image of entanglement, which moves thinking about place away from the problems caused when connection becomes identified too strongly as network; as Ingold himself is keen to highlight, there is a naturalness to entanglement that is lacking in globalised concepts of network.

I find Ingold's insights into *entanglement* particularly helpful in considering the nature of the boundaries of ministry as that which binds rather than divides, brings together rather than separates. The helpfulness of his concept of binding is that it presents not just an insight into the making of places, but also into the making of boundaries. Ingold says that this binding of paths forms knots (2011: 148), which he depicts in terms of place. But to my way of thinking, and with boundaries in mind, this interweaving is more like braiding, suggestive of both containment and crossing. It is an image of the *boundary as entwinement*. It is this notion of the boundary as entwinement that I seek to develop later in this thesis as a movement along a boundary (see Section 5.4.2.2). In this sense, boundaries are not just places of dwelling (movement at boundaries), or crossing (movement across boundaries), but also travelling (movement along boundaries). For this latter kind of boundary movement, an understanding is required of boundaries (to borrow Ingold's language) not as 'in-between' spaces so much as paths along which we travel.

An example of such boundary entwinement may be recognised in the Methodist Church's position on human sexuality.<sup>41</sup> The 1993 Conference called on 'the Methodist people to begin a pilgrimage of faith to combat repression and discrimination, to work for justice and human rights and to give dignity and worth to people whatever their sexuality.' The church has revisited this issue with a report to Conference in 2005, and a further review in 2007. More recently, the issue has formed part of a wider conversation on marriage and human relationships in 2014 and a statement on homophobia in 2015. Amidst a range of differing interpretations and understandings, no agreement has been reached: 'The Conference encourages Methodists to continue to discuss their differences in a spirit of openness and love.' Expressed as a continuing pilgrimage, Methodists are invited to continue to explore these issues of division as part of an on-going search for unity. As a process of learning to live together, this an example of dwelling defined by movement; in Tweed's terms, as the process of making a home; in Ingold's terms, as the making of place resulting from an entwinement of paths. Pastorally, it speaks of the mutuality of holding and of being held. Entanglement, in all its messiness and 'knottedness', offers a useful image of pastoral care and the reality of many pastoral relationships. The issue of care forms the focus of the final part of this chapter as attention is turned to a discussion of the third aspect of Lefebvre's trialectic, lived space.

## **2.5 The lived space of grounded connectedness**

In the previous sections, discussion revolved around the conceived space of (Methodist) connectedness and the perceived space of everyday movement. This new section moves on to the third of Lefebvre's aspects of space, and offers the argument that lived space is to be understood as

<sup>41</sup> The information contained in this paragraph is taken from The Methodist Church (2018) [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk), accessed January 2018.

pastoral relationship, as consideration is given to 'spatialities of responsibility, loyalty, care' (Massey, 2005: 189). In the Methodist Church, presbyters and deacons are ordained to a ministry of pastoral care (The Methodist Church, 1999b: 297).<sup>42</sup> A ministry of care is exercised within congregations through the appointment of pastoral visitors, and provision is made for an annual rededication of those called to this ministry (The Methodist Church, 1999b: 344). One of the challenges for any congregation is how this ministry of care is not just viewed and exercised within the confines of the congregation but also expressed as a wider endeavour, across neighbourhoods and as a global concern.

### **2.5.1 Relationships of care**

In the previous chapter, the basis of an everyday ministry was identified as showing concern for that which is noticed through a mutual giving and receiving of care. Here the topic of care and place is discussed with reference to Massey's 'geographies of care', Tuan's 'fields of care' and Relph's 'care-taking'. Massey's understanding of place has already been introduced in Section 2.3.2. For her, the call for a geography of care (2005: 189,193), as a theme that is developed in the concluding chapter to her volume, is part of her search for a 'politics of relational place'. Through it she presses her case for connectedness that is both local and global in character. In this section, that connectedness is emphasised as a grounded connectedness, in which the everyday is grounded not in a territorial sense of bounded place, but through a situated ethic of care and responsibility.

<sup>42</sup> The reference to presbyters reads 'to celebrate the sacraments, to preach the word and to care for God's people'; deacons 'are ordained to a ministry of service and pastoral care and seek to equip God's people for service in the world.'

For Tuan and Relph, a care for place is strongly related to an experience of place. Tuan seeks to establish 'fields of care' (1979b: 416-419), and interestingly, he draws on the topic of religion, offering the delimited site of sacred space as an illustration. Such fields of care are built up over time, as the consequence of accumulated experience and care. Relph associates the care for place with its rootedness, and the experience of place as a growing familiarity: 'It is this attachment that constitutes our roots in places; and the familiarity that this involves is not just a detailed knowledge, but a sense of deep care and concern for that place' (1976: 37-39). This attitude of 'care-taking' (1976: 38-39), according to him, is the basis of the human relationship with place.

The contrast between the approach of Massey on the one hand, and Tuan and Relph on the other can be seen in two points of discussion, the first of which relates to distance and the second of which focuses on time. In the first instance, Relph argues that it is a close attachment to, and increasing familiarity with, place, which fosters a sense of belonging and a commitment to 'care-taking'. As Tuan (1979b: 416) confirms, 'Fields of care...can be known in essence only from within.' It is a perspective that offers a closed and bounded view of place, reflected in the way that both writers oppose 'inside' and 'outside' as separate domains (Relph, 1976: 64; Tuan, 1979b: 412). Tuan contrasts how those on the inside of place experience it as a field of care, compared with those on the outside for whom place is more apparent as 'public symbol'. Similarly, Relph comments, 'The essence of place lies not so much in these as in the experience of an 'inside' that is distinct from an 'outside'...To be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identity with the place' (1976: 49). Massey takes a different stance, as she asks, 'Why do we so often and so tightly associate care with proximity? Even those who write of care for the stranger so often figure that relationship as face-to-face. It is the counterpoint perhaps to the persistent lack of acknowledgment of the strangers who have always been within' (2005: 186).

Massey, then, is much more inclined to hold a definition of place, which includes the stranger, in contrast to familiarity of place highlighted by the phenomenologists. In this, there is a resonance with the argument of the previous chapter (see Section 1.2.2.1) in which collage is seen to overturn the convention of familiarity, replacing it with a picture of the everyday that is both familiar and strange. The point of view put forward by Massey is developed as she baulks against 'the Russian-doll geography of ethics, care and responsibility: from home, to local place, to nation', before concluding that, 'There is a hegemonic understanding that we care first for, and have our responsibilities towards, those nearest in. It is a geography of affect which is territorial and emanates from the local' (2005: 186). Here, then, is a call by Massey for a definition of place, not as bounded territory, but as open and porous connectedness.

The second distinction to be made between these contrasting approaches brings to the fore a focus on time. Whereas Tuan and Relph emphasise an identity shaped by the past, Massey looks to the potential of an identity that is still to be shaped. Tuan stresses that attachment to place is 'a function of time' (1979a: 179), in particular the repeated and unnoticed experiences of the everyday. It is this, which, according to Relph leads to the creation of 'authentic' (1976: 64), place, marked by a past which gives clear identity to that place. The influence of Heidegger (2001: 157) is apparent, for whom the care of place was really about its preservation; nowhere is this clearer than in the example he uses of the Black Forest farmhouse, with its unchanging picture from the past. Massey is more influenced by future possibility than the preservation of the past. The open and dynamic nature of space, which is at the heart of her proposal, spells out an understanding of space as always under construction. Space, like the future, is open: 'In this open, interactional space, there are always connections yet to be made' (2005: 11). It is this possibility of relational politics that can make a difference that lies at the heart of Massey's geography of care.

Having said this, there are aspects to both approaches that show a commonality as well as a distinction. Relph has at least an awareness of the potential of place: 'to care for a place involves more than having a concern for it that is based on certain past experiences and future expectations...' (1976: 38). Furthermore, Massey, as does Pred (1984), acknowledges the historically contingent construction of place; for her, one important strand of her overall argument is that place is made up of 'stories-so-far'. Nevertheless, it remains true to say that if Relph is concerned primarily with the fixed roots of place, then Massey is most interested in what place might yet become. In this, Massey's thought bears a similarity with Pred's proposition of place as 'becoming'.

### **2.5.2 Place as possibility**

The emphasis on becoming makes a necessity of looking again at the notion of collage as an expression of everyday space. Massey herself is critical of collage, which she regards as a too static depiction of space, and an imposition of power, with its overlaid layers telling a history rather than suggesting future possibility: 'the product of superimposed historical structures rather than full contemporaneous coexistence and becoming' (2005: 110). It is for this reason that, in a similar way to Cresswell, who favours talking about 'spacing' and 'placing' (2011: 7) (that is, as verbs), I think it preferable to refer to the *making* of a collage rather than to collage as a finished product; that the process of producing a collage from all the possibilities available is the one which gives the best understanding of collage as everyday space.<sup>43</sup> This picture of pieces that are still to be placed in relation to one another gives an interesting perspective on the setting of boundaries. It is not that boundaries do not exist, but that they are still to be set; they are a matter of negotiation.

<sup>43</sup> See Section 4.4.2 for discussion of the making of a collage as a research method.

This can be illustrated with reference to a worship event in the Bradford area, entitled *All, Together*, which had its origins in the personal concern and enthusiasm of an individual to create a service more relevant to people with learning disabilities.<sup>44</sup> From the outset, however, the aim was not to provide a time solely for people with learning disabilities, but the emphasis lay on creating a time of worship and fellowship to include their family members and carers and indeed whoever might wish to attend. Regularly attracting 30-40 people, these events have been found helpful to many, especially as a coming together of people of varying abilities. However, reflection on the events show that it is quite possible to create situations in which to meet on an occasional basis but never to move beyond that, for example building on-going relationships outside that setting; a movement, we might say, from hospitality to friendship. In many ways, *All, Together* is an inadequate beginning, a coming together of elements which themselves reflect a fragmented church. Yet, even within its inadequacy, it may indicate a small but significant movement towards a renewed and more hopeful church. As lived space, in Lefebvre's terms, it offers momentary glimpses of what yet might be in a life that is more fully lived.

## **2.6 Conclusion to Chapter 2**

This chapter has used the framework of Lefebvre's trialectic of space as conceived, perceived and lived to explore social space in terms of its connectedness. Drawing on the Methodist tradition of living in connexion, the proposal was for a Methodist understanding of spatial relations in terms of connected place. This was done in acknowledgment of Massey's

<sup>44</sup> This illustration formed material for a case study as part of the background work of this thesis. For a more extended reflection on this material as a theological theme, see Section 3.4.2.

thinking on a global sense of place as constituted by local and wider relationships.

The work of the chapter has been to continue the thinking begun in the preceding one with respect to circuits of everyday life as understood through movement and collage. The theme of movement, presented as a practised connectedness, has been extended to include an exploration of movements across and at the boundary. The theme of collage, presented as grounded connectedness, has been expanded to show how boundaries negotiated through relationships of care can become spaces of hope and becoming.

This discussion of the spaces of everyday life (building as it has on conversation around circuits of everyday life) has implications for an understanding of circuit as a part of Methodist structures. It is worth revisiting the definition given in the preceding chapter of Methodist circuits as ‘the primary unit in which Local Churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help’ (Methodist 2014: 454, Standing Order 500). My immediate concern is with use of the phrase ‘Local Churches’. Taking Massey’s argument seriously, this would seem to unduly weight the ‘localness’ of churches; it runs the danger of presenting a picture of churches as showing (to borrow Ingold’s phrase) ‘snug, well-wrapped localism’ (2008: 1808), rather than the sense of connected place that has been developed in this chapter. As a title, it fails to acknowledge that churches are made up of both local and wider connections. It is a difficulty that can be resolved by starting with a definition of circuit rather than churches.

In terms of a description of circuit, I am more inclined to Ingold’s image of entanglement, because it shares the emphasis on movement that has been a key part of my argument. His language of entanglement lends

itself to an understanding of circuit as a path of movement.<sup>45</sup> As paths of movement, circuits become means of entwinement. Methodist circuits might therefore be seen less as a unit of 'local churches' joined together like the points of a dot-to-dot puzzle (which is Ingold's criticism of the image of connection as network), and more like zones of entanglement. From this perspective, the churches of the circuit (so called 'local churches') might be regarded, not as the static dots of fixed and bounded place, but dynamically as *circuits within circuits*, paths of movement caught up with other paths of movement. Churches themselves, as I have already tried to show, are made up of a complexity of movements. Entwined with circuits of everyday life, churches are drawn into entanglements with others. Operating a circuit ministry of movement (as practised connectedness) and relationships of care (as grounded connectedness), and through the full range of local and wider connection, churches take on the character of connected place.

<sup>45</sup> In this, there is a resonance with the original use of circuit as a term in Methodism. See Introduction: Methodist ministry as movement, and Section 1.2.1.

## Chapter 3 A theology of connected place

### 3.1 Introduction: theologies of place

In the previous chapter use was made of developments in social scientific thinking on space and place, and the case was made for understanding the space of the everyday in terms of connected place. In this chapter the discussion is extended to the discipline of theology, drawing on theological studies of space and place, and with the aim of putting forward some markers for the setting out of *a theology of connected place*. The argument is a cumulative one, itself a kind of journey with marker posts, as space, which is connected, practised and grounded is demonstrated in theological terms as *relational, motional and transformational* – themes which are spelt out in the course of this chapter.

The theology of space and place has formed an innovative and developing area of theological interest since the late 1990s, with a number of notable contributions to the field of study. The ground covered under the heading of ‘theologies of place’ is broad, and acknowledges social scientific investigations of space and place in a number of ways.<sup>46</sup> Some have been influenced by developments in social and cultural theory expressive of the spatial turn. Gorrington (2002), with his interest in the built and material environment, and the construction of social space, highlights the theories of Lefebvre, Harvey and Soja, whilst Sheldrake (2001; 2012; 2014), in foregrounding the practice of place, makes particular use of

<sup>46</sup> I use the heading ‘theologies of place’ to gather together a number of related terms: prominent amongst them are ‘a Christian theology of place’ (Inge, 2003), ‘a theology of the built environment’ (Gorrington, 2002), ‘theology in the built environment’ (Bergmann, 2007), ‘theology of space and place’ (Jansen, 2016); Sheldrake (2001) is more concerned with a spirituality of place, but also the relationship of theology with spirituality.

Certeau's emphasis on spatial practice. Offerings from a cultural studies perspective (Nausner, 2007; Jansen, 2016) take a post-colonial stance, with a focus on the contested nature of place. Other scholars, taking a 'loss of place'<sup>47</sup> as their starting point (Lane, 1998; 2002; Inge, 2003), have drawn upon phenomenological sources in exploring a 'sense of place'. Theologies of place have also sought to utilise the resources of disciplines more commonly associated with theological study: biblical studies (Brueggemann, 2002; Inge, 2003), ecclesiology (Pickard, 2009), ethics (Gorringer, 2002), and spirituality (Sheldrake, 2001; Lane, 2002), as well as ethnography (Fulkerson, 2007). Whilst there has been some attempt by scholars to cross-reference other studies in the field, my own attempt here is to draw upon the full breadth of work representing theological investigation of space and place. The work I offer is therefore two-fold, taking my own look at social scientific contributions to the discussion on space and place, and bringing my findings to bear on the already existing theological studies in the field.

The work of this chapter follows on from the preceding chapter, not only in continuing to build on a notion of place as connected place, but also in mirroring the outline of that chapter in terms of connection and disconnection, and place as practised and grounded connectedness. The approach is a thematic one, offering a theology of place characterised in three ways. Firstly, it is *relational*, what Methodists might describe as 'living in connexion'. Secondly, it is *motional*; as Bergmann (2007: 374), who highlights movement and mobility as neglected themes in theology, says, 'Let's get theology to move!' Thirdly, it is *transformational*, offering 'a theological reading of place', which 'maps out a terrain of needed and actualised transformation' (Fulkerson, 2007: 235-236). In taking and using these themes, explored as individual themes in the work of others,

<sup>47</sup> This 'loss of place' can be seen as a consequence of the universalising tendencies of modernity, which, valuing notions of generalised space over the particularity of place, has led to the demise of the significance of place in human experience. See Inge (2003: 36).

my own contribution rests in seeking to bring the three together as a distinctive theology of connected place. The linkage between these themes and the work of previous chapter is shown in Table 5 below:

Lefebvre's triad	Space as conceived (Representations of space)	Space as perceived (Spatial practice)	Space as lived (Spaces of representation)
Thesis lens/trope	Connectedness of everyday relationships	Movement as everyday practice	Collage as setting for everyday life
Methodist Connexionalism	The Connexional principle	Connexionalism as embodied	Connexionalism as demonstrated
Massey	'A global sense of place'	Practised connectedness	Grounded connectedness
Theology of connected place	Relational	Motional	Transformational

**Table 5 Theoretical mapping onto Lefebvre's trialectic 5**

### **3.2 The relational character of connected place**

Relationship is a key aspect of the Methodist principle of living in connection. As a theological theme within Methodism, this is a development emerging from reflection on connexionalism as it represents the organisation and structure of Methodism. The United Methodist Book of Discipline states, 'The connectional idea is a style of relationship rather than simply an organisational or structural framework' (The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (1988) para 112, p.116 quoted

in Beck, 1991b: 44).<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the most recent Methodist statement on connexionalism was able to state that, 'Relationship is at the heart of connexionalism', whilst honestly acknowledging that, 'Sometimes relationships within the church can feel fragile or disconnected' (The Methodist Church, 2015: 90). In Section 2.3 themes of connection and disconnection were discussed in the light of the Methodist principle of 'living in connexion' and Massey's understanding of space as relational, plural and always under construction, reaching the conclusion that the space of the everyday could be helpfully viewed as connected place. In this section theological reflection is based on Massey's three themes: that place is constituted by its relationships; that the relationships of place are both local and global in scope; and that the boundaries of place are open to new connections and possibilities. To a considerable extent there is crossover here with the threefold theology of connexion that I have laid out elsewhere: a theology of interdependence; a theology of unity in diversity; and a theology of a larger Christ (Drake, 2004: 136-138). In that instance the emphasis was on Methodist ecclesiology, but here the aim is to establish a theological understanding of the space of the everyday as connected place.

### **3.2.1 A theology of relationships**

It is not hard to find material amongst the various theologies of place on the relational nature of place. The relational character of much contemporary theology is reflected in the approach taken by a number of writers on the theology of place, and is expressed in theology which is

<sup>48</sup> It is worth noting that the quote here originates from the United Methodist Church based in the United States. This illustrates that the notion of connexionalism is part of a discussion wider than British Methodism alone. It also explains why in this reference, the word is spelt as 'connectional' (as used in American Methodism) rather than 'connexional' (as used in British Methodism).

Trinitarian, Christological and Pneumatological.<sup>49</sup> For Inge, the focus is on incarnational theology. As he states, 'it is clear from the incarnation that places are the seat of relations or the place of meeting and activity in the interaction between God and the world' (2003: 52). He explains this, saying, 'God relates *to* people *in* places, and the places are not irrelevant to that relationship but, rather, are integral to divine-human encounter. The same holds true, as we might expect, for the relations of people to one another in places' (see Inge, 2003: 58). By contrast, Gorringer centres his discussion on the Trinity.<sup>50</sup> Taking a lead from Barth, he asserts that 'divine spatiality is explicitly Trinitarian. The origin of all space...is to be found in the Trinitarian relationship' (2002: 43). Noting how this resonates with Lefebvre's notion of space as the product of social relationships, he is able to offer 'a Trinitarian mapping of spatiality', of God as Redeemer, Creator and Reconciler: 'imagination, order and justice are...the keywords of a Trinitarian theology of space and the built environment' (Gorringer, 2002: 48-49).

Both, then, offer a relational view of place, but the contrasting approach results in differing understandings of relational place as everyday space. This is due in part to their differing view of sacramental theology. For Gorringer (2002: 40), all places are potentially sacred. From the outset he is clear that he is not interested in sacred spaces *per se* so much as the built environment of the everyday. His insistence on this point stems

<sup>49</sup> The discussion in this section is conducted with respect to doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. The doctrine of the Spirit, in terms of a theology of place, is the particular concern of Sigurd Bergmann, who articulates a theology of place based on the inhabitation of the Spirit. However, because Bergmann also emphasises this form of dwelling as movement, his contribution will be discussed as part of the following Section 3.3.

<sup>50</sup> The three Persons of the Trinity are a 'community of being', with each person 'sharing in the life of the other two', in a mutual relationship expressed in the term *perichoresis*. This relationship overflows into the life of the world; as Rahner stated, 'The economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity' (see McGrath, 1994: 253-255).

directly from his proposal that the Trinitarian economy of salvation does not allow for a separation of the world into the sacred and the secular (Gorringe, 2002: 5-12). Inge, however, brings to the fore the sacramental event as giving a place its sense of holiness. As a result - and despite his insistence that people are sent out from the celebration of the Eucharist 'to go out to find Christ in the people and places of everyday life' (Inge, 2003: 62) - his argument draws a boundary between the holy and the everyday, and a highlighting of the former at the expense of the latter. It is not that Inge expresses a point of view that God is not at work in everyday spaces. After all, the incarnation can quite readily be argued as being about the God who comes into the ordinary places of the world, as shown, for example, by the narrative of Christ's birth (Luke 2.7).<sup>51</sup> However, it is indicative of Inge's reliance on the narrative of the 'loss of place' with which his account begins, and the phenomenological reassertion of the significance of place. As a result, his view of holy places as places of deep meaning sets them apart rather than opens them up to the space of the everyday. It is this point of view that has led him to hold a too bounded view of place, with boundaries that are too impermeable for a movement between the holy and the everyday. As a consequence, Inge remains more interested in churches as holy places than churches as everyday spaces.

To some extent, this difference is ameliorated by Sheldrake, who highlights religious practice,<sup>52</sup> which does not just happen 'in' places but actively makes places:

I hope that it will be clear that by 'practice' I do not simply mean particular spiritual or devotional *practices* but the practice of living...a Christian understanding of the practice of living is not

<sup>51</sup> Gorringe (2002: 8) also highlights the *Magnificat* from Luke 1.

<sup>52</sup> The theme of practice as movement will form the subject matter of Section 3.3.

confined to the inner life of the Christian community but includes the practice of *everyday* living in the heart of the world of human places (2001: 147, his italics).

For Sheldrake, then, explicitly religious practice is fully a part of a much wider 'practice of living', expressed through the world of social relationships.<sup>53</sup> He is able to include the everyday within the sacramental space of the Eucharist because of his emphasis on what he calls 'the practice of catholic place' (2001: 64). It is with his notion of catholic place that our discussion is able to move on to the next port of call in this exploration of a relational theology of place: that the relationships of place are both local and global in scope.

### **3.2.2 A theology of 'a global sense of place'**

Having identified theologically that place is to be understood relationally, the discussion can proceed to consider the next characteristic of place as constituted by relationships that are both local and global in character. Massey's global sense of place, we might be reminded, challenges the depiction of local place as 'real' whilst global space is abstract; her dynamic and relational view of space leads her to conclude that place consists of both local and global relationships. What theological resource can be brought to bear on Massey's 'global sense of place'? The discussion is conducted with reference to three terms, catholicity, *koinonia* and *oikumene*.

Catholicity refers to the universality of the church. When Sheldrake talks about catholicity, he refers to the transcending of place; that God, made incarnate in the particularity of place is not confined to place: 'There is a persistent tension in Christianity between what is sometimes referred to

<sup>53</sup> This sense of inclusion is to some extent undermined by reducing the commentary on the 'everyday' to a single short chapter at the conclusion of his book.

as place or placelessness or, as I prefer, between the local and universal dimensions of place' (2001: 30). He seeks to resolve this tension by developing notions of the practice of catholic place as a moving beyond the bounds of place, and Eucharistic space as a making room for what is other (both of which will be discussed further in the subsequent sections 3.3.3 and 3.4 respectively). But in raising this tension, it seems to me that Sheldrake comes close to setting out a position that Massey was keen to avoid; that place is local and 'real' whilst 'placelessness' (as the space or non-place of globalisation) is general and abstract.

Methodist connexionalism is a way of expressing the relationship of the local and wider dimensions of the church. As Beck comments, 'No local church...is a unit complete in itself and autonomous, but is *essentially* linked to the wider church' (1991b: 45). For him, a key understanding of connexionalism is that there is 'acknowledgement of a larger identity' (Beck, 1991b: 46). In other words, the local church is a part of the whole. But this does not address the sense of disconnection, identified as creating a mismatch between Methodism, as it exists locally, and the wider connexion. However, the implications of Massey's global sense of place give cause to reflect upon what is a 'local church'. If it is the church as it exists in a particular place (or to express it better, the church as it exists as a particular place) then that church, connexionally speaking, is made up of relationships that are both local and wider. The connexion is not something 'out there' but is present in the life of that church community as a concentration (or 'constellation', as Massey (2005: 149, 187) calls it) of local and wider relationships.

A 'local' church is never, then, only local as such, but always 'local-and-wider' (see the introduction of this topic in Section 2.6). Of course, Methodist churches may not see themselves in this way; there is a challenge as well as (and perhaps more than) a reality in all this. The main point to argue is that a church community that can learn to see itself

in this way will be better set to engage in ministry with the spaces of the everyday as defined by a global sense of place. This is an argument picked up by Nausner in response to reading a report about international congregations in Berlin in which the reader is informed that 'Globalism and localism intertwine daily in these church settings; resident aliens become global citizens in Christ' (2007: 17). But this leads him to argue the further point that in a globalised world this is a task for all congregations: 'This issue of global citizenship in Christ (see Ephesians 2.19) needs to be considered in any Methodist local church that takes its connectional heritage and identity seriously' (2007: 17). It is this recognition which will help congregations not only to define themselves by their 'localness' but by their connectedness; in Massey's terms, by the totality of all their relations.

For Massey, this totality is not the same as homogeneity. A key aspect of this constellation of interrelationship is its plurality: place is not to be defined by a closely bounded single identity, but by a multiplicity of identities, which offer a spatial heterogeneity. A theology of connected place, therefore, faces the requirement to account for the heterogeneity of place, the many and varied relationships which help to constitute a global sense of place. The theological basis of a global sense of place rests in the understanding that God's love is indeed global, a theology that sees the whole world caught up within the greater purposes of the love of God. A global sense of place, therefore, can be expressed as the *oikumene*, as the whole household of God, meaning the whole inhabited earth.

In the latter part of the twentieth century, it was the endeavours of the ecumenical<sup>54</sup> movement, which fostered the understanding that the oneness of the church could not be separated from the wholeness of creation. Equally, and crucially, such unity was not the same as

<sup>54</sup> A title derived from the word *oikumene*.

uniformity, but rather was to be celebrated in its diversity. This unity in diversity was to be witnessed in the *koinonia* of the church, and as indicated in the New Testament, as the communion shared with God, and as the fellowship of Christians. As such, it was a participation in the life of Christ, in which a common calling to serve God was empowered through the gifting of the Spirit. In an article entitled *Connexion and Koinonia*, Beck (1998: 138-139) recognises the contribution that the experience of *koinonia* gives to a Methodist understanding of connexion, not only as a unity but also in the encouragement of diversity.

It is this sense of connectedness as a unity in diversity that allows Nausner, who writes both as a Methodist and as an academic working in the field of cultural studies, to take up the argument of how connexionalism can impact on a globalised world. His proposition is that a connexionalism that embraces cultural diversity might be ‘a counter force to the homogenizing power of globalization...I want to understand the Methodist connection very much as a form of community that offers an alternative to the uniforming tendency of economic globalization’ (Nausner, 2007: 17-18). Nausner’s argument is important because it helps to take thinking about connexionalism beyond its confines of church structure towards making a contribution to wider discussion on economic, social and cultural concerns. As I have argued elsewhere,

There needs to be encouragement to make connections with other Christians, and also with people of other faiths and none. Christ transcends the barriers of our own making, and is made incarnate in many cultures and contexts. Connexion means being ecumenical in the widest sense, pushing the boundaries at every point, as we seek the larger Christ who calls us to live in new patterns of relationship and new networks (Drake, 2004: 138).

This reference to ‘pushing the boundaries’ makes it opportune to consider in the next section the role boundaries play in a theology of connected place.

### 3.2.3 The boundaries of connected place

To advance a theology of the boundaries of connected place is to offer a counter view to a theology that arises from a set and bounded understanding of place. Both Gorringer and Nausner make use of Tillich's language of the boundary. Tillich argued that the disposition of being *on* the boundary of alternative possibilities, was 'fruitful for thought', but by the end of the piece, he concluded that he was 'frustrated' by his 'boundary-fate' (Tillich, 1973: 297, 349). Although he attempted to work from the perspective of the boundary, there is a feeling of bleakness about this picture of being torn in two different directions, unable to resolve the tension between the two. This language of the boundary has been noted and commented upon by those discussing the boundaries of place. Gorringer, in discussing the division between the sacred and the secular, saw a problem in Tillich's approach to theology, in the way it 'privileged the extraordinary, 'boundary situations'...over the everyday' (2002: 12). Nausner, however, defended Tillich's depiction of 'Christian existence in an uneasy border situation' into which we are 'thrown': 'Although I do not agree with Tillich's quite schematic binary understanding of being in-between *two* entities, I still affirm the sense of tremble and struggle at multiple boundary situations' (2004: 122).

What are represented here are two different tendencies with respect to the boundary. One is Gorringer's concern to work out a theology 'of the claims of God upon the *whole of our life*, and the activity of God in the *whole of life*' (2002: 12, my italics) and what is, in effect, the dissolution of a boundary in the everyday; the other is Nausner's valuing of the multiple boundaries to be found in an intercultural theology, and the continuing existence of boundaries as a necessary means of recognising difference. Therefore, the one might be said to emphasise unity, and the other diversity; in this, both Gorringer and Nausner can be seen to have a concern for the *oikumene* rather than just privileged parts of it. It is with this attentiveness to the boundary in terms of dissolution and difference in

mind (as being expressive of a unity in diversity), that the following section (3.3) explores a theology of boundaries in two particular ways. The first marks a crossing of the boundary, and the second, an encounter at the boundary. Unlike the somewhat static image of Tillich's standing on the boundary, these two approaches, in highlighting movement and relationship offer a much more dynamic understanding of boundary situations.

### **3.3 The motional character of connected place**

Section 2.4 looked at practice in terms of movement. In this new section, consideration is given to a *theology of practised connectedness*, building on the work begun in that earlier section. The dynamic character of social space is made up not only of its relationships but also its movements. A theology of place, then, needs to take account of 'movement in and of space' (Bergmann, 2007: 374). However, it is not just a theology of movement that is of concern here; it is also about theology as a way of moving. As Rieger (2015) chooses to emphasise in his theology of travel, and as indicated by the title of his book, theology is a task best conducted 'on the road'. Theology emerges from practice as a way of living and moving. A theology of practised connectedness may therefore be seen as movements of relationship that break open notions of fixed and bounded place.

#### **3.3.1 Movement as a theological theme**

Movement and mobility have been relatively neglected themes in theologies of place. As an example of this oversight, Gorringe, writing from a Trinitarian perspective, promisingly begins his work with reference to the way in which the built environment is shaped by the human body: building 'is done by the whole body, so that it is the movements of the body which create living space' (2002: 3). However, he does not develop movement as a creative and distinctive theme in the rest of his book. At

points he is critical of mobility, which he regards as contributing to a loss of place, and points to an on-going need for rootedness as offering anchorage in an increasingly globalised world. He fails to ask what it is that mobilities may offer to the on-going creation of place. By contrast, Bergmann frames the discussion in a different way. He too is concerned with the impact that the mobility of globalised space has on place, but the question he seeks to ask is 'what kind of mobility could be sustainable and life enhancing for a just earth community' (2007: 373). For Bergmann, then, mobility is part of the solution and not just the problem.

Both Gorringe and Bergmann offer a Trinitarian interpretation of space and place, yet only the latter has taken up movement as a clear theme in their argument. At the same time that Gorringe was writing, interest was being developed in the Trinity as movement, especially in terms of dance. As Fiddes comments, one of the interpretations of *perichoresis* is as the divine dance: 'I suggest that the image of the dance makes most sense when we understand the divine persons as movements of relationship, rather than as individual subjects who *have* relationships' (2000: 72). The Trinity as dance is one that has been particularly explored by feminist writers (see, for example, Baker-Fletcher, 2006). In terms of a discussion of place and space, thought might be given to the link between one of the Greek terms for space, *chora*, and choreography as the process of arranging a dance. When Gorringe makes explicit use of a quote from architect, Rudolph Schwartz, 'Space is dancingly experienced',<sup>55</sup> one suspects that he has missed an opportunity to explore more fully the Trinity as movement. This opportunity has been taken up by Bergmann who draws especially on Orthodox theology, especially that of Gregory of Nazianzus, and which

stated clearly that movement was an essential characteristic of the Triune God, who in fact has been understood as an inner movement

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Gorringe (2002: 3).

of love, justice and beauty. The fully perfect community of the Spirit, the Son and the Father is in classical trinitarianism understood as an inner movement of God that is overflowing to soteriology as the Creator's liberating movement of creation (2007: 374).

This same theme of movement might be also identified as an aspect of incarnational theology, in a way that suggests that such movement is not just restricted to the 'vertical' dimension of incarnation (the movement, as it were, from heaven to earth) but also to the 'horizontal' one of seeing the ministry of Christ as being itinerant in character. This movement is reflected in the Word who takes on flesh and dwells among us (John 1). Here, the definition of dwelling is not a fixed and static one, but rather has the meaning of 'one who pitches his tent among us'. In itself this also suggests the Old Testament picture of the God who moved through the wilderness with the wandering people of Israel. In his own argument about incarnational theology Inge, though strong on presenting the relational nature of place, perhaps does not give prominence to movement as a theological theme in the way that it demands; in this he is not helped by his definition of place as the *seat* of relations between God and people. There is potentially therefore a greater emphasis to be put on movement as a theme in incarnational theology. Bergmann's thinking, on the other hand, has offered redress to the matter of movement as a neglected theme in theology. It is this sense of a theology on the move, and as movements in relationship, which characterises a theology of practised connectedness. How does such a theology of practised connectedness speak into notions of fixed and bounded place?

### **3.3.2 Motional theology as transformational theology**

A motional theology is a theology of empowerment. Koyama's *Three mile an hour God* (1982), offers a description of a God of movement, who travels alongside his people, in the Exodus from Egypt and most tellingly in the incarnate Christ. He explains the crucifixion in these terms: 'Jesus

Christ came. He walked toward the 'full stop'. He lost his mobility. He was nailed down!' (Koyama, 1982: 7). Here is a picture of crucifixion as immobility, and of powerlessness in reference to movement. In a complementary way, Rieger highlights the saying 'Rise and walk' (Matthew 9.5; Acts 3.6) as 'an illustration of the effects of the good news in mobilizing people to join the walk of Christ in whatever way possible' (2015: 37). Resurrection, then, is not a standing still, but best understood as a moving on, an empowering in the Spirit of the risen Jesus.

This resurrectional perspective is also evident in the thinking of Brueggemann (2002: 199) who presented the case for viewing the central concern of the bible as not being about freedom or emancipation, so much as about belonging or rootage. Understanding the New Testament could be helped by seeing it in the light of the Old Testament's relationship to the theme of land, and thereby help to see the New Testament message not solely as spiritual but equally having a content which was physical and political. In this way, Brueggemann was able to offer an interpretation of crucifixion and resurrection in terms of loss and gain - as a giving up of power that those who are powerless might receive of the same. This echoed 'the [Old Testament] dialectic of *possessed land lost/exiles en route to the land of promise*' (2002: 169, Brueggemann's italics). Two points spring out of his analysis, the first relating to power, and the second to rootage. First of all, he rightly addresses issues of power. Indeed, his suggestion is that any consideration of the role of land in the New Testament can only be made with reference to the underlying subject of power. With this in mind, it is possible to reframe Brueggemann's discussion of land in terms of mobility, offering an understanding of crucifixion/resurrection as immobility/mobility.

Systems of globalisation have resulted in differing effects on different groups; what has been beneficial for some has had negative impacts on

others. For some, movement is a freedom, whereas for others it is an imposition, resulting in either a movement over which they have little control, or incapacity to move even if they would choose otherwise. There is an ambiguity to movement, which is best seen in terms of a differential in power. Rieger expresses this differential through a study of tourism and migration as two phenomena, which have grown rapidly in an age of globalisation. Though complex in each case, his study broadly reveals a privilege for tourists, which is not applicable in the same way to migrants. At the very least, tourists will assume a safe place to return to after their travels. Rieger (2015: 60) goes on to suggest that only when issues of power are tackled will these differentials begin to be addressed; for him, therefore, a theology of travel is about travel *and* acts of justice (2015: 107ff). In other words, mobilities are part of the solution, and with Rieger we might return to Bergmann's question as to what kinds of mobilities work for justice.

The second point is to look at what Brueggemann calls 'rootage', as indicative of the need for belonging in a world of rootlessness. His thesis may be about the requirement for rootage, but it is also, and as he himself describes it, about being 'en route'; as has been expressed in other sources, place is about both *roots* and *routes* (Nausner, 2004: 36; Pickard, 2009: 44). It is this sense of place as being constituted by both settlement *and* movement that has been one of the contributions from the work of the mobilities turn (see Section 2.4.1), and which has been incorporated into those thinking theologically about place. Jansen (2016), studying migration, takes Tweed's formulation of crossing and dwelling (as an expression of movement and settlement), to look at the journeys taken by migrants and their capacity to make new homes in the places at which they arrive. This demand of homemaking raises the possibility of finding an identity that is shared between two or more places, especially when marked by a desire to look with nostalgia on the place from which the migrants have travelled. But the arrival of migrants also has the

potential to change the identity of a place for all concerned in beneficial ways.

Such a theology of homemaking not only affects people arriving at a place but those already in place. Part of this same analysis, therefore, is the recognition that churches themselves, not only as buildings, can all too readily be identified as bounded and fixed places. This can be seen in the example of offering hospitality, which Nouwen (1998) expresses as the movement from hostility to hospitality. Hospitality and welcome have become high-profile aspects of church mission in recent years. Many churches may see themselves as offering hospitality in a way that is open to all, but that welcome may be offered under the condition that those coming into the church do not seek to change it. Veling (2005: 215) for example, chooses to develop his approach to theology through movement, through the lives of those who are on the move, such as refugees. He explores the practice of hospitality as examples of an opening of the borders, expressed at various points in the biblical and Christian tradition, and through the New Testament understanding of hospitality as love of the stranger. Yet, he points out that even within the Christian community the extent of the welcome offered may be limited. The well-known mantra of the ecumenical movement of 'unity in diversity' is not beyond criticism: 'Welcome is extended, but only insofar as unity is preserved and not threatened' (2005: 233). In other words, the theological tenet of unity in diversity (as highlighted in Section 3.2.2) is skewed towards a unity *without* diversity. In this line of argument, hospitality should not only be about the welcome offered, but also about an openness to change on the part of the one offering hospitality.

Jansen also recognises the possibility of conflict in all new encounters. His theology of space and place argues that if conflict is to be avoided, it is not adequate to work with a definition of place as a 'bounded and excluding concept' (2016: 154). Rather, there is a need for a theology that

works with the ambiguity of place 'combining the need to be at home and on the way' (2016: 159). Jansen's suggestions give cause to reflect on how settlement and movement are integral to each other in the making of place. In other words, it is not adequate to view settlement as static and movement as dynamic versions of place; as Tweed (2008: 82) argues with respect to crossing and dwelling, both movement and settlement are dynamic concepts, and both express the potential for transformation.<sup>56</sup> Equally, both contend with a notion of fixed and bounded place. Therefore the notion of dwelling/settlement/home is not one that is contained by a boundary but represents rather an arrival at a new boundary, with opportunity of fresh encounter and the potential for change. Routes/movement and roots/settlement represent two experiences of the boundary. If the first represents a crossing of the boundary, the second marks an encounter at the boundary. Both offer opportunities for growth and transformation.

### **3.3.3 Crossing the boundary and dwelling at the boundary**

From the earlier and more established theologies of place, Sheldrake's is the one that most clearly addresses the topic of a crossing of boundaries. His concern with the *oikumene* of a catholic sense of place, and the assertion that although God makes himself known in place he is never confined by it, leads him to describe a movement of 'perpetual departure' (Sheldrake, 2001: 31). This movement is from the particularity of place towards the 'further' or the 'more'. As such, Christian discipleship relates to place as both a 'here' and an 'elsewhere'. It is therefore preferable to frame Christian theology in terms of both placement and displacement. As Gorringer, drawing on Hauerwas's use of the phrase 'resident aliens' expresses it, Christians need 'both to be informed about their world, and to reflect on it in the light of their experience of unsettlement' (2002: 25).

<sup>56</sup> For Tweed (2008: 83), 'settling' is as much an activity as migration.

Sheldrake's inspiration is drawn from Certeau's reflection on the empty tomb (Matthew 28, as the risen Jesus goes ahead of his disciples to Galilee), that Jesus 'had to be 'here' in order that it might be possible for him to be 'not here' but 'elsewhere' (Certeau, 1997: 151). In other words, although his disciples know Jesus in and through place, the risen Christ is continually moving ahead of them and is not to be confined to any one place. For Certeau it is a boundary situation: 'Within the Christian experience, the boundary or limit is a place for the action which ensures the step...from a being "there" to a being "elsewhere" ...Boundaries are the place of the Christian work, and their displacements are the result of this work' (1997: 151). Sheldrake's use of Certeau is helpful because it presents this 'beyond' or 'more', not in terms of generalised space, but as an itinerary, and the crossing of a boundary in terms of making a journey.<sup>57</sup> As resurrection theology, it is not an invitation to be free of place, but rather an invitation to discover God in new places.

However, a word of warning may prove necessary here. Nausner (2004: 128) suggests that the transcending of boundaries too easily becomes confused with an imperialistic form of Christian territorialising.<sup>58</sup> He argues that an encounter *at* the boundary is a more authentic way of speaking about boundary experience than a crossing of the boundary: 'Although Christ is the one who transcends multiple boundaries, I believe that we as Christians, as Christian community, need to settle for the more modest notion of negotiation at boundaries' (2004: 131). Elsewhere he has described this requirement for negotiation with reference to Methodist

<sup>57</sup> Bauerschmidt comments in a similar way, but with explicit use of Certeau's ideas of strategy and tactics: '[the] claim here seems to be that Christianity has both a strategic place, defined by the boundaries which delimit it, as well as tactical actions which displace it through the praxis of departure' (1997: 139).

<sup>58</sup> Using the language of strategy and tactics (see footnote above), this might be thought of in terms of a strategy of territorialising, as opposed to a tactic of journeying.

mission in today's world, quoting South African Methodist, David Fields: 'it is not that, in Wesley's terms that 'the world is our parish' but rather that 'the world is coming to our parish' (quoted in Nausner, 2017: 245). In terms of Christian mission, this might be interpreted as a being sent, but also being open to receive those who have been sent to us.

Nausner takes inspiration for this argument from Tanner's assertion that Christian identity is formed not *by* the boundary, so much as *at* it (2007: 6).<sup>59</sup> In this understanding, boundaries are not fixed but fluid; they are the product of continuous negotiation between strangers at multiple boundary situations. According to Jansen, 'An intercultural theology is emerging at the boundaries where we move from a static description of many cultural identities to a dynamic recognition of mutual influence. At the boundaries we come to recognise that people are surprisingly alike, surprisingly different, and surprisingly unique' (2016: 157). In this definition, the boundary becomes a place in its own right, as boundaries form zones of encounter. Homemaking as dwelling is therefore to be seen in terms of encounter at the boundary. As Nausner (2004: 122, 126) puts it, homeland is borderland; to be a Christian is to be a boundary dweller, and the Church is a community of negotiation.

In addressing the issue of the boundary in these two different ways, my own position is that I do not see them as being mutually exclusive. I agree with Jansen who speaks both in terms of crossing the boundary but also encounter at the boundary. If Sheldrake describes the crossing of a boundary as a *departure*, Jansen sees encounter at the boundary as being the consequence of making an *arrival*. In the former the emphasis

<sup>59</sup> Tanner says, 'the distinctiveness of a Christian way of life is formed not so much *by* the boundary as *at* it; Christian distinctiveness is something that emerges in the very cultural processes occurring at the boundary, processes that construct a distinctive identity for Christian social practices through the distinctive use of cultural materials shared with others'. See Tanner (1997: 115).

is on *displacement*; in the latter it is on *re-placement*. Boundary experiences are about both departures and arrivals. It is an argument that echoes the discussion concluded in Section 3.2.3 regarding the boundary in terms of dissolution and difference (and as representative of unity and diversity); if the crossing of a boundary in some way marks the *dissolution* of that boundary, then the encounter at a boundary marks a recognition of *difference*.

In this section about the motional character of connected place, I have argued for the significance of movement as part of a theology of connected place. If, as Gorringer argues, 'To be human is to be placed' (2002: 1), this needs to be qualified; it is also to be displaced (through a crossing of boundaries) and to be re-placed (through a dwelling at boundaries). A theology of connected place is not a theology of fixed and bounded place. To reference the Methodist parlance, of itinerant ministers being 'stationed' in an appointment: the imagery of station<sup>60</sup> is not one of an enclosed and bounded place, but one of 'comings and goings', a place of departure and arrival. The missional challenge for churches therefore, is not so much the question as to whether or not they are 'in the right place', but whether they are places open to sending and receiving. A theology of practised connectedness is therefore one that recognises the key significance of movement, of that perpetual departure which marks a crossing of boundaries, but also an arrival at the boundary of new encounter.

### **3.4 The transformational character of connected place**

This chapter has thus far sought to articulate a theology of relationship (a theology of connected place) as seen through the doctrines of the Trinity

<sup>60</sup> Most obviously, the comparison being made here may be likened to the purpose of a railway station, for example. For its use as a Methodist term, refer to the Introduction: Methodist ministry as movement.

and the Incarnation. This was developed as a theology of movement in relationship (a theology of practised connectedness) from the same Trinitarian and incarnational perspectives, and also as the result of an empowering and leading of the Spirit of the risen Christ. Finally in this chapter, consideration is given to *a theology of grounded connectedness*, building on an understanding of the everyday that is grounded in a pastoral relationship. In this section the aim is to establish the main elements of a theology of grounded connectedness as consisting of an ethic of care and a theology of transformation. The section continues to work with ideas developed in Chapter 2 of the connectedness of place, and space which is 'lived' through everyday experiences of care. This understanding of place as the product of relationships of care does not put an emphasis on the closed and contained relationships of fixed and bounded place, but on relationships open to change and possibility. Theologically speaking, it offers a definition of care in terms of relationships that are open to the missional imperatives of sending and receiving. A ministry of crossing and dwelling at boundaries represents a resource not only for the 'breaking open' of place, but also for a remaking of the relationships of place. This potential for 'making new' is explored in the latter part of the section through the themes of brokenness and becoming. On the one hand, I put forward the argument for an ethic of care that offers resources for a binding of place in its brokenness. On the other, I set out the basis for a theology of transformation, showing how boundaries negotiated through relationships of care can become spaces of hope and becoming.

### **3.4.1 An ethic of care as a theological ethic of everyday space**

Firstly, I look to develop this theology of grounded connectedness in terms of an ethic of care, and I do so by continuing to build on material set down as part of the theoretical discussion in Chapter 2. In Section 2.5 the relational nature of place was viewed through an ethic of care. In this section, that view is expanded into a three way conversation between the space of the everyday, ethics and theology. What theological

understandings can be added to that earlier topic of conversation? Gorringe points out that a theology of the built environment can only be established through an engagement with ethics: 'It is in ethics that theology has engaged with the concrete' (2002: 1). In this section ethics is related to two subjects of significance to the development of my thesis: the everyday and the spatial.

With respect to the everyday, Gorringe (2002: 4-5), in identifying the God of the everyday built environment, states that 'good action' is not to be confined to just certain parts of the everyday world, but as demanded by his Trinitarian approach, the whole of it. In this, he is reinforcing his view that holy places are not to be privileged over the space of the everyday. This view is echoed in the approach to ethics taken by Michael Banner (2014), not to privilege the special or the extraordinary over the routine or the banal:

If [the subject of Christian ethics] is thought to have anything to say about conception, birth, suffering, death and burial, it will be as those life moments throw up dilemmas, many of which are extraordinary, unusual, and tragic. But about the everyday experience and understanding of those events, about the normal passage of the life course, and its more general shaping and structuring by a conception of what it is to be human, Christian ethics can seem to have little or nothing to say (Banner, 2014: 9).

Banner (2014: 31-33) offers a way of conducting an ethics of everyday life through issuing an invitation to 'begin the work of everyday Christian ethics' by bringing the Christian imagination, as an exploration of the life of Christ, to bear on the regular and mundane activities of everyday

human living.<sup>61</sup> Drawing on the resources of social anthropology, he argues that this cannot be the product of the detached spectator, but requires participation; in other words, it is in the realm of practice that an everyday set of ethics is established. In his reflection on suffering and what it means to pay attention to suffering, he comes very close to the suggestion made in Chapter 1 of this research that to pay attention to the everyday is not just to take notice, but also to take care (2014: 101).

Although the focus of Banner's study is on the whole of life in terms of the whole life course, there are glimpses of the way in which the spatial dimensions of the everyday are addressed. Interestingly, the outline of Banner's book in some ways reflects Lefebvre's triad of space as conceived, perceived and lived: an opening chapter in which the invitation is made to 'conceive our conceivings' (2014: 33) in the light of the life of Christ ('seeing the world in the life of Christ'); the main middle section which consists of a focus on ethics as practice; and a final chapter in which the Christian imagination is seen in terms of remembrance ('finding Christ in the world'). Secondly, Banner draws on the insights of social anthropology and places his thinking firmly in the realm of social relationships. Indeed, in his concluding pages he suggests with the use of spatial imagery that 'the imagination of Christ's life provides a rich and vibrant imaginary of a new social topography' (2014: 209).

This emphasis on the spatial dimension of ethical living has been taken up in a more overt fashion by Sheldrake (2001: 78), who has argued for a definition of ethical space as that which makes equal space for 'the other'. He offers a picture of the church in which,

<sup>61</sup> Banner takes the moments of Christ's human life as mentioned in the creed – conception, birth, suffering, death and burial - as setting the topics of discussion for his book.

the very nature of the Christian community as the Body of Christ is 'to make space' in love for the other. In that sense, the Church *is*, or *is called to be, an ethical space* rather than, in a detached way, 'to have moral convictions'. Its very life is an ethical practice, that is, a practice of making place for the fullness of all things and all people (2001: 74, Sheldrake's italics).

His argument is based on a discussion of the Eucharist as being a space for reconciliation, in which each can 'be identified as who they are.' In this, he comes close to Fulkerson's (2007) quest for churches to be 'a place to appear' (see the following section, 3.4.2). Such recognition requires not just acceptance of the other, but, crucially, an openness to change on one's own part if reconciliation is to be achieved. It is, in Sheldrake's terms, a breaking open of place, in a way that reflects the Eucharistic understanding of the bread that is broken and shared for the sake of others; and from the brokenness comes the possibility of a remaking.

Theologically, two aspects of ethical everyday space emerge. The first is the fragmentary nature of human living, which not only sets people against one another and against God, but which also acknowledges the brokenness within each person. Secondly, there is the possibility of a remaking, as a process of reconciliation and renewal. It is with these in mind that discussion now turns to a theology of transformation. This is done with specific reference to collage as a gathering of fragments and as a process of remaking.

### **3.4.2 A theological ethic of everyday space: the theme of brokenness**

A collage, as has already been discussed in Section 1.2.2, is composed of a selection of pieces or fragments (often discarded fragments) from a variety of sources. Theology itself, when regarded as a discipline drawn from practice, might be thought of as having a fragmented character.

Swinton (2006) makes the point that practical theology, as a situated discipline, is itself a theology of fragments. Forrester has put forward a proposal for the valuing of *Theological Fragments*, offering what he describes as 'a modest and unsystematic theology, consisting of 'theological fragments' rather than some grand theory' (2005: ix). He is associated with a grouping of social and political theologians (Pattison and Lynch, 2005: 414), and the fragments he offers tend to be related to social and political concerns. Regarding the contemporary world in terms of its fragmentation, Forrester's argument is that fragments from the biblical and Christian tradition can speak into the contemporary situation. However, this does not mean that everything about the contemporary Church should be accepted uncritically. A hermeneutic of suspicion will question any view of the Church that is solely an ideal and does not represent the Christian life today as expressed in concrete and particular forms (Forrester, 2005: 17).

The fragmented nature of postmodern life is also apparent in the lives of individuals as well as broader society, a point made by Stefan Gartner (2003) in his essay on *Pastoral Care and Boundaries*. Gartner is particularly interested in offering a pastoral theology as it relates to the individual, and notes the ways in which the life of any individual is fragmented by the many boundaries that cut across it. To live in eschatological hope, he posits, is to look to the final removal of those boundaries, which prevent life being lived in all its fullness. This hope, he concludes (quoting German practical theologian, Henning Luther) prevents 'denying or pushing aside the fundamental fragmentedness of personal identity. Faith would mean living as a fragment and being able to live as a fragment' (Gartner, 2003: 130).

One of the examples that Gartner works with, namely that of disability, has proved to be a rich source for theological reflection. One product of this reflection has been the emphasis on the body; that it is through the

body that life and faith are experienced, as the limits or boundaries of the body are expanded out into contact with the world. To this extent, the movement of the body (or an absence of movement) influences the way in which these experiences are made. This is particularly apparent in the writings of Henri Nouwen generated by his time spent with the *L'arche* community at *Daybreak* in Canada, where Nouwen built a friendship with another of the residents, Adam. Nouwen's (1997) book entitled with that name (and published posthumously after Nouwen's sudden death in 1996) arose out of the lived experience of time spent with Adam. His theology in that book, presenting the pattern of the life of Christ seen through the life of Adam, reflected on Nouwen's own deep sense of brokenness.

It was the experience of spending time with people with learning disabilities that led Mary Fulkerson to offer reflection on brokenness and place. The resulting account of the Good Samaritan United Methodist Church, a congregation where black people and people with disabilities are present, led to the publication of her ethnographical study, *Places of Redemption* (Fulkerson, 2007). Like Nouwen, Fulkerson is concerned with the wounded-ness of life. For her, the wounded-ness apparent in both church and society is in the way it perceives and treats people with disabilities. When this wounded-ness is understood in terms of brokenness, it reveals the fragmentation of individual lives, of the society in which we live, and the way in which they might be re-made. These fragments then can be seen as having the potential to be open to one another and to move beyond the boundaries of their incompleteness.

These theologies of fragments offer material from which to develop a theology of transformation drawn not from abstracted universal principles but from concrete particularities. A theology of fragmented identity, such as that offered by Gartner, highlights the role of love in opening up the boundaries between fragmented individuals; and of grace in helping

individuals become what they might yet be. As Cilliers argues, 'We are indeed fragments, but not loose-lying bits and pieces; we are continuously being fitted into a larger picture of fulfilment' (2013: 2). Forrester offers a final image of fragments of bread, leftovers from the breaking of the bread, crumbs from the original loaf, being gathered together. I would want to make a similar point and a comparable claim about discarded fragments being pieced together in the form of collage: that each embodies a vision of re-creation and hope. Fulkerson's research leads her to propose the need for 'a place to appear', as a 'place where people of different races and abilities 'appear' to one another in significant ways' (2007: 21) and where transformation of hurt might take place. These theologies, therefore, represent a reordering of relationships, through an ethic of care and concern for the other, and as located in the concrete and particular spaces of the everyday. A theology of grounded connectedness, with its focus on an ethic of care, offers a means by which relationships marked by fragmentation might be transformed into relationships of hope. It is this transformation from brokenness to becoming that forms the focus of the following section.

### **3.4.3 A theological ethic of everyday space: the theme of becoming**

In taking up the theme of becoming, a reminder may be given of my earlier argument that collage is best viewed not as a finished product but rather as a product-in-the-making. Bergmann (2017: 23) likens the process of place-making to that of making a collage. For him it is a process of *Beheimatung* ('making oneself at home'):

places are not just there; they have to be built. All-embracing space is a gift, but one needs to respond to it by creating lived spaces in and with it. Pieces for making oneself at home can be found in the most unexpected contexts. They have to be collected, selected, evaluated and put together... The process of making oneself at home is demanding and painful, and it sometimes moves from

disorientation and delocalization to reorientation and relocalization (2017: 27).

Although reservation might be expressed about an understanding of home seen in terms of its 'localness', I am in agreement with Bergmann's suggestion for the making of a home to be understood as part of a process.

One important aspect of this process of becoming is seeing places as being open to new possibilities, and recognising the character of place as being constructed (in Massey's terminology) of stories-so-far.

Understanding place in terms of story has been a key component in a number of theologies of place. Brueggemann described the land of the Old Testament storied place, 'a place that has meaning because of the history lodged there' (2002: 198). Associated with this sense of place as storied is the role of memory, a feature that is often particularly associated with a rootedness in place. The role memory plays in the making of place is a significant one. Sheldrake (2001: 14) points out that landscape is not the natural 'backdrop' to the human story, it is shaped by it. He highlights the character of place as storied place, and the way in which the memories of individuals gather together to create narrative (2001: 16-18).

Gorringe (2002) concentrates on the importance of collective memory, and how its loss can detract from a sense of place. For him, memory is related to tradition and the church can play a useful role in helping to carry the corporate memory of a place. By contrast, he argues, the mobility of modern society can lead to the loss of place memory. It is worth noting that there is an ambiguity here between the way in which mobility helps create place (as described above) and the way in which it undermines it. It raises the question as to what extent memory exists in movement and to what extent in rootedness? Gorringe suggests that there is a 'balancing act...between, on the one hand, idealized versions

of the past, and on the other, complete loss of the particularity of cultural, economic and physical identity' (2002: 255-256 see also pp 187, 218). Memories generated through movement have a more important role here than Gorringe acknowledges. Those who have moved to a location bring memories and experiences of their own and these become incorporated into the evolving story of place, as highlighted for example by Jansen (2016).

In the Christian tradition, the role of memory is particularly associated with the sacrament of the Eucharist. The command to disciples to 'remember' the death of Jesus, as given in Luke 24.6-7 has particular resonance given the earlier use of remembrance during the meal Jesus shared with his disciples prior to his crucifixion: 'Do this in remembrance of me' (Luke 22.19). In the context of the Passover festival, it also points to the remembrance that was to be kept of the saving events in Israel's story of the Exodus and the rescue from Egypt. There is a richness to the term used for remembrance that implies a making real in the present that which is past. In this way, memory works not only as a journey from the present into the past, but also as a return journey, a bringing out of the past and into the present. It is a recognition that the God who has been at work in the life of his people in the past, continues to do the same in the present. Sheldrake argues that, 'Eucharistic place is very much a landscape of memory – not least of ambiguous and conflicting memories' (2001: 80). The narrative of Christ, which is central to it, highlights 'injustices and pain in human narratives' and 'reconfigures' them. Banner also chooses to focus on the Eucharistic act of remembrance, arguing that, as a means of invoking the Christian imagination, remembrance serves also to articulate an ethics for the everyday. In so doing, he hints that such remembrance is a re-membering of Christ's life in our own life and times (2014: 197). Banner's use of the term *re-membering* has spatial overtones – it is about the reordering of our own social relationships and everyday ethics in the light of the Christian imagination. This reordering speaks of a process of becoming, in which the everyday

spaces of 'storied place' is a gathering of stories-so-far, but, crucially, open to new possibilities beyond the boundaries of fixed and bounded place.

In Section 3.4, the argument has been presented for a theology of connected place grounded in everyday relationships of care. Building on the earlier arguments from Chapter 2, of connectedness expressed as an ethic of care, and a definition of place as 'becoming', the outcome has been a theology focussed on the missional challenge of crossing and dwelling at boundaries. Seen in the context of the chapter as a whole, the section has shown how relationships practised as movement and demonstrated through an ethic of care might help to transform everyday spaces marked by experiences of brokenness into places of hope and becoming.

### **3.5 Conclusion to Chapter 3**

In this chapter, discussion has centred on the setting out of a theology of connected place through an understanding of social space conceived as connectedness, practised as movement and lived as everyday experiences of care. As a theology focused on the relational and motional, it has been possible to set out the basis of a theology which is also transformational - a reordering of social space based on an ethic of care, in which the reality of brokenness is changed into the hope of becoming. Although the starting point for this theological approach has been a Methodist understanding of connectedness, the intention has not been to offer conclusions of interest to Methodists alone. In this way, it has been possible to generate a theology with the potential for wider application, as a theology that is relational, motional and transformational. For others studying theology, I would surmise that it is the discussion on movement as a theological theme that stands out the most. But I would

also contend that it is in bringing the three themes together that has carried the work of this chapter.

A key component of the chapter has been to bring social scientific and theological discourses on spatial relations to bear upon one another. This process has reflected the kind of conversation that has been evident on the topic of the boundary, with the discourses displaying a measure of overlap. The ethical dimension of the everyday, for example, has proved to be a fruitful topic arising from both discourses, as an ethic of care grounded in particular and concrete expressions of everyday life. However, it is equally important to highlight that if the differing discourses overlap, they are not identical. Massey's ethic of care, for example, arising from her search for a politics of relational place, may be contrasted with an ethic of care, which, in Banner's phrasing, is the product of 'the Christian imagination' as a reflection on the life of Christ (2014: 34). If the former represents a 'breaking open of place', the latter highlights a gathering of broken fragments, described by Banner as 'humble efforts at care' (2014: 208). If both approaches emphasise the importance of practice, the latter's focus on humility suggests that practice is also about a quality of practice; and that movement, as I have discussed it in these two chapters, is not just about mobile actions, but also about *a certain way of moving* - and of *being moved*. Brought into proximity to each other, these differing positions have added to the distinctive understanding of the theme of becoming offered in this chapter. These areas of overlap and proximity mirror a wider discussion to be had about the relationship of the social sciences with theology, and as a topic will be revisited as part of the discussion on methodology in the next chapter.

A part of the recognition is that the conversation is not only *between* the discourse of social science and the discourse of theology; there are, of course, differing discourses *within* each area of research. It is for this

reason that it is necessary to talk (in the plural) about social scientific *theories* and *theologies* of spatial relations. For example, the extent to which I have resisted a theology of holy places as distinct from a theology of the space of the everyday is evidence both of that plurality, and of my own particular standpoint. Tweed's argument that positionality has a significant role to play in the making of theory is an important one, and, again, this will form one of the points of discussion in the methodology chapter to follow. But of equal importance is the recognition that if the discussion set up as a conversation between theology and the social science of the spatial turn has offered a considerable degree of interaction, and therefore represents to that same extent a dissolution of a boundary, then it is also of importance to highlight the differences emerging between competing theological (or, indeed, social scientific) formulations of spatial relations as representing the continuation of a boundary. It is these encounters at boundaries within a field of study (of theology or social science) that need to be highlighted as much as the crossovers between them; in disciplinary terms, both are equally authentic experiences of boundary situations.

## Chapter 4 Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction: setting out a methodology

The two preceding chapters set out an understanding of spatial relationships seen from the perspective of social scientific theory and theological understanding respectively. In Chapter 2, key concepts of Lefebvre's triadic construction of spatial relationships and Massey's global sense of place were brought into conversation with a Methodist idea of connection in presenting an understanding of spatial relationships conceived as connectedness, perceived as practised connectedness and lived as grounded connectedness. In Chapter 3, this threefold structure was translated into a theology of connected place, which, practised as movement and lived as everyday experiences of care, offers resources for a theology that can be understood in terms of relation, motion and transformation.

The theoretical work of the preceding chapters has been built around the two organising themes of collage and movement, introduced earlier (see Introduction: Key themes of the research, and Section 1.2). Firstly, collage, as an analytical tool for the recognition of the setting of everyday life, has formed a means by which the unnoticed may be noticed. As the lived space of grounded connectedness, and as a theology of transformation, the approach suggested by collage offers the possibility of relationships renewed through an everyday ethic of care. Secondly, movement has been presented as an everyday practice, through which a ministry of care and concern may be articulated. As the perceived space of practised connectedness, and as a theology of motion, this practice emphasises such ministry as a movement across and at the boundaries of the everyday. Recognition of the spatial dimensions of collage and movement, expressed in terms of the connectedness of everyday relationships, and a theology that is relational, gave rise to a notion of

connected place, in which churches are characterised by the totality of local and wider relationships.

Where Methodist churches take on the character of connected place, the suggestion was made that these relationships can helpfully be pictured as the entanglement of paths of Methodist movement with circuits of everyday life. When expressed as a ministry of care, these movements represent a breaking open of bounded place (as a ministry of crossing boundaries) and entwinement with others in a process of 'place-binding' (as a ministry of dwelling at boundaries). In this new chapter, I continue to work with themes of collage and movement in developing a methodology for studying these boundaries of ministry as an everyday practice in an everyday setting. It is a methodology that is built on bringing the two themes (of collage and movement) further into conversation with one another.

The main aim of the chapter is to set out the groundwork for a piece of qualitative research, taking the form of an ethnographic study of the spatial relationships of ministry understood as a crossing and dwelling at boundaries. At this point, I present a preview of the chapter, in order to set out a clear direction of travel. Firstly, I introduce the inter-disciplinary nature of the methodology. Secondly, I set out the ethnographic approach to the study, with particular reference to research that is aimed at producing an ethnography that is multi-method and multi-sited. Thirdly, I seek to show the context of the study, focused on the city of Bradford in West Yorkshire, where I live and work as an ordained minister of the Methodist Church. Fourthly, I introduce the methods themselves, as providing sources of ethnographic data alongside documentary sources. Fifthly, I address the ethics of the study and the issue of reflexivity in research. Finally, I offer a framework for presenting the analytical findings of the study, by which the proposed methods are integrated into the framework laid down by Stringer (2016).

## **4.2 Methodological concerns**

### **4.2.1 Multi-disciplinary research**

The methodology adopted in this study aims to be multi-disciplinary, engaging with a number of disciplines from the social sciences and humanities, including geography, anthropology, sociology, social theory, cultural studies and the study of religion. In taking a broadly ethnographic approach to the study, I have also sought to follow in the footsteps of ethnographers such as Pink (2007; 2008) and Hall (2010b; 2012), who have incorporated visual and arts-based techniques in their research. In this way, the hope is that a study of boundaries and their crossing will itself be characterised by a crossing of disciplinary and methodological boundaries. In a similar manner, the theoretical discussion of Chapters 2 and 3 sought to bring the social sciences into conversation with theology.

This kind of approach is, of course, nothing new. There are a number of fields of study relating to my own sphere of interest that are also marked by such a multi-disciplinary approach. Congregational studies is a field that shares much common ground with the study of religion, and which draws on a mixture of disciplines including anthropology, sociology, theology and organisational studies (Hopewell, 1987; Guest et al., 2004; Cameron, 2005). The congregational studies approach has tended to set theology alongside other disciplines as one amongst a range of headings. Practical theology, which 'uses the methods and insights of academic and other disciplines that are not overtly theological as part of its theological method' (Woodward et al., 2000: 15) has tended to deploy the social sciences within a more prominent theological framework, seeing itself as first and foremost a theological discipline (Swinton and Mowatt, 2006: 76). Practical theology has seen it as a necessary task to draw upon the social sciences because theology itself 'cannot reveal all that one needs to know adequately to respond to contemporary situations and issues' (Woodward et al., 2000: 15).

The position adopted in this study lies at the interface of theology and social science. I myself have been trained in theology as part of my preparation for church ministry; I engage with questions and issues of theology within the setting of day-to-day ministry; I applied to study at a university department with both theology and religion in its title.<sup>62</sup> If I might describe myself as a theologian looking to relate more closely to the social sciences, I do so in acknowledgment of Swinton's (2012b: 87) comment, that where such engagement is sought it is most commonly from theologians looking to the social sciences rather than vice-versa. For Pete Ward, then, it is a matter of making a proposal that is

simultaneously theological and socio/cultural...Interdisciplinary conversations are not constructed around a disembodied and sacred "theology" and a profane and misguided social theory, but arise from the possibility of analogy and dialogue from social and cultural realities that are in Christ. So where there may well be differences of view and contested theories and interpretations, these are a conversation, a dialogue that is held together in the one from whom all things have their origin (2012: 2-3).

I find common ground with Swinton and Ward in taking such an approach. Ward (2012) makes a number of points in reference to this looking to the social sciences. Firstly, it is not just social scientists that are taking an increased interest in ethnographical approaches to the study of church communities but also a growing number of theologians. Secondly, theology and social science each have something to offer the other in making such studies: 'to do ecclesiology we must embrace methods of research that are simultaneously theological and "ethnographic" and that these methods arise from our situatedness as church' (2012: 2). Thirdly, he points out that this situated character is to be discerned, not only in the local and the particular, but also in the position of the church within its

<sup>62</sup> University reorganisation has now established a broader School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science; the former Department of Theology and Religious Studies no longer exists.

own ecclesial tradition of teaching and worship. In looking to pursue a methodology which includes an ethnographic approach to study, Ward is taking up a call issued by Healy (2000: 168-169) for exploration of the 'concrete church' through an 'ecclesiological ethnography'. Healy did not develop this approach with worked out examples of ethnographic study, but more recently there has been a proliferation of ethnographies of churches, with an increasing emphasis on small and focused settings for study (Stringer, 1999; Arweck et al., 2002; Cameron, 2005; Scharen and Vigen, 2011; Scharen, 2012; Ward, P., 2012).

#### **4.2.2 Theological study and ethnography**

In this desire to work with an ethnographic approach, I find myself in the company of other theologians, including Fulkerson (2007) and Swinton (2006; 2012b). The term 'ethnography' can be a bit of a 'catch-all', referring to method and methodology; 'little' ethnography (as research task) and 'big' ethnography (akin to qualitative research in general) (Brewer, 2000: 17) and also to the final written form of the research (Bryman, 2012: 432). Ethnography, 'the descriptive interpretation of a people' (Cameron, 2005: 29), is a form of qualitative research drawing especially on the method of participant observation, and taking an inductive rather than deductive approach in that theory arises from a study of the data rather than the other way around. The essential elements of an ethnographic study are: immersion in a cultural context or social setting for an extended period of time; the process of listening, observing, conversing and interviewing as a means of gathering data; the taking of 'field' notes, supplemented by transcripts, documents and other records, which form the basis of the writing up of the project (Bryman, 2012: 432). In origin, ethnography was the domain of anthropologists working in 'exotic' locations, often for a period of years; more recently, it has been used by a range of social scientific researchers, as an approach that equally lends itself to studying 'routine and normal aspects of everyday life' (Denscombe, 2010: 79).

Frances Ward (2004) points out the messiness of conducting ethnographical research in trying to arrive at a coherent point of view amidst the complexities of social interactions, personal relationships and the perspectives of all involved in the process. 'Doing ethnography,' she states, 'creates some sort of order out of the messiness of life, both the life of the congregation and, often, your own life as author. It is the production of a coherent text from the scraps and fragments of life' (Ward, F., 2004: 126). She particularly highlights the things that remained unsaid – the omissions and the gaps – or those things only revealed reluctantly. In other words, Ward implies that the ethnographic process is something akin to that of creating collage, collecting and putting together pieces of information, including those 'odds and ends', which could be easily dismissed or overlooked. The outcome of an ethnographical study will have the texture and look of a finished collage. From this general introduction to an ethnographical approach, the focus now moves onto two further methodological matters, which relate more closely to the use of method, namely research which is both multi-method and multi-sited.

#### **4.2.2.1 Multi-method approach**

In the methodology incorporated into this study, a number of different methods will be called upon to provide research material. It has become common practice within the social sciences to combine methods in a multi-method approach, a pattern that has been replicated in other disciplines such as practical theology. Care needs to be taken not to confuse a multi-method approach with a mixed-method approach (Leavy, 2011: 72). The latter incorporates methods that are both quantitative and qualitative in nature. When this is the case, the strategy is sometimes referred to as a triangulation of methods (Brewer, 2000: 75-76; Stausberg and Engler, 2011: 9; Bryman, 2012: 635-636) and is a means of crosschecking data. The emphasis in this research is on qualitative methods alone; nevertheless a number of qualitative methods will be utilised in constructing the whole project. Triangulation of methods is not therefore the most appropriate form of relating the methods to one

another; nevertheless, comparisons may be drawn between the results of each method, highlighting both similarities and differences in the understandings arising from each. Shank (2006) talks about research in these terms as being juxtapositional, whereby the different understandings share a common 'guiding metaphor'. In the case of the research in hand, the guiding metaphors are those of collage and movement.

Such a flexible approach can be necessary to the conduct of qualitative research. According to Swinton and Mowat (2006: 50), 'It is our opinion that the most effective way that practical theologians can use qualitative research methods is by developing an eclectic and multi-method approach'. A key reason for adopting a multi-method approach is the need for flexibility. As Stausberg and Engler (2011: 5, their italics) point out, good research is often marked out more by 'improvisation and by *bricolage* than by a master plan'. The kind of creativity that they highlight, in terms of the present research, originates in the attention paid to the 'guiding metaphors' of collage and movement, and to methods that are less commonly used in the conduct of qualitative research. They can, to some degree, be described as alternative methods, with each speaking to the context in which it is used.

#### **4.2.2.2 Multi-sited ethnography**

Offering collage and movement as guiding metaphors for the research has had implications for the way in which the research has been conducted. This has been particularly relevant in the construction of a multi-sited ethnography, which challenges a notion of the 'bounded ethnographic field' (see Section 4.4.1). Clifford (1997: 2-3) notes that within his own discipline of anthropology, fieldwork has been normally regarded as 'localised dwelling', and culture (with its association with gardens and roots) as being primarily situated. Clifford himself has become much more interested in travel, and how an ethnography might

be done that takes proper account of travel practices, both of anthropologists themselves and those they seek to study. Although ethnography has privileged relations of dwelling over relations of travel, he is keen to present fieldwork as travel encounters, and the study of culture as a comparative discipline of dwelling and travel: 'what is at stake is a comparative cultural studies approach to specific histories, tactics, everyday practices of dwelling and traveling: traveling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-traveling' (Clifford, 1997: 36).<sup>63</sup> This train of thought was developed by Schein (2000), who coined the term, 'itinerant ethnography', a phrase with resonance for myself, as an itinerant minister seeking to conduct ethnographic research.

In an influential article from the mid 1990s Marcus set down the argument for conducting a multi-sited ethnography, which formed a 'mobile ethnography' practised 'across and within multiple sites' (1995: 96). According to Marcus, an ethnographical study involving multiple sites 'is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography' (Marcus, 1995: 105). Clifford, noting that contemporary ethnographies are often based on multiple locations visited repeatedly and regularly by researchers expresses the process in the following way: 'We often need to consider circuits, not a single place' (Clifford, 1997: 37). In a way that resonates with a Methodist organisational understanding of circuit, as consisting of churches in different locations, the research project aims to produce findings based on research conducted at different sites.

<sup>63</sup> For further discussion of Clifford's ideas, especially in relation to fieldwork, see Section 7.2.2.

Each method, then, contributes to the construction of a multi-sited ethnography. In so doing, recognition needs to be given to Marcus's later development in thinking, which is embodied in his guiding principle of 'ethnography through thick and thin' (see Marcus, 1998). In saying this, Marcus acknowledges the need to be able to design research projects that incorporate research of different ethnographic depth: 'It is interesting and important to argue why some sites should be treated 'thickly' and others 'thinly' in terms of the loci and design of particular projects' (Coleman and Von Hellermann, 2011: 21). In the study, which I am conducting, the methods used will display differing depths of 'thick and thin'.

### **4.3 The methodological context**

#### **4.3.1 The context for the study: collage and movement**

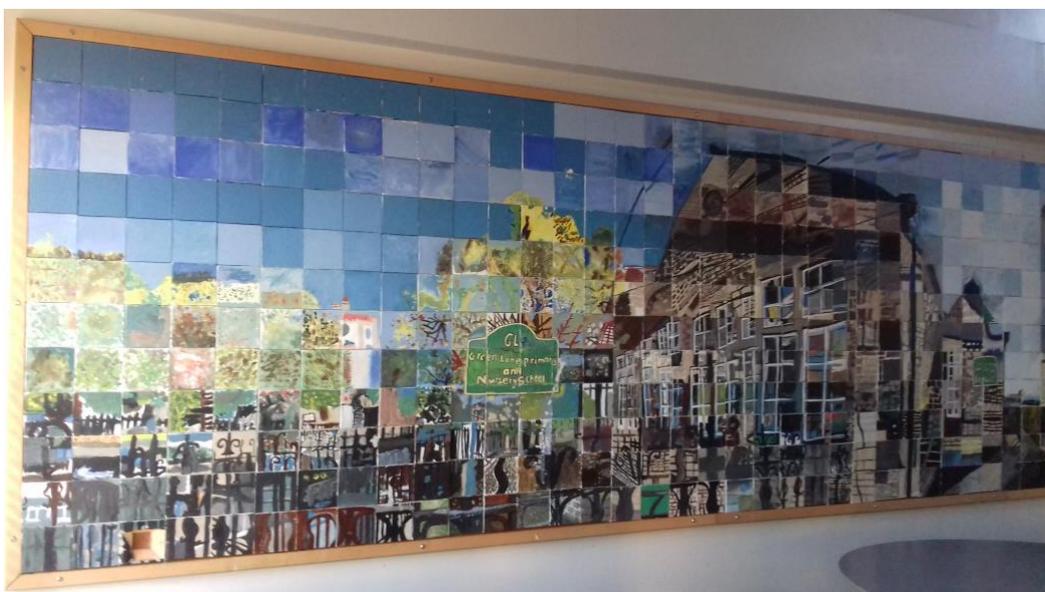
The Bradford collage is made clear by the topography of the city with its layered hillsides and valleys giving multiple perspectives; it is present in the opposition of old and new; it is emphasised in the juxtaposition of a landmark building alongside a street of terraced housing below, or the moorland beyond; it is highlighted in the way that a piece of waste ground (often a parcel of land that has never been developed because it is too sloping to be useful as building land) or a derelict building gives the impression of a piece of otherwise useless rubbish that has been inserted into its surroundings.

I am not the first to draw on the form of collage in offering a description of Bradford as a city. An artist who does provide us with collaged images of Bradford is Tim Curtis ([www.timcurtisartist.co.uk](http://www.timcurtisartist.co.uk)). An example of his work can be found at Green Lane School in Manningham, where Curtis has assisted pupils to make a collage of their school (Figure 3). The marketing team for Bradford's bid to be European City of Culture in 2008

drew inspiration from a photomontage by artist, David Hockney, in creating a slogan for the bid:

One of my colleagues found the words 'One landscape, many views' in the subtitle of Bradford-born David Hockney's photomontage work *Pear Blossom Highway*. This concept worked for us, because of the ethnic diversity of the city...and because of the social, cultural and physical variety in the towns which form part of the Bradford district, with a mixture of urban and rural areas. The reference to 'one landscape' stressed the importance of finding unity among the many different views which were present in the city. This was especially crucial in the aftermath of the 2001 disorders...' Paul Brooke, Director of the Bradford bid, quoted in *Urban Mindscapes of Europe* (Weiss-Sussex and Bianchini, 2006: 290-291).

Although the bid proved unsuccessful, one legacy of the slogan was seen in the city logo used in the years following the bid, featuring a collaged depiction of a letter 'b' for Bradford (Figure 4).



**Figure 3. Collage of Green Lane School. Photo credit: Ruth Drake**



**Figure 4 Telegraph & Argus building, Hall Ings, cc-by-sa/2.0  
Copyright Betty Longbottom, geograph.org.uk/p/496529**

My own understanding of Bradford as collage has emerged from the movements I have made as part of my work of ministry in the city. These views, resulting from stops made during the course of travel have helped to formulate the kind of questions I am asking in relation to this research, and as explored up to this point in terms of theory. Tweed points out that all theory depends upon *positionality* (2008: 7). Theories are ‘sightings from sites’ (2008: 13), and as such all have their limitations. In taking up sightings from different positions, Tweed reflects something of Hockney’s understanding in his photomontages, as representing not a single perspective but as many views on the one landscape. Tweed’s ‘academic itinerancy’ (2008: 24) also resonates with my own position. I too am an itinerant! And not just in terms of the travel that takes me around the country from appointment to appointment, but as I move through, around and across the city, in my daily round as well. In this latter itinerancy, I would argue, we all share to a lesser or greater extent as an expression of everyday living.

Indeed, movement might be recognised as an integral component of the process of research. It is important to emphasise that research is a process as much as a practice; not so much set steps to work through, but as ‘a whole event...in which stages merge and are not sequenced’ (Brewer, 2000: 5). This requires not a slavish adherence to method but the creative adaptation of method where required and as new material is gathered (Brewer, 2000: 2; Stausberg and Engler, 2011: 5). Methodology and the application of method may lead to new knowledge, but philosophically it may be better to say with Ingold that we ‘know as we go’ as we ‘journey through the world along paths of travel’ (2011: 154).

#### **4.3.2 The methodological journey**

From the outset of the project my understanding of the Methodist movement in terms of its itinerancy and Bradford as a collage of difference shaped the main aim of the research in exploring the relationship between an urban place of diversity and change and the everyday movements of its inhabitants. As the project developed it became clearer that these themes of collage and movement were also shaping the research methodology (see the previous section, 4.3.1). The specific choice of methods to be used in the research came out of this same process, resulting in the use of *collage-making* and *walking practice* alongside the more commonly used means of *observation*, *interviewing*, and *the use of documentary evidence*. This choice, most obviously in the implementation of research through walking practice and collage-making, was therefore part of a deliberate attempt to build into the research process methods that would reflect and address the main aims of the research. One of the consequences of the deployment of the chosen methods was that its emphasis of conducting research ‘on the move’ and piecing together data generated by ‘passing encounters’ was that it gave rise to a certain sense of incompleteness in the resulting analysis. However, I would also emphasise that the way in which the themes of movement and collage were developed as aspects of the methodology

meant that the methods themselves were particularly suited to the research task. It was this sense of appropriateness to the task in hand that proved key in the design of the methodology as a whole.

If the distinctiveness of my methodological approach has been in the specific combination of methods utilized in the fieldwork, it would also be equally pertinent to say that I was particularly enthused by the prospect of experimenting with more unusual methods of walking practice and collage-making. For the walking practice, I have taken a lead from research conducted by Lee and Ingold (2006), and bringing a Methodist understanding of ministry as an itinerant practice to bear upon it. With respect to collage-making as a method suited to ethnographic study, I have been particularly influenced by the work of Hall (2010b; 2012) on difference and juxtaposition as collage, using materials specific to the Bradford context to examine these factors afresh. My emphasis on the themes of collage and movement also extends to the way in which I have deployed the methods of observing and interviewing. These methods were used to explore two specific sites, which consisted of the grounds of churches. I had been drawn to these spaces with two characteristics in mind: one was the sense that they were 'overlooked fragments' that could be viewed as pieces of collage; the other was that both sites were marked by the movements of people 'passing by' rather than going into church buildings. The overall selection of methods incorporated in the study was designed to offer a means of exploring Bradford as a place of boundaries, and specific city spaces as examples of boundary zones.

The choice of methods was subject to a process of sifting. One method that I considered but did not make use of in the research was that of journal-keeping or diary-keeping. With the Methodist tradition of itinerancy in mind, I was influenced in exploring the use of journals as a research method by the journaling practices of early Methodist itinerant preachers (see Section 1.2.1.1). The process of making an ethnographical study

can be aided by the habit of keeping of a journal. It has become the standard practice of many ethnographers to make diary entries during the course of undertaking fieldwork, and to add to them pieces of information, references and other sources of reflection which may prove to be of help in analysing and writing up the research. Furthermore, Graham presents journaling as a means of theological reflection, offering a means of responding reflexively through 'paying attention to oneself in a particular situation' (Graham et al., 2005: 40). Bryman (2012: 239) highlights diaries as a means of data-collection for the purposes of research although, as Alaszewski notes, 'While the literature on the use of diaries for social research is growing, it does not match that on other commonly used social research methodologies' (2006: vii). My intention was to request my ordained colleagues in the two Bradford circuits to keep 'time-space diaries' (Büscher and Urry, 2009: 103), in which 'respondents record what they are doing and where, how they move during those periods and the modes of movement' (Urry, 2007: 40). My main concern with applying this method related to the issue of confidentiality: my ordained colleagues were few in number and my inclination was that it could prove difficult to preserve the anonymity of the participants. On these grounds, I did not pursue the use of this method further.

There was an element of risk involved in the choice of methods used in the fieldwork. Not only was I having to learn the techniques of ethnographic research 'from scratch', but I was also committing myself to the use of these less commonly utilized methods. Part of my initiation into the carrying out of ethnographic research lay in the recognition of the difficulties that can accompany its implementation and the frustrations associated with those occasions when the research did not unfold as expected. This was the case, for example, with the collage-making, when I had to learn from the experience of organising and advertising a workshop to which no one came. Reassessing my work of preparation, I changed the approach from a generally issued invitation around churches to requesting the participation of a group of people who already met

together as part of a study group. I was learning that such setbacks are part and parcel of the work of the researcher.

Within the application of the individual methods, inadequacies may be recognized. More could have been done to incorporate a larger element of participation in the research, for example by repeating the walks in the company of others, or involving the participants in the collage-making in generating some of the material (photographs) used in the assembly of the collages. It also needs to be acknowledged that the sample sizes are open to question, for example, not conducting further workshops in the collage-making exercise, or building up a sample larger than the twenty-four people who completed the interviews conducted in the grounds of churches. Notwithstanding any sense of incompleteness that may be identified in the application of the individual methods, it is equally important to highlight that one of the strengths of the methodology rests in providing opportunity for a comparison of data resulting from the combination of methods as part of a multi-method and multi-sited approach. From this perspective, I would argue that the results have been sufficient in helping to provide a valid and coherent account of the role of movement in the exercise of Christian ministry and its contribution to the creation of Bradford as a place.

As a part time student, the research has been completed over an extended period of time. Establishing the methodology became a major focus of the first year of study, followed by fieldwork for the research conducted during the three consecutive summers of the period 2013-2015. The exercise in walking practice was undertaken in 2013, observation and interviews in church grounds in 2014 (as part of a planned sabbatical break from the work of church ministry), and the workshop in collage-making in the summer of 2015. Over the same period, I was beginning to work with documentary evidence relating to Bradford as a city and to Bradford Methodism, and this formed a further

strand of the methodology.<sup>64</sup> The work on reviewing the literature and setting out the theoretical basis for the thesis has been a continuing part of the process throughout the whole period of study.<sup>65</sup> The theoretical and ethnographic aspects of the research therefore formed part of an on-going conversation between the two, with each continuing to give shape and form to the other. With this methodological context in mind, I now turn to the task of describing something more of the methods themselves.

## **4.4 Methods**

### **4.4.1 Walking practice**

This method was aimed at investigating the perceived space of Lefebvre's triad, understood in this research as the space of practised movement. In turning to walking as a particular form of movement, not only did moving around on foot offer a different perspective to my usual means of travel around the city, but also gave recognition to point made by Hall (2009: 575), that walking remains a significant part of people's day-to-day movements. Additionally, I had in mind the contribution made by walkers to the making of early Methodism in the Bradford area, which was 'helped by the willingness with which preachers and those attending worship seem to have accepted without question a walk of ten miles or more in each direction' (Terry, 1999: 73). The thinking behind the use of this method was based on the idea of utilising walking practice as a means of exploring Bradford as space and place, and of understanding more about how forms and flows of movement contribute more generally to the making of place. Although Certeau (1988: 91-110) has been particularly influential in identifying the spatial practices of the walker or

<sup>64</sup> See especially Section 5.2 for use of documentary evidence relating to Bradford and Section 6.2 for the use of documentary evidence relating to Bradford Methodism.

<sup>65</sup> This material is covered in Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

the pedestrian in giving shape to urban spaces,<sup>66</sup> he did not produce ethnographic evidence to support his claim. Other researchers however, have given form to the practice of walking as an ethnographic method. As a form of ethnographic study, such walking practice has been used by a number of researchers investigating urban locations, including Pink (2008) in her work conducted in association with the Cittaslow ('Slow City') movement, Vergunst (2010), on the streets of Aberdeen, and Hall (2009) in city and valley areas of South Wales. The basis of these studies has been the development of an ethnography that reflects on walking as a practice, through consideration of the movements of ethnographers themselves and those who are being studied. Each of the studies has raised points of particular relevance to what I aimed to achieve through pursuit of this method.

Firstly, Pink's study offers evidence for understanding the making of place in terms of entanglement. Seeing her interest as lying with the production of a visual ethnography, the various visual methods she uses to accompany her walking practice helps to record and reveal a complex entanglement of different pathways. She conducts her research through walking in the company of others, and although, in my own study, I was walking alone I was reminded by her research that I should do so in anticipation of at least some degree of social encounter and in the expectation of crossing the pathways of others. Whilst evidence of place-making understood through processes of entanglement fits in with an important aspect of my own aims in taking up the method of walking practice, one of the peculiarities of Pink's approach is that while her work is aligned with the purposes of 'Cittaslow', the actual studies conducted so far seem to have been in the relative quiet of market towns rather than along the streets of the urban metropolis. For my own part, the walking was substantially if not exclusively along city ways.

<sup>66</sup> See Section 7.2.3 for further discussion of the figure of the pedestrian as part of Certeau's thinking.

Secondly, there is the role played by rhythm. For Vergunst (2010: 382), walking practice, with all its rhythms and variations, is helpful in seeing ethnography as an ongoing process, which does not just offer a picture of how things are at a given moment but gathers together (in the manner of Massey's understanding of place as an accumulation of 'stories-so-far') past, present and future. Such an understanding can be expressed in the continuous present form of the verb to walk ('I am walking') which leads Vergunst (2010: 383) to speak of an 'ethnographic presence' in preference to an 'ethnographic present'. His approach helped me to see that my walking would be about moving in time as well as space, and which would become apparent not only in the narrative form of the writing up of the research, but also the movement in time evidenced in the material world around, and the ways in which walking might be attuned to the environment or disrupted by it. In my own research, I develop this thinking about rhythm through a notion of *gait* (see Section 5.4.3).

Finally there is consideration of the scope of the walks that I was to undertake. Hall (2009: 572), who, in writing about movement not only between locales but also within them, points out that the emphasis on movement apparent in the 'mobilities turn' does not just involve a rethinking of the 'bounded ethnographic field', but also a refiguring of it – local movements are just as significant as global flows. His particular concern is in following movement within a given locale and walking with individuals and groups who move around in them, whether it be project workers engaging with the homeless in Cardiff city centre, or young people in a Valleys' community. For him, cities are as much spaces of flow as they are spaces of place: 'The essential point is a simple but significant one – mobility need not exceed and escape place' (2009: 575). More of one, he continues, does not mean less of the other: 'locals move as much as they ever did; staying put, as any fieldworker will tell you, involves moving around.' This dual sense of 'reaching beyond' and 'moving around' strongly shaped my thinking and planning for the conduct of my own piece of walking practice.

#### 4.4.1.1 The scope of the walks

In its wider context, Bradford is a part of the West Yorkshire conurbation, an area, which in 1974 formed one of the new Metropolitan counties covering the regions of Leeds, Wakefield, Kirklees and Bradford. The unit of local government in existence today is the City of Bradford Metropolitan District, which has its origin in the changes of the early 1970s and the bringing together of the old city of Bradford with various outlying boroughs, mainly in neighbouring Airedale and Wharfedale. The city prior to 1974 was a more tightly circumscribed area set within the former West Riding of Yorkshire.

Looking at the literature, proponents of these differing perspectives of Bradford as a district or a city can be identified, and here I take two of the most recent examples offering overviews of the history and geography of Bradford.<sup>67</sup> Richardson (2002) argues the case for a broader understanding of the city region. Originally published in the 1970s, Richardson's thesis paralleled the background work into the establishment of Metropolitan areas by looking at the connections, especially economic ones, between the central city and the urban boroughs. The revision of his book in the early 2000s, with a focus on more recent studies of transport patterns in the Bradford region, reaffirmed the ongoing significance of this wider area. By contrast, Duckett seeks to lay out a 'history and guide' to Bradford and in doing so chooses to focus on the city as it existed prior to the 1974 changes: 'Even today, over thirty years on, people have difficulty in understanding the nature of these 'metropolitan' areas and identify more with the older

<sup>67</sup> Other overviews, in addition to the two discussed here, include J. James, *The History and Topography of Bradford* (1841), W. Cudworth, *Round About Bradford* (1876), H. Hird, *How a City Grows: Historical Notes on the City of Bradford* (1966), J. Fieldhouse, *Bradford* (1972), G. Firth, *A History of Bradford* (1997) and A. Hall, *The Story of Bradford* (2013).

townships and neighbourhoods that preceded them' (Duckett, 2005: 9). Duckett is not wholly dismissive of metropolitan areas; he was, after all (and as he is keen to point out), involved through his publishing work with the production of Richardson's book (Duckett, 2005: 7). But for him, geography is an argument for a more closely defined identity of a particular locality rather than an analysis of connections between several different localities. Duckett certainly does not deny the presence and reality of diversity, but finds his interest (and cause for celebration) in the diversity presented within the setting and story of his chosen locale, rather than in the contrasts apparent across the wider region.

These differing perspectives on Bradford informed the planning of my walks. I planned two walks, each with its own distinctive purpose relating to the two motifs of boundary that I have developed so far, namely those of collage and movement. The first walk extended from the centre of Bradford, north to Shipley and then west to Bingley. The emphasis was to be on movement, following the course of the Bradford beck to Shipley (with the flow) and then along the Aire valley to Bingley (against the flow). In constructing this walk I was also trying to echo something of the rationale of Richardson's thesis with its highlighting of movement in the larger Bradford region, seen in patterns of transportation and trade, commuting and migration. The second walk was designed to focus to a greater degree on the more contained city espoused by Duckett. My feeling was that this understanding of Bradford, set in the 'saucer-shaped depression' or 'natural amphitheatre' lying within the foothills of the Pennines (see Duckett, 2005: 10, 13), would best be captured and experienced by a round walk. The simplest solution seemed to be to follow the ready-made 'round-way' of the Bradford ring road. My feeling was that this route would offer views of the collage of Bradford and its neighbourhoods, especially where the ring road occupied the higher ground, and also close-ups of particular pieces of the collage wherever

the built environment obscured the more landscaped views.<sup>68</sup> However, I want to avoid the over-simplification that one walk would be about movement and the other about collage. It seemed clear to me that, as the basis of each walk was to be the walking itself, both would equally be about movement in this sense.

#### **4.4.2 Collage-making**

In this method, the aim was to work with material relating to the process of collage-making, as a means of investigating the lived space of Lefebvre's triad. Hall's (2010a) experiment with collage in her exploration of ordinary life is helpful in this respect. Such an approach, she argues, is of particular relevance to understanding the juxtaposition and diverse context of her research setting - the Walworth Road in London. As part of her research she produced relatively simple collages of shop fronts, which allowed her to group images in different categories but also 'allowed for a punctuated, regular visual rhythm' (Hall, S., 2010a: 76). My own aim was to take this approach a step further and to consider including a group of church people to participate in the production of a collage. Included in this aim was the use of collage as a stimulus to foster a conversation (from both the making and the viewing of the collage). Following Hall's example, photographs would serve as the content, arranged and rearranged in collage form. Through arts-based work and the growing interest in taking a visual approach to ethnography (Pink, 2007), the use of images has been presented as a challenge to the predominant use of words and numbers in conducting research. The method is discussed from two perspectives, firstly the use of collage as a

<sup>68</sup> In planning out these walks around Bradford, I felt that I was taking on something of the spirit of W. Cudworth (1968 (1876)), as captured in the title of his volume *Round About Bradford*. I think that there is an emphasis in this title on movement around the area, perhaps captured with greater clarity in his record of more localised perambulations entitled *Rambles Round Horton (1886)*.

form of arts based research, and secondly the use of photographs as a form of visual research.

Arts based research has come to the fore in recent decades (Knowles and Cole, 2008; Leavy, 2009: 216-217). It can cover a number of fields including performing arts and visual arts. One form of arts based research is that of collage. Most collaged work is produced by specialist arts researchers, usually specialists in art, who share their results with research subjects as a way of eliciting a response and opening up a conversation (Butler-Kisber, 2008: 272). However, this method does not need to be solely the concern of arts specialists, with participants also being encouraged to create art (Daspit and McDermott, 2002: 182; Leavy, 2009: 227-228). Such an approach would have some risks: some researchers caution against allowing those who are not experts to be involved in the production of collage as the work may not be of a high enough standard, although there are those who argue that not to allow this would be elitist (Butler-Kisber, 2008: 273). On the positive side, collage is one form of visual art that most people could contribute to at a basic level and may well have had experience of at school. The main point of relevance to the method as it formed a part of my own proposal was that it would be about a facilitation of conversation and interaction rather than the production of a sophisticated piece of artwork.

The use of photographs in this method requires a further area of research to be addressed, namely visual research. This has been a growing field of research over the past twenty years or more, with significant contributions by a number of researchers (Frankenberger, 1991; Harper, 1998; 2002; 2003; Prosser, 1998; Rose, 2012; Banks, 2007; Emmison et al., 2012). One researcher who has focused most clearly on the use of photographs in visual research, rather than offering a broader approach, is Douglas Harper. His starting point for work with photographs is that they form a valid source of empirical data, but he is keen to point out that does not

equate to an 'objective truth', as each photograph can be interpreted in different ways (Harper, 2003: 182; Holm, 2008: 326). This leads Harper (2002: 182ff) to consider the context of the photo (that it represents a 'particular moment' in a wider narrative), the experience of the photographer, and the perspective of those who view the photograph.

This last point has interested Harper in the method of photo-elicitation (sometimes referred to as photo-interviewing), 'based on the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview' (Harper, 2002: 13). The photographs used may be specially produced for the research in hand (either by the researcher or the participant) or may be material that was already extant (either from the participant's own collection or from a more general archive) (Banks, 2007: 6-7; Holm, 2008: 328; Emmison et al., 2012: 20-21). The use of photographs aids the manner of the interview, making conversation easier, giving a neutral visual reference point so that eye contact does not have to be constantly maintained and provides a reason for what otherwise might prove to be an awkward silence. Rose (2012: 305) points to the content of the interview, that photos may enable the participant to 'talk about different things in different ways' and makes for a more collaborative style of research.

#### **4.4.2.1 Gathering material for making the collages**

With these issues in mind, I was at a stage where I could begin to make preparations for a collage-making workshop. The decision to use photographs as the raw material for producing collages raised further considerations. Firstly there was the matter of collaboration and the question of who would take the photographs. I had to acknowledge that I was going to be taking the photographs myself (researcher-generated) rather than allowing participants to undertake the task (participant-generated). Although this seemed less satisfactory, my final decision was taken on the basis of the limitations of time and expense in the conduct the research. Involving other people at this stage would have required a

much greater degree of organisation, provision of photographic equipment, and time to complete the task. The collaborative element of the exercise would come with the making of collages rather than the taking of photographs.

Secondly, I also needed to make a firm decision as to the content of the photographs. I decided that images of signs and noticeboards might prove to be a fruitful way of eliciting the conversations for which I hoped, rather than photos of the churches themselves. In particular, I was concerned that from a participant's point of view many of the churches would simply not be familiar and that if I wanted people to talk from experience, then this might not be the best way of prompting them to do so. On this matter, signs and noticeboards seemed to provide a more promising way of eliciting conversation, because although the boards and signs themselves might be unfamiliar objects, there may be information on them that would more readily relate to personal knowledge and awareness. As I travelled around, I began to think more about the noticeboards and signs. I was particularly taken by the variety of forms – shape, frame, colour, material, condition, setting and position – and the potential these characteristics offered for the making of striking collages. I was also aware that the content of the boards and signs for the most part was made up of words. This led me to reflect on whether I really working with images here, or just words presented in a different way? But I also considered that this might make an interesting conversation in its own right.



**Figure 5 Photographs of Site 1**



Figure 6 Photographs of Site 2

#### 4.4.3 Observation and interviews

This method was also about gaining insight into the lived space of Lefebvre's triad. In the method the aim was to look at particular sites, the grounds of churches, which I argue, as overlooked places, can be likened to fragments of collage. It was designed to focus on people who pass through these sites, and to find out about their experience of them, and from this point of view, incorporated an exploration of movement into the method.

Two sites were chosen. The first site (Figure 5) was formed from the grounds of a church consisting mainly of a large car parking area. A number of people use this space as a cut-through from a main road to an area of housing situated to the rear of the church grounds. There was no designated pedestrian path through the site, but the car park area narrowed by the church so that only pedestrians could continue beyond it to the entrance at the rear of the site. The second site (Figure 6) was the former burial ground of a chapel where passers-by use the path through the church garden as a short cut from one road to another. When viewed from the main road, the large nineteenth century church building with a columned façade is set back behind the line of the shops and other buildings, with the old graveyard, now grassed over, lying in front. A passage to the left of the church (as viewed from the main road) provided a cut-through to the car park at the side of the church.

For this part of the study, there were two main elements – observing and interviewing. Like the collage-making, this exercise combined two distinct research methods, this time in the study of church grounds, although the methods employed in this latter study were not as closely woven together as they were in the former with the interaction of the arts work with the visual use of photographs. Nevertheless, the two methods of observing and interviewing were connected in providing different ways of studying the same open spaces, with each bringing an influence to bear on the

other. Ideally, according to Layder there should be opportunity for an on-going and 'reciprocal interweaving of insights and evidence brought about by the shuttling to and fro between observation and interviewing' (2013: 76).

#### **4.4.3.1 Observation**

The first method, then, consisted of a period of observation at each site. Observation is one of the key ways of undertaking qualitative research, being a 'mainstay of ethnographic research and, at the other extreme, of time and motion studies' (Knight, 2002: 56). An ethnographic approach is often related to the method of participant observation, and ethnographers have identified different degrees of participation that a researcher may choose or be drawn into whilst conducting a period of observation. In this particular exercise of observing people as they cross over the grounds of a church, the level of involvement would be envisaged as being minimal, mainly because those passing through the site would be such transient figures.

Observation can be categorised as a form of visual research. Emmison (2012: 152-182) includes observation as one of the methods used to understand the 'lived visual data' of the built environment, including the open spaces of gardens and public places such as squares and plazas. Such locations are places that can be decoded; they also provide settings in which to observe the movements of those who enter and pass through them (Emmison et al., 2012: 152-153). The grounds of churches highlighted in my own research therefore formed potentially interesting spaces to study. One reason was because churches on the whole tend to be set up for people going inside a building and spending time there in worship or engaging in other activity, but here were spaces where a key activity is 'passing through'. Another reason is that the grounds of these churches, because they provided a way through from one place to another, took on the characteristics of a public space, despite being the

private property of the church. Therefore an interesting question to ask those passing through was whether they regard the space as public or private (or as being neither one nor the other). The aim was to get an overview of the way in which the space was used as a place of passing through.

#### **4.4.3.2 Interviews**

The second element took the form of a brief interview. Interviewing technique is often divided into three kinds: structured (or highly-structured), semi-structured and unstructured (or lightly-structured) (see, for example, Denscombe, 2010: 174-176). The first, often associated with a quantitative analysis, tends to ask a series of closed questions so that the answers can be analysed statistically; the second usually offers more open questions which can be asked in varying order, and will produce more extensive answers; the final kind is often more like a conversation, with a series of prompts indicating the direction in which the conversation might take. The second and third kinds are more commonly associated with qualitative enquiry, require a longer period of time to complete and can require an extensive recording and transcription. In these latter forms of interviewing, care needs to be taken by the researcher in treading the line between 'guiding' the interview and asking 'leading' questions (Bryman, 2012: 473-474). For the purposes of the exercise conducted in the grounds of the churches, the constraints of time and setting needed to be taken into account. Interviewees may not have had a lot of time to spare, and the open-air setting was not particularly conducive to an extended interview. In some ways this exercise resembled more the kind of 'intercept interviewing' (or 'clipboarding') associated with market research (see Knight, 2002: 54), although some attempt has been made to include not only fixed response questions but also some open-ended questions.

There remained the issue of sampling and who is to be approached for interview. Denscombe (2010: 42-48) highlights three broad approaches to the issue of sampling: a statistical approach, using probability sampling set with precise mathematical formulae, and resulting in a random sample; a pragmatic approach, using non-probability sampling (such as a quota) which is deemed sufficiently accurate for research purposes; and a cumulative approach, which continues to gather samples until a saturation point has been reached when it is deemed that no further useful information can be added to significantly alter the results. The characteristics of these latter two approaches are that they are purposive (in being focused on the research-question in hand), and exploratory, in that they 'provide the researcher with a means for generating insight and information' (Denscombe, 2010: 24 see also 34-35). For the purposes of the exercise to be conducted in the grounds of churches a broadly cumulative approach was used, mainly because of the limitations of resources in being able to produce anything more statistically substantial. This technique is particularly suitable for a qualitative approach to research, although it is still worthwhile giving some thought to the size of sample that should be sought. A number of authors seem to agree on a figure of around 30 as a minimum sample to obtain (Munn et al., 2004: 15; Denscombe, 2010: 45); Bryman (2012: 425) however, notes that there is no overall agreement on this, suggesting that there is a balancing act of weighing sample size against theoretical saturation. Layder (2013: 126), refusing to offer a minimum sample size, favours saturation as the key factor: the important question, then, is not how many but 'when is the process of sampling finished?' The aim, therefore, was to interview as many people as possible, although this was not everyone, as some refused, and others passed by whilst an interview with another person was being conducted.

#### **4.4.4 Documentary sources**

The purpose of this method was to provide documentary data, from statistical, archive and other sources, to bring to bear on data gathered

from the first three methods. Material used under this heading has been compiled as a way of examining the conceived space of Lefebvre's triad. As such, I used this documentation in seeking to represent the 'official' spaces of Bradford and Bradford Methodism. The material is drawn from two main sources, namely, governmental (at both national and local levels), and the Methodist Church. Bryman highlights that documentary data provides a source of material that has 'not been produced specifically for the purpose of social research' (2012: 543), but is accessible and relevant to the concerns of the research. The extent to which such official material is authoritative, objective and factual will be an issue of concern to the researcher in reaching a judgement as to the credibility of the documents as sources for research (Denscombe, 2010: 217).

#### **4.4.4.1 Government and other official sources**

The data gathered under this heading has been used primarily in conjunction with the data resulting from the method of walking practice. The material was collected from a number of sources, from national and local government. This has included statistical data, with particular use has been made of the information contained in the National Census material dating from 2011 (Office of National Statistics, 2012). Other sources have included Bradford Metropolitan District Council (2013), although to a large extent this has been based on the same census material, supplemented by an accompanying commentary. Further material has come from a regional level (representing a cooperation of local authorities), for example from the websites of the West Yorkshire Observatory (West Yorkshire Authorities, [www.westyorkshireobservatory.org](http://www.westyorkshireobservatory.org), accessed March 2018) and Migration Yorkshire ( [www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk](http://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk), accessed March 2018). The data used is all in the public domain and readily accessible to researchers.

Alongside this empirical data, I have used some of the various accounts of Bradford, examples of which include Avery (2015), Cudworth (1968 (1876)), Duckett (2007), Fieldhouse (1978), Hall (2013), James (1967, (1841)), and Richardson (2002). I have drawn on these as offering more of a narrative approach to giving a bigger picture of the Bradford area when set in historical and geographical context. There is a particularly rich seam of resource in telling the story of Bradford, and, whilst some of the accounts are not specifically academic texts, in themselves they form an important source of documentary evidence relating to the development of the city.<sup>69</sup>

#### **4.4.4.2 Methodist circuit preaching plans**

Here, the exploration of the Bradford context is developed in relation to the Methodist circuits. For this part of gathering documentary data, use has been made of a selection of archive material taken from Methodist (John Rylands Special Collection at the University of Manchester) and Local Authority (West Yorkshire Archive Service) archive collections. The material used consists of Methodist circuit preaching plans for the Bradford area for the period 1963-2013. The preaching plans take the form of tables, listing locations of churches (and times of services) down the left hand side, and calendar dates of Sundays across the top (see Figure 7). Names of preachers are then inserted into the table as a record of forthcoming preaching appointments to which preachers and congregations might refer. The number of circuits (and the number of churches within circuits) changed over time, and this can be noted from the 10-year periods included in the study. However, it should be also noted that the material provides 'snapshots' of this history rather than a comprehensive record of changes to circuits (for example, of the closure or opening of individual churches). From the diagrammatic form of the preaching plans, I have constructed a series of maps (see Section 6.2)

<sup>69</sup> See footnote 67 for further references to the history of Bradford.

showing the location of Methodist churches in the Bradford area in the period from 1963 to 2013.<sup>70</sup>

AUTUMN 2013		SEPTEMBER				
		1	8	15	22	29
Sundays		ORDINARY 22	ORDINARY 23	ORDINARY 24	ORDINARY 25	ORDINARY 26
Readings		Sirach 10.12-18 or Proverbs 25.6-7, Psalm 112, Heb 13.1-8, 15-16, Luke 14.1,7-14	Deut 30.15-20, Psalm 1, Philemon 1-21, Luke 14.25-33	Exodus 32.7-14, Psalm 51.1-10, 1 Timonth 1.12-17, Luke 15.1-10	Amos 8.4-7, Psalm 113, 1 Tim 2.1-7, Luke 16.1-13	Amos 6.1a,4-7, Psalm 146, 1 Tim 6.6-19, Luke 16.19-31
Allerton	10.30	Lewer	Peacock T	Blundell P H	Dixon S	T Griffiths
Baildon	10.00	Flecknoe	Jackson JMA	Drake S	Smith	OA
	6.00		Drake S			at HRMC
Bolton	10.30	Ayrton	OA	Anderson	Griffiths S	Bonny H
	6.30					at HRMC
Calverley	10.30	Blundell	Bolton (T)	Ayrton	Attenborough L	Jewell H
	6.00	Jemison S	at Baildon	Blundell	Drake	at HRMC
Christchurch	10.00	Watson	Allison	Watson	Greenwood	Watson
						at HRMC
Crag Road	11.00	Lorrain-Smith	Ayrton	M Attenborough	OA	Jemison H
	6.00	Taylor S				at HRMC
Eccleshill	10.30	Taylor S	Lorrain-Smith	Keating	Jemison B	OA H
	6.30					
Haworth Road	11.00	Bashforth	Lewer	Griffiths S	Ayrton	Lewer H P
	6.00					Circuit Service
Little Lane	10.30	Muschamp S	Robinson	T Griffiths	Maclaren	OA AAW Sgn H
Northcliffe	10.30	Greenwood	Drake B	OA	Whiteley	Griffiths SU
						at HRMC
Saltaire	10.30	Barker	T Griffiths	Jemison AE S	Lorrain-Smith AE	Greenwood
Sandy Lane	9.30	Bashforth	Lewer	Griffiths S	Ayrton	OA
St Andrews	10.30	Whiteley	J Griffiths B AAW	Hoe S	OA	Blundell P H
	6.00	Blundell S	Bashforth	Bible study	Jemison	at HRMC
Thackley	10.30	Jemison	Reid Cov	Barker	Knight S	OA
	3.00					at HRMC
Thornton	10.30	Griffiths	Bashforth	Taylor S	T Griffiths H	Bolton (T)
	6.00					at HRMC
Wilsden	10.30	Keating	Marsh S	Dambrook	Tilsbury	Drake BTC
	6.00					at HRMC
Wrose	10.30	Bolton (T)	Jemison B	Lorrain-Smith	Drake S	Keating
	6.00					at HRMC

**Figure 7 A sample page from a Circuit Plan, Bradford North Circuit 2013**

<sup>70</sup> The starting point of 1963 has been used because of the difficulty in locating the evidence of circuit plans from earlier decades. The fifth diagram is based on data from the year 2000.

## 4.5 Ethical considerations and reflexivity

In recent years an increased level of attention has been given by institutions and researchers to research ethics (Traianou and Hammersley, 2012: 5-9). An overall consideration of research ethics will involve a focus on the relationships involved and a look at the role of the researcher, relations with research participants, the gathering of data and the dissemination of findings (Van den Hoonaard and Van den Hoonaard, 2013: 15-23). For research carried out under the auspices of an institution there will be an ethics policy to adhere to in the conduct of that research. The University of Leeds policy on ethics states:

Research must be conducted with integrity. This means that in addition to the satisfactory resolution of issues surrounding consent, confidentiality and data protection, the principles of honesty and openness should be observed in both the conduct of the research and the publication of the results ([ris.leeds.ac.uk/download/downloads/id/1386/research\\_ethics\\_policy](http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/download/downloads/id/1386/research_ethics_policy), accessed July 2014).<sup>71</sup>

Even when the proposed research carries with it a relatively low level of ethical risk there is still a need to lay down principles by which the research will be conducted.

Bryman (2012: 135) uses four main headings in his consideration of ethical issues: harm to participants; lack of informed consent; invasion of privacy; and deception. The methods proposed focussed on two main groups of people. In terms of making observations and conducting interviews, the intention was to observe and interview individuals as they used and passed across the grounds of a church. For the method of collage-making, the intention was to bring together individuals as a group. The following paragraphs look at Bryman's guidelines with reference to each of these groups.

<sup>71</sup> The ethics reference for my thesis is University of Leeds PVAR 13-050

Firstly, then, harm to participants. Even when the level of risk is not high, there remains the important issue of confidentiality. A general principle of ethical conduct is that research subjects should not be identifiable. This applies not only in terms of the published results but also in respect to adherence to the principles of the Data Protection Act. For the process of observing and interviewing, the individuals involved were relatively anonymous by the nature of the exercise. For the group making collages, individuals were identifiable and care has been taken to preserve confidentiality.

Secondly, in terms of informed consent, the collage-making method required a clearly worded consent form (Appendix 1). Participants needed to be asked for their consent to use material arising from the research. A right to withdraw was also made clear. For the interviews, interviewees were provided with information sheets (see Appendix 2) regarding the conduct of the study, but it was decided that signed consent for such brief interviews was neither practicable nor necessary. The method of observation had the potential to prove problematic simply because those being observed were passing through. In terms of the observational task, there was no real contact and therefore no opportunity to seek consent. One of the key issues facing those undertaking this kind of observation is the extent to which their presence as a researcher is made known to those around them, and whether the research is carried out in an overt or covert manner (Mason, 2002: 93; Denscombe, 2010: 209). In this exercise, one of the advantages of taking on a covert approach is that the presence of the researcher would only impact minimally on the behaviour of those passing through. It could also be argued that in the circumstances, and given the nature of the study and its aim of observing those passing through an open space, that there would actually be very little opportunity for the researcher to be made known himself. On the other hand, there needs to be recognition of the ethical implications of carrying out research where those being studied are not aware that they

are being observed in this way. For this reason, a compromise suggestion was a poster advertising the study, placed in prominent positions a few days ahead of the observation itself, explaining its aims and operation (see Appendix 3). If someone had a concern, they could have chosen to avoid cutting through on that particular occasion; on the other hand, it also provided opportunity for those who wanted to stop and have an informal conversation with the researcher about what was happening. In order that the exercise might avoid being as intrusive as possible, and so that anonymity might be preserved, the observations were not recorded as photographs or video but only as field notes taken at the time and written up at the end of the day.

Thirdly, there is the right to privacy. Issues may be raised which individuals may wish to be kept private rather than being included in the results of the research. Bird (2011: 81ff) makes the point that the religious beliefs of individuals may well prove to be a special case in point and particularly sensitive in relation to the issue of privacy. A continuing awareness of this issue was therefore an important one. Finally, the question of deception is an issue of particular interest in the instance of the research in hand. I refer to my own role as both researcher and ordained minister. Some of those who took part in the research knew me in my latter capacity and it raised the question once again as to how acceptable it is to play both roles in the same setting. This has been particularly true in relation to my leadership role in the church, and I took care in my conduct with participants not to let my dual role place undue expectations on those taking part in the research.

This dual role of researcher and church minister also raised issues of reflexivity. The insider/outsider problem is the description usually assigned to the tension between those who argue as to whether the study of religion can only be done by those who fully participate in the life of religion or is best undertaken by those who can maintain the critical

distance and objectivity of the scientific method. This distinction between the 'insider' (or 'emic') position and the 'outsider' (or 'etic') position is too stark a choice to be helpful (Arweck et al., 2002). Researchers engaged in the ethnographical study of religion have developed a range of positions based on the participant observation model which has long formed a standard approach for anthropologists studying different cultures: complete observer; observer as participant; participant as observer; complete participant (Knott, 2010b: 262). Within this continuum, those undertaking qualitative research, need to take account of the role that reflexivity plays in the conduct of the research, showing a critical awareness of their own position, and acknowledging what they bring into any given situation (Ward, P., 2012: 7).

As a member of the Methodist church I need to acknowledge that I am a full participant in the life of the church and that this means that in any research I undertake I will do so from that perspective. The case has been made elsewhere to justify ethnography as ministry (Crain and Seymour, 1996: 302, 310, 314). In that study, the authors reflected upon their own ethnographic research conducted in the field of religious education and interviewed nine other ethnographers about their studies. Crain and Seymour reached the conclusion that the conduct of the ethnographic research had an impact on those being researched: 'Many religious educators are beginning to use ethnographic methods in their research...the goals for many educators who study faith communities are similar to the goals of those who minister: strengthening and equipping the people of God for ministry' (Crain and Seymour, 1996: 299). Tribble (2011: 77) pushes this case further in seeing ethnographic research as an outworking of the vocation of an ordained minister, motivated by a sense of care and service. But the role of itinerant minister is also an interesting one to reflect upon especially in relation to the life of a local congregation.

The task of the itinerant minister is to come and go from any given situation, to participate and to act, but also to observe and reflect and feed back. Within Methodism an itinerant minister is appointed ('stationed') to a circuit (usually five years in the first instance; note the use of the term station, as a temporary stop or base); within that station, the minister will often be given pastoral charge of a number of churches, meaning that they will move from one to another during the course of any one week. To what extent does being an itinerant minister mean being 'a part or apart' from any given situation? The answer will vary, but in every instance it will resonate to some extent with the participant observer model in one or other of its forms (with the arguable exception of the 'complete observer' position).

#### **4.6 Structure of the study**

Having addressed these methodological concerns, the next step is to set out a structural framework for the study. For this, I turn to the framework offered by Stringer (2016) and into which he placed his research on religious diversity. His original purpose in offering this framework was as a means of mapping urban theory in its interaction with religion. Although principally relating to a means of organising the theoretical field, Stringer regarded his proposed framework as a way of locating his own ethnographical research. As a framework, it also provides a helpful means of serving the methodological purposes as I have laid them out so far, and in organising my own research material. My intention, therefore, is to use Stringer's suggested framework as a means by which to organise the multi-method, multi-sited approach that I have chosen to take.

Top-down Macro	Top-down Micro
Bottom-up Macro	Bottom-up Micro

**Table 6 Quadrants from Stringer's framework**

Stringer envisaged a grid consisting of a vertical axis, showing a continuum from 'top down' to 'bottom up' and representing 'the stance of the theory in relation to the population of the city'; and a horizontal axis, marking out a range from 'macro' to 'micro' as marking out 'the scope of the theoretical framework' (2016: 3). From this outline, he highlighted four broad headings (or quadrants), into which the material fitted, namely, top-down macro, top-down micro, bottom-up macro and bottom-up micro (Table 6). As a model, Stringer's design lends itself to a structuring my own ethnographic research into one particular strand of religious diversity (Methodism as a Christian denomination) in terms of the urban setting of Bradford. I now proceed to position the methods to be used in my own research to the four quadrants of Stringer's design (see Table 7).

Top-down Macro Chapter 5 Official and historical overviews of Bradford	Top-down Micro Chapter 6 Maps drawn from Methodist Circuit Plans
Bottom-up Macro Chapter 5 Walking practice	Bottom-up Micro Chapter 6 Collage-making Observation and Interviews

**Table 7 Thesis chapters mapped onto Stringer's quadrants**

First of all, then, the documentary evidence introduced in my methodology may be fitted into the two top-down quadrants. The top-

down macro quadrant, Stringer argues, is to be seen as ‘a classic bird’s eye view of the city’ (2016: 3) and into this quadrant I place documentary material offering such an overview, drawn for example from statistical sources and putting them alongside general histories of Bradford. The top-down micro quadrant Stringer regarded as speaking of ‘city cultures’ (2002: 6), and I have interpreted this category as ‘Bradford Methodism’. I have sought to represent this culture through an exploration of Methodist circuit preaching plans for the Bradford area, and using the data to plot a series of accompanying maps. As such, it gives a top-down view of the chosen culture of Bradford Methodism.

Top-down Macro Chapter 5 Official and historical overviews of Bradford Social space as conceived	Top-down Micro Chapter 6 Maps drawn from Methodist Circuit Plans Social space as conceived
Bottom-up Macro Chapter 5 Walking practice Social space as perceived	Bottom-up Micro Chapter 6 Collage-making Observation and Interviews Social space as lived

**Table 8 Stringer's quadrants related to social space**

Secondly, the remaining methods may be associated with the two bottom-up quadrants of Stringer’s framework. The third quadrant of bottom-up macro is described by Stringer in terms of taking ‘the view point of the ordinary citizen but in some way trying to capture the whole city experience’ (2016: 11). I seek to represent this quadrant through walking practice, and the conduct of walks around and across the city. Finally, the fourth quadrant, bottom-up micro, is the one to be most

commonly associated with ethnographic work as typically understood (Stringer, 2016: 14). Into this quadrant I put my research resulting from work centring on specific sites; included within this category is the material arising from the exercise relating to church noticeboards, and from the observations and interviews made in the grounds of the two churches. This framework is reflected in the construction of the two chapters that follow on from this current one. To help the reader I have also inserted an additional table relating the quadrants to Lefebvre's construction of social space (see Table 8).

#### **4.7 Conclusion to Chapter 4**

Given the theoretical and contextual framework for this project, the main methods proposed are unsurprisingly ethnographic. Key concepts drawn from theoretical work on the topic of spatial relationships have framed the approach taken up in the offered methodology. The methodology sets out the means by which relationships that have been understood spatially in terms of their connectedness can be explored from the perspective of both theology and social science, in an interdisciplinary manner through the use of an ethnographic approach to research. In this chapter, methodological concerns surrounding a multi-method and multi-sited ethnography have been addressed, along with consideration of issues of ethical conduct and reflexivity. The chapter has also served the purpose of introducing the context of the study as it relates to the city of Bradford. Walking practice, collage-making, and observation and interviews conducted in the grounds of churches have been introduced as methods with an ethnographic character, which, when set alongside the use of documentary evidence offer a way to explore the threefold aspects of social space as conceived, perceived and lived. Finally, the framework drawn from Stringer's design, offered a structure for the analysis of the results, which will be fully considered in Chapters 5 and 6.

Looking ahead to these two chapters, Chapter 5 offers a macro perspective, with focus given to the two quadrants, bottom-up macro and

top-down macro, as I bring together the ethnographic record of the walking practice with official and historical overviews of the city; that is to say, material relating to the bigger picture of Bradford. In this chapter I seek to ask what insight does the movement of walking practice bring to an understanding of the Bradford landscape. In Chapter 6, I take up the micro perspective of the bottom-up micro and top-down micro quadrants, bringing the ethnographic material from observation, interviews and collage-making into conversation with the Methodist related material from the circuit preaching plans. The aim of the chapter is to establish a reading of the Methodist circuit taken through the lens of collage. In each chapter, I am asking as to what evidence of boundaries emerges from the exercise; what kind of boundaries; and what is revealed of those boundaries that was previously hidden.

In both chapters, I put the emphasis on the bottom-up rather than the top-down, as my particular interest rests in drawing out the significance of the ethnographic approach to the research. In presenting each of Chapters 5 and 6 in terms of a 'top-down' and a 'bottom-up' view, I am not just simply trying to create a binary opposition between the two, but rather seek to take up a position similar to Husband (2014: 43), who argues that 'ethnographic accounts of lived experience, as 'viewed from below', which have been a major contribution to our understanding of the contemporary city' do not simply replace accounts of the city as a whole. Although he argues for privileging the view from below, his hope is that 'the cumulative argument will benefit equally from both approaches.'

## Chapter 5 Reading the Bradford landscape through movement

### 5.1 Introduction: taking readings of the Bradford landscape

The focus of the thesis so far has been on a theoretical exploration of the spatial relationships of everyday life. Particular use has been made of Lefebvre's triad of spatial relationships as conceived, perceived and lived. Drawing on the Methodist tradition of living in connexion, and Massey's call for a relational understanding of place as grounded, practised connectedness, I have sought to reinterpret Lefebvre's triadic construction as the conceived space of connectedness, the perceived space of practised connectedness and lived space of grounded connectedness. Movement (as the practised connectedness of perceived space) and collage (as the grounded connectedness of lived space) have formed the organising themes for the thesis, and I have applied these headings to an understanding of the Bradford landscape (as collage) and Methodism in Bradford (as movement). In this present chapter I look to see what insight movement as a form of practised connectedness reveals about the Bradford landscape as collage. In Chapter 6, I reverse this order, asking what insight collage as a form of grounded connectedness brings to the Methodist circuit as movement.

In this chapter a closer look is taken at the Bradford context. Firstly, consideration is given to an overview of Bradford, drawn from official sources, histories and academic literature relating to the city. It explores the key themes of *decline* and *diversity*, and asks in what ways processes of *regeneration* and issues of *identity* are made apparent in Bradford today. Secondly, the results from two pieces of walking practice conducted in the Bradford area are analysed using the organisational categories of *fragments* and *flows*. Through discussion of these

categories characterised as *discarded fragments* and *hidden flows*, the question is asked as to what extent the analysis offered by the ethnographic technique of walking practice reflects or challenges the established narratives of decline and diversity. This ethnographic exploration allows for an understanding of the Bradford landscape which is less about regeneration and cohesion as the 'grand claims' of overarching narratives, and more about a gathering of discarded fragments and a glimpsing of hidden flows as offering gestures of hope in bringing about change and renewal.

The remaining portion of the chapter is given over to taking the initial steps in setting out a ministry of everyday movement exercised as a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows. This further deliberation shows how a focus on movement not only offers a reading on the Bradford landscape, but also an articulation of how such 'humble efforts of care' might contribute to the making of Bradford as a place. This is achieved by paying particular attention to the boundaries of place as markers of encounter rather than division, and through which the problems of division become the possibilities of connectedness. As a form of practised connectedness an everyday ministry contributes to this process through its movement at the boundaries of place, and which I describe in terms of both a movement across and a movement along.

## **5.2 A discourse of diversity and decline**

The Pennine setting of Bradford gives shape to the city with its features of moorland and hillside. The now little used name of Bradford-dale gives us the clue that the valley could quite properly be regarded as one of the Yorkshire Dales, though the presence of the heavily built up urban area in the bowl of the valley gives it a quite different character to the popular picture of the Dales today. The rapid growth of Bradford can be traced back to the nineteenth century, with the development of the weaving and woollen trades, and the transformation of small cottage industry into

much bigger factories and mills (James, D., 1990: 27-28). The market town was taking its first steps towards becoming a modern city and the accompanying growth in population was marked by groups of newcomers arriving in significant numbers, starting with those from the rural areas of the English counties seeking work, and Irish immigrants in the earlier nineteenth century, followed by arrivals from Europe (witnessed for example in the name 'Little Germany', a locality in central Bradford) (Richardson, 2002: 84; Hall, A., 2013: 67, 73). This growth did not continue unabated into the twentieth century, with signs of industrial decline apparent from the late nineteenth century onwards (Duckett, 2005: 101).

In the post-war period, the flow of migrants initially came from European countries (mainly Poland and Ukraine), and also from the Caribbean, but for the most part, migration in the latter half of the twentieth century was from the Indian sub-continent, especially Pakistan. The most recent additions to the population of Bradford have been eastern European nationals (Duckett, 2005: 173ff). These new flows also brought change to the religious make-up of the city, especially (but not solely) seen in the enlargement of the Islamic community, accompanied by, in the most recent period, a growing sense of Muslim self-consciousness and confidence as a community (Husband et al., 2014: 25-26). Today, Bradford is often pictured not only in terms of its ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, but also with reference to the relative youth of its population. Since the riots of 2001, increased efforts have been made in managing community relations, although persistently high levels of unemployment and lack of other opportunities continue to create social problems (Darlow et al., 2005: 26ff). The decline in Bradford's prosperity over recent decades has highlighted not only issues of poverty, and the contrast between areas of deprivation and the city's more affluent parts, but also its sense of entrepreneurship and the presence of many small-scale trades and businesses. However, Bradford has not gone through the same degree of economic redevelopment and renewal as many of its urban counterparts (Hudson et al., 2011: 12-13).

The story of Bradford in the twentieth century and up to the present time has been mainly presented in terms of two themes, *decline* and *diversity*. Bradford's economic decline goes hand in hand with the fortunes of the woollen industry (James, D., 1990: 185), which Hall (2013: 154) argues was facing troubles as far back as the 1880s, although this became a clearer trend in the depression period of the 1930s. Fieldhouse (1978: 198) notes that the post second world war period was marked by a steady reduction in the number of workers employed in the textile mills, in an industry that was living 'on its industrial fat' (Richardson, 2002: 134). Equally, there was a failure of business to diversify sufficiently into new industries to compensate for the loss of the manufacturing of wool products (Duckett, 2005: 171-172). Bradford's declining economy has persistently suffered with relatively high levels of unemployment and other markers of deprivation (Darlow et al., 2005: 22-24). In 2011, a third of Bradford's thirty electoral wards were noted as being 'within the 10 per cent of the most disadvantaged areas in the country' (Hudson et al., 2011: 8). Whilst this same report made comment on the pessimism felt by Bradford residents in the light of economic recession, a different report from the same institute could record 'cautious optimism' on the part of business owners (Akhtar et al., 2011: 29).

Signs of regeneration include not only the focal points of the Westfield shopping centre in central Bradford and key tourist attractions (for example, the World Heritage Site at Saltaire), but also its entrepreneurial activity and youthful age profile (Hall, A., 2013: 222). In the national census of 2011, the population of the Metropolitan District was numbered at 522,452 and the youthfulness of this population is shown by the proportion aged under 16 years accounting for 23.5% (18.9% in England as a whole) whereas those aged 16-64 years amount to 62.8% (64.1% in England) and the over 64 group amounting to just 13.7% (compared with 16.9% in the whole of England) (Office of National Statistics, 2012: Table Number, KS102EW). Notwithstanding particular problems that may be associated with this age group (for example, perceived issues with drugs

and crime), nor the necessity to make provision of adequate levels of support for young people (with appropriate educational and employment opportunities) (Darlow et al., 2005: 55-56), this sense of youthfulness tends to draw a level of optimism and positive recognition. This is illustrated by a report issued by the local council, which described Bradford as ‘the youngest English city outside of London’ (Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 2013: 2-3). This characteristic is attributable to a significant extent to factors of ethnicity and migration, as discussed in the following paragraph.

Diversity forms the second theme prominent in accounts of Bradford. The statistics from the UK National Census of 2011 show that 63.9% identified themselves as White British (compared to 80.5% in England as a whole), with 20.4% recorded as being of Pakistani origin (2% for England), the highest proportion in any local authority area in England (Office of National Statistics, 2012: Table Number, KS201EW). 2.3% of the Bradford population was born in countries acceding to the EU between 2001 and 2011, indicating the more recent migration from countries in eastern Europe (Office of National Statistics, 2012: Table Number KS203EW). A briefing produced by the local authority showed that the 20% of the population who were of Pakistani origin had risen from the 14% recorded a decade earlier. Other ethnic groups taken as a whole have also seen a 6% rise as a proportion of the total population. It is important to note that, as summarised already, this diversity has a history, in migratory and other factors. Equally, it should also be recognised that the kind of summary offered here does not adequately reflect what Richardson (2002: 158) calls ‘the finer detail’ of diversity; there is a ‘super-diversity’ to immigration (Phillips et al., 2010: 5).<sup>72</sup> As Husband

<sup>72</sup> The term ‘super-diversity’ is referenced by Phillips to Vertovec, S. (2007) *New complexities of cohesion in Britain. Super-diversity, Transnationalism and Civil-integration*. Oxford: COMPAS (Research report submitted to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion). Available at: <http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk>

(2014: 106-108) shows in his study of the Manningham area of Bradford, to treat Manningham as 'an Asian area' is far from telling the whole story. He illustrates this by focusing part of his study on the Polish community in Manningham. Similarly, as Husband also identifies, to talk about 'the Polish community' is not always adequate in describing the different stories of Polish people who came to Bradford as a result of the Second World War and its aftermath, and those who have arrived more recently as a consequence of the expansion of the European Union. Nor is immigration the only factor to take into account when considering the diversity and demography of Bradford. The overall growth of the city's population (at 11.1% over the last decade, compared with 7.1% nationally) is attributed to the number of births rather than to migration. According to this report, the population movement in and out of the city but within the UK currently accounts for an annual decline of 4000 residents each year, and outweighs the impact of the 1500 immigrants who arrive annually from outside the UK (Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 2013).

Religion is also a feature of this diversity. The responses from the 2011 national census show that 45.9% of the Bradford population identified themselves as Christian, contrasted with 59.3% of the population of England and Wales as a whole (Office of National Statistics, 2012: Table Number, QS210EW). Muslims accounted for 24.7% of the whole population (compared to 4.8% across England and Wales) and this was the fourth highest proportion in any local authority in England and Wales. Those claiming no religion amounted to 20.7% (21% nationally), with smaller numbers of Buddhists (0.2%), Hindu (0.9%), Jewish (0.1%) and Sikh (1.0%) also represented. In the 1990s, Lewis (2002) made the case for religion not to be subsumed under a more general category of ethnicity, and to be a focus in its own right for understanding the particular circumstances of diversity in Bradford. McLoughlin (1996: 228) highlights that an understanding of Islam in Bradford is itself a task of viewing diversity within diversity, and that how Muslims understand their own identity is itself constructed, contingent and negotiated in relation to other Muslims and the circumstances they face in the given situation,

especially that of exclusion. This recognition of religion as a factor in understanding diversity has gained new prominence in the light of events, local, national and global, in the opening period of the twenty-first century.

The politics of multiculturalism has been a cause of significant dispute during recent decades (Husband et al., 2014: 222). Fieldhouse's optimism from the late 1970s ('Future observers may well decide that the most astonishing change in the whole of [Bradford's] history was the transformation of a closely knit, homogenous community...into a multicultural city, with a future all to make and a new identity to establish another Bradford' (1978: 201)) may be contrasted with Avery's reflections on the subsequent decade, as 'a policy of integration had given way to that of multi-culturalism with each community going its own way' (2015: 54). McLoughlin (2006: 138) identifies the failure to establish a multiculturalism based on "critical" dialogue' rather than 'essentialized "difference"'. Following the 'riots' of 2001, reports into the disturbances highlighted segregation as a key theme in explaining the events, especially the perceived self-segregation of the Asian community (Hall, A., 2013: 208-209). Cohesion became the new watchword, and the search for community cohesion formed a key objective of policy makers. This emphasis on 'top-down' policy led a developing sense that 'the cohesion agenda is one of assimilation and conformity that may have had the net effect of dividing communities rather than uniting them' (Hudson et al., 2011: 19). Amin (2003: 460-463), with specific reference to Bradford in the wake of the 2001 riots, has highlighted a need to set aside the divisions created through policies of cohesion in favour of 'a politics of presence', which would emphasise a 'negotiation of difference'. Elsewhere, he suggests that the arena of this negotiation is not the forum of public policy so much as the 'micropublics' of everyday settings of association, such as workplaces and youth clubs (Amin, 2002: 969).

However, in the aftermath of the events of 9/11 and 7/7, and ensuing measures relating to counter-terrorism, the situation took on a fresh intensity as community cohesion became caught up in debates around

national security. It also led to an 'intense and sustained scrutiny' (Lewis, 2015: 10) of Muslims and Islamic practices by governmental authorities, politicians and the media amongst others:

In the context of post-11 September 2001 and the 'war on terror', cities like Bradford acquired a prominence in the national political neurosis around the Islamic presence in Britain. The fact that ...Bradford also had a prior history as a locale for South Asian dissent and civil disruption served to enhance the city's visibility in the emerging policy furore around social cohesion and counter-terrorism (Husband et al., 2014: 7).

In effect, the association of these policies, each with the other, and a particular emphasis on the Muslim community, served to reinforce rather than ameliorate a sense of segregation. It was this narrowing of focus on a cohesion which became dominated by issues of ethnicity and religion that proved particularly damaging to community relations. One report issued in 2011 (Hudson et al., 16ff), whilst finding that there was no clear agreement as to what the term 'cohesion' meant, concluded that only through work on a wide range of social and economic factors (including unemployment, crime and poverty) could communities be brought closer together. It was not just issues surrounding ethnicity and religion that needed to be taken into account, but recognition that other factors are also complicit in perpetuating community divides, wealth, age and gender among them. Ethnic and religious tensions need to be set in a wider context in order to be more fully addressed. In other words, decline and diversity are not separate but interrelated narratives.

Of course, such narratives do not necessarily go together; Duckett for example highlights the positive benefit of diversity for the local economy, arguing that Bradford's 'multi-national population give it an outward-looking focus' (2005: 126). By contrast Rohse, whilst not denying the challenges created by 'recession and riots', has asserted that the combination of deindustrialisation and fear of 'Asianisation' has produced a dominant discourse (largely created outside of Bradford, for example in

the media), which is almost wholly negative in tone, and presenting the city as a 'problematic and depressing place' (2015: 85-86). The picture of the relationship between decline and diversity that emerges is not a straightforward one - it has complexity, as pointed out by Athwal (2011: 35), in a discussion of poverty and ethnicity – but wrestling with these interconnected narratives is an important part of reaching a fuller understanding of Bradford as a place, and as a contested space, which highlights issues of exclusion and division. The impact of policy and structural change is inscribed into the landscape of life in Bradford as this discourse of decline and diversity.

In this section, an overview has been offered of established narratives from official, academic and historical accounts of Bradford through the interwoven themes of decline and diversity. Husband points out that a demographic account 'is invaluable in many contexts but lacks a grip on the lived experience of the place' (2014: 2). With the aim of gaining a different perspective on Bradford as a place, the remainder of the chapter explores something more of the everyday life of Bradford through the exploratory ethnographic technique of walking practice. Use of walking practice as a research method offers a different perspective on the landscape to that of the political, and an experience of the landscape 'that is to be based fundamentally in movement' (Vergunst and Árnason, 2012: 147). Vergunst's argument is that an exploration of the experiential and the political together offers the opportunity of gaining a fuller understanding of the landscape of place. What does an experience of moving through the landscape of Bradford on foot relay about a discourse of decline and diversity?

### 5.3 Walking through and around Bradford

This section is the result of two walks conducted in the summer of 2013.<sup>73</sup> Lee offers two main justifications for using walking as a research practice. Firstly, he asserts that, 'in walking we are on the move, seeing and feeling a route ahead of us and creating a path around and after us. We can often explore a new place most fruitfully by walking through and around it' (2006: 68). In terms of my own practice, therefore, the act of walking provided me with the opportunity to pay attention to the city at a different pace to that offered from journeying by car. No longer simply passing through on my way to 'somewhere else', there was time to pause and consider what I was sensing and experiencing. It also gave recognition to the fact that although parts of Bradford as a place were familiar to me, others were unfamiliar. This was made plain to me when, only a short distance into the first walk, I stopped for coffee at a cafe attached to a catering firm serving local offices and businesses. Set on the corner of Mill Street, the street name gives a clue as to the former use of this Victorian building, formerly part of a larger industrial site and now occupied on the ground floor by the newer business. The café, which I had not noticed before, was situated not far from the coffee shop belonging to a large chain, which I had visited on several previous occasions, in the car park of the Forster Square retail park. A workman was ahead of me in the queue for the counter, ordering a takeaway tea. I took my coffee to one of the empty tables and looked at what was going on. Two professionals chatted at the only occupied table. The server came over to my table and handed over my camera, which I had left lying

<sup>73</sup> See the introduction to walking practice as a method in Section 4.4.1 and the reasoning behind the choice of routes in Section 4.4.1.1. Since completing my walks, Husband's (2014: 37-81) study of the neighbourhood of Manningham in Bradford included a chapter on walking practice. Whilst this study uses walking practice as an ethnographic technique to provide a description of place, and its local and wider connectedness, it does not focus in to the same extent on movement as it contributes to the making of place. However, it has offered insight into making an analysis of my own observations drawn from walking practice.

on the counter. I received it with a word of thanks and she commented that she thought it must belong to me, with a hint perhaps that I had been identified as a non-regular customer. If the café was new to me, I had also been recognised as being new to the person working in the café. By contrast, a police community support officer called in and started chatting to the server in what I judged to be a daily part of his round.

Lee's second justification for the use of walking practice as a method of research is his indication that this experience of new places through walking 'in turn leads to the realisation that we have to understand the routes and the mobilities of others' (2006: 68). A part of my intention in walking, therefore, needed to be the movements of other walkers. Later the same day, I had the opportunity to consider such intertwined movements with others, when, on a quieter part of the walk as I followed the River Aire along an unmade track, I passed a couple of teenagers sat with their backs to me on a log bench away from the path. Further along the route, I looked over my shoulder and saw the same pair now following me along the track. I stuck with the bend of the river until I saw two familiar figures ahead of me, the teenagers who must have been following a more direct route. My speed was faster than theirs and I passed them by just as they were making ready to turn down a side lane. We nodded the briefest of acknowledgments, in mutual recognition perhaps of our 'entanglement' (Ingold, 2008: 1796) along the trail.

These briefest of encounters along the path and in the café form examples of Watson's argument that 'the social can be constituted in many different ways across a continuum of limited engagement – an exchange of glances or mutual recognition to 'thick' engagement, which may involve embodied interactions or conversation – with many different possibilities in between' (2009: 1581). She proposes that such 'rubbing along' is of particular relevance to heterogeneous places, where 'recognition of different others through a glance or gaze, seeing and being seen, sharing embodied spaces, in talk or silence, has the potential to militate against the withdrawal into the self or private realm' (2009:

1581). Such difference, illustrated in these two examples by categories of gender and age, has, in a Bradford setting, come to be focused on ethnicity, culture and religion. The capacity to 'rub along' has been identified in studies relating to Bradford (Barker et al., 2014: 28; Husband et al., 2014: 229-230) as being a key component in building positive and non-threatening relationships.

Bradford's diversity, as has been argued in the preceding section, has been viewed in a decidedly problematic way, especially when caught up with a discourse of decline. Walking, as a practice of everyday life, offers an alternative means to explore Bradford as a place, and to investigate the lives of those who move through and around it. To what extent does an analysis arising out of the conduct of walking practice confirm or challenge this picture of negativity? This is the topic of discussion for the following two sections, 5.3.1 and 5.3.2.

Deliberately echoing the themes of collage and movement, which have already formed a key part of the argument so far, these two sections provide the means of offering discussion on the narrative of decline and diversity. The material presented is also narrative in form, consisting of the accounts of the two walks conducted for the purpose of research. However, they are not straightforwardly narrative in the sense of offering a time sequenced ordering of each event taken in turn. Rather, the material generated by the walks is organised, for the purpose of analysis, into two categorised sections, arranged around the themes of *fragments* and *flows*. Each section of themed material contains episodes from the first and second walks.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>74</sup> The material has developed through a series of distinct stages of writing: 1. The compilation of field notes taken on the days of the walks; 2. The written up notes from each of the two days, and presented as a straightforward (time-sequenced) narrative; 3. The reordered narratives organised under the analytical categories of 'fragments' and 'flows'.

### 5.3.1 Discarded fragments

The second walk was undertaken in early September. My starting point was the bus stop on Manningham Lane just before the junction with the Ring Road. I turned left at the crossroads and set off on my round walk in an anti-clockwise direction. I descended into the valley and onto the bridge, which crossed over my previous route. I was less certain about this walk than the first one, and wondered what I could expect to see of interest on a city ring road; but I also knew that I had covered even less of this second route on foot than I had of the first. Heading out onto the bridge, on the left was a reclamation yard and the ground was covered with piles of old stones waiting to be reused as a part of some new project (Figure 8). Away to the right was a vista of the centre of Bradford.



**Figure 8 Reclaimed pieces for new building**

In both directions I was reminded that I was setting out on this walk with the aim of finding out something more of a collaged understanding of Bradford's neighbourhoods and communities.

It is not just the collaged appearance of the whole city that speaks of collage, but also its unwanted fragments. In their book *Edgelands*, Farley and Roberts (2011) focus their attention on those pieces of land that are neither city nor countryside, but wasteland, places ranging from allotments and sites for pylons, to drainage ditches and the sides of busy roads. Even though these 'edgelands' may be forgotten, they are in reality never far from where people live and work and pass by. Often ignored and dismissed as nothing more than waste, such edgelands are, according to Farley and Roberts, worth noticing and celebrating. In other words, such pieces of waste ground are an essential part of any collaged landscape, be it Bradford or anywhere else. But in Bradford, at least in my estimation, they hold a particularly prominent place in the formation of an impression of the city. There is a generous scattering of such wasteland pockets to be found across the Bradford landscape. These pieces of wasteland are like the moorland setting re-emerging within the city: evidence of the former landscape before urban development.<sup>75</sup>

### 5.3.1.1 Experienced fragments

In describing such fragments of wilderness as 'discarded', I make a play on the meaning of this word. Although not directly related to the probable origin of the word, there is a resonance with a process which is part of the worsted woollen industry on which Bradford built its wealth – that of *carding*, as the combing of wool to make it ready for spinning and also as the dressing of the woven cloth. Carding (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018a), in this sense, is derived from the Latin word, *cardus*, thistle, as the implement used for carding, and gathered no doubt from the waste areas where these plants tend to thrive. The term discarded might be applied to those fragments of land made waste through the decline of the woollen industry in Bradford. On my first walk, I encountered the site of

<sup>75</sup> In old documentation preserved in the West Yorkshire Archives, much of this moorland, difficult to manage and largely unsuited to the purposes of agriculture, and treated as common land, was referred to simply as 'the Waste'.

the former Midland Mill near Bradford city centre, now disused and derelict (Figure 9). This imagery may be broadened out to include other areas of industrial waste, for example, the site of the former Grattan's building on Ingleby Road (Figure 10). Set aside for housing, the work had been delayed by the recession.



**Figure 9 The former Midland Mill**

It might also be commented that the discarded waste material from the carding process would be used to make 'shoddy', an inferior woollen product (Picken, 1999: 377). Lying between the Bradford Beck and Canal Road, I came across a fragment of former industrial land, now re-colonised by greenery with large bushes and trees overshadowing the watercourse. Edensor's (2008: 127) experience of conducting walking practice through sites of industrial ruin led him to highlight the contrast between the kind of improvised and disrupted movements required to negotiate such sites with the highly ordered and regulated movements of the industrial activity and capitalist processes which preceded them. This leads him to suggest a different form of narrative that is generated by these wastelands: 'Stories that are fragmented, non-linear,

impressionistic and contingent are better suited than traditional linear narratives to the experience of walking in ruins' (2008: 137). He goes on to argue that this is cause for less formal and more creative use of space (2008: 139).



**Figure 10 The former Grattan site on Ingleby Road**

Other sites on my walks spoke of a process of regeneration that has already happened or which is already taking shape. Most prominent among them, and visible at the starting point of my first walk, was the 'hole in the ground', in Bradford city centre, awaiting the development of a new shopping mall, and whose stop-start history had yet to get beyond the work of building foundations.<sup>76</sup> Further along that same walk, I came to Saltaire, widely viewed as a success story of regeneration, and now a World Heritage site. Based on processes of conservation (of the model village created by Titus Salt in the mid nineteenth century for the housing of his mill workers, who gained good living conditions but were subject to

<sup>76</sup> The Broadway Shopping Centre was finally opened in November 2016.

an increased level of paternalistic control over their lives) and innovation (the mill houses a technology company as well as tourist facilities). Pausing for lunch in Roberts Park (a facility originally provided so that the mill workers could enjoy fresh air and exercise), I noted how many other people continued to enjoy its facilities. Vergunst, however, points out that regeneration always 'has its winners and losers, both in terms of economics and access to urban space' (2017: 16). The reference here is to a highly planned level of regeneration. However, on my walks, I came across evidence of earlier developments, which represented regeneration of a different kind: the provision of allotments.

Shortly after the start of my second walk, following the Queen's Road portion of the Bradford ring road, I passed by a set of allotments: land divided up into bounded portions for the growing of flowers and fruit and vegetables, their jumbled arrangement incorporating an ad hoc piece of fencing and a gateway made from a recycled door. As an arrangement of land it gave a picture of collage; as a 'making-do' it offered a living illustration of *bricolage*. Crouch points out the 'leftover' nature of allotments as land which did not find a more profitable use...the sites were usually spaces left over' (1997: 5). The origin of allotments is a political story of power and protest (Foley, 2014: 8), in part a consequence of the enclosure of common lands in the eighteenth century (Crouch and Ward, 1997: 9-10). In the twentieth century, allotments became a part of a provision by local authorities, but more recently, they have once again become the object of political wrangling, the tension between the retention of allotments on the one hand and the identification of allotments as sites for regeneration on the other (Howe and Wheeler, 1999: 132). Howe and Wheeler (1999: 142), specifically addressing the case of allotments in the Leeds and Bradford area, make the point that the continued use of allotments is a means of furthering a different

understanding of regeneration, namely that of sustainability<sup>77</sup> and as part of a broader agenda relating to urban food growing.



**Figure 11 By the side of the allotments on Queens Road**

Passing the allotments on Queen's Road, I could see that two men were working on their plots, and a third man was enterprisingly sitting by the main road next to a handwritten sign advertising plums and rhubarb from his allotment. Whilst waiting to make a sale, he rested in a garden chair, reading the newspaper (Figure 11). Although the name indicates apportionment (that is, the bounded areas of plots), Crouch argues that allotments are best understood as places of movement and encounter. In words that echo Ingold's views on the creation of place, he asserts that allotments provide 'a simple everyday iconography of the way we make sense of the world around us by moving around the place and getting to know it with others' (1997: vii). Noting that the history of allotments has

<sup>77</sup> On the subject of sustainability in relation to the development of community gardens see Pink (2012).

been presented as a series of social movements, each responding to particular economic and political circumstances of their day (Foley, 2014), comment might be repeated on the relation between movement in this social sense, and the physical movements made by individual actors as components in creating a politics of place at odds with that offered by the modern urban world.



**Figure 12 Redevelopment behind Shipley railway station**

Elsewhere on the walks there were signs of open space being used up in redevelopment: on the far side of the beck from a patch of green wilderness between Shipley railway station and Crag Road a lorry was dropping a load of hard core: a part of the land was being redeveloped and I wondered how much longer this area would remain a quiet backwater (Figure 12). At Gaisby Fields, new housing was being completed on what had formerly been open space. On the opposite side of the fields was a piece of land with allotments that had been abandoned – or waiting to be reinstated, perhaps, as demand for allotments remains high. New housing, and associated infrastructure is required, of course,

but so are sustainable means of development. Of this latter type of regeneration, allotments are a good example.

### **5.3.1.2 Fragmented experience**

Former industrial sites, and the allotments had offered good opportunities for making some close observation as part of the process of ethnographic study. Alongside these 'opportunities to look around', Lee identifies two other 'modes' of interaction between self and the environment, which result from walking practice; firstly, a 'time for thinking', and secondly a sensory or embodied experience (2006: 69). An example of this third, sensory, perspective, was offered as I walked through the industrial estate along Hillam Road where I could both see and hear the sound of a lorry being loaded as well as hearing the loud noises of a factory in operation. An embodied experience of wilderness landscape emerged when I took a path leading away from the main Canal Road, leading into the area of extensive open land behind the railway station at Shipley.



**Figure 13 The fields behind Shipley railway station**

Away from the road, I became aware of sounds other than the noise of the traffic - a train rolling by, and even the singing of crickets. My bare leg was stung by a nettle, and I realised that not only was I walking a path, I was actually feeling it - directly on my skin and not only through the mediation of the rubber sole of my sandal (Figure 13). The senses of touch and hearing were much more prominent experiencing this piece of landscape. Noting the way in which sight can become the predominant sense in fieldwork, Lee comments how in walking experience, 'The eyes...seem somewhat secondary to the feet, ears and skin in how the environment is perceived' (2006: 72).

Beyond the Dudley Hill roundabout, on the second walk, Lee's second and third modes of interaction became apparent, as I walked alongside the widest section of the Ring Road at Rooley Lane. The 'Lane' is in reality six lanes of busy traffic, and the constant noise and movement affected my concentration. I was tired and hungry and felt that my walking and thinking were becoming increasingly detached from each other. My mind kept drifting onto matters relating to the imminent move to a new manse, which the Methodist circuit had purchased. I felt that there was a connection between the movement of walking and the house move, but that it was also a distraction. I stopped for lunch at the supermarket on Mayo Avenue. There was a half hour delay on service but I was glad of the extended rest. I spent the time catching up on making notes, looking at the map and reading some more of Bruce Chatwin's book, *The Songlines*.

I set out again and the rain started, then stopped, before coming on again at a steady pace. I reached the more familiar territory of Great Horton Road, dipping down and for a brief distance heading towards the city centre, before the Ring Road took a left turn and up again along Ingleby Road to the edge of the ridge. By the time I was on the descent towards the valley bottom I was soaked through. But for the moment, I struggled on through the rain on the long haul up the hill. My head hung down and I was no longer attuned to my surroundings. I had a picture of them inside

my head as viewed from the car windscreen but I was not really looking around me. I was now in Manningham with its terrace housing and its many small shops but I was not attempting to observe what was going on. I was no longer giving the attention that I was expecting to give as a part of the discipline of walking practice. My only concern was to find the shelter of the bus stop and get back into the dry.

I was on the bus home. I was disappointed that the latter part of the walk seemed to have been wasted. I had lost my focus and not gathered the information I had hoped for.

The next day I finished the chapter from *The Songlines*, which I had started the previous day. Journeying, Chatwin suggests, drawing on the reflections of Pascal, provides distraction from the human condition, the diversion required to stop us from dwelling on despair (Chatwin, 1987: 181-182). Yet for me it seemed that the opposite was true, that I had found myself distracted from the very act of journeying by thoughts of homemaking and an attachment to comfort. After further consideration I concluded that both are required - settlement and movement, and that the collage I was looking for was not only about Bradford and its neighbourhoods but about fragments of homing and journeying, pieced together, making a whole.

Yet I also knew that such a conclusion could not be sufficient. On the one hand it felt self-indulgent, in much the same way that Chatwin's own work has been criticised. On the other hand it did seem to go some way to meeting other criticisms of Chatwin such as that expressed by Stewart, who, when inspired by Chatwin's writing to do some walking of his own, found the experience to be often frustrating and the context frequently difficult to understand: 'I experienced not an unfurling discovery, but harsh disconnected fragments...Much of what I saw and heard was contradictory' (2012: para. 9). Lorimer's (2011) conclusion on walking studies seems particularly apt in these circumstances, that pedestrian practice should be regarded as 'an on-going exercise in the tempering of

expectations'. But he also expresses optimism for future studies, which 'could be as much about atmospherics as they are a world of substance: ranging from experience of place-making amidst washes of weather and elemental force fields, to swings of mood or memories that happen off-stage and away from the action' (Lorimer, 2011: 30). I was learning to see how clear focused observation is not the only way of understanding the Bradford collage, but that distracted thoughts of home and the desire to push on through a shower of rain are as much responsible for how and when a part of the collage is pulled to the fore or hidden in the background. Such is the complexity of the relationship between self and landscape, and, far from being a failure, the outcome of this second walk, and indeed of both pieces of walking practice, had been the requirement to reflect more deeply.

My own disjointed experience of moving through the landscape acted as a reminder that those parts of the landscape which might be marked 'waste' rather than 'progress' were just as important in coming to understand Bradford as a place. There is a fragmented-ness to place, which means that solutions for change are not necessarily a matter of straightforward development but form part of a more complex picture. The attention paid on the walks to 'fragments', both of the material environment and of personal experience, allowed for a focus on the overlooked, rather than the overarching narrative previously told; on an array of discarded pieces rather than a single story of decline. Within this experience of fragments, there was evidence that processes of regeneration do not always rest in seeking for solutions to big problems, but can be found in lower key options, which may be more creative and sustainable. Identifying such solutions requires taking notice of the experiential as well as the political aspect of landscape.

### **5.3.2 Hidden flows**

From a consideration of fragments, the discussion now moves on to the theme of flows. Caught up in a narrative of decline, flows, which might otherwise represent an enriching diversity of cultural exchange, have instead come to be identified with a discourse of exclusion. In exploring the theme I come to focus on the waters of the Bradford Beck and the 'hiddenness' of the flow of this largely culverted waterway. This notion of hidden flows is explored in an ethnographic manner through the contrast between the flow of pedestrians and the flow of traffic along busy roads as being different kinds of movement. By focussing on those moving around on foot, an emphasis is placed on such hidden movements from below as offering a resource for change and renewal, and as a means of helping to challenge the dominant discourses of modern urban living, including that of a diversity too readily interpreted as a problematic narrative of division.

#### **5.3.2.1 Migratory and global flows**

Bradford, as has already been shown, is a city made up of migratory flows and the global flows of a culturally diverse city. This is apparent through historical surveys of Bradford and in demographic data relating to the present day. The theme of flow in this Bradford context has come to represent the dominant narrative expressed as diversity marked by division. Such flows have become problematic, coming to be regarded as the chief cause of divided and segregated communities. Ethnographic approaches, such as walking practice, can help to tell a different story of a city made up of migratory and global flows, to the one which makes migration and diversity problematic characteristics of life in an urban environment. Ethnography does this by allowing for finer grained study, which has the potential to offer more nuanced understandings of life in the city.

This might be illustrated with reference to a short stretch of the second walk, through the Bradford Moor area of the city. A string of retail outlets

including a grocery shop, a store advertising money transfers overseas, and a travel centre drew resonance with Massey's (1997: 320-321) description of Kilburn High Street as helping to depict a global sense of place (as discussed in Section 2.3.2). Here, other signifiers of the Asian presence in this part of the city could be identified: a smart restaurant on the crossroads, a newish looking mosque set back from the road, and a shop with brightly coloured clothes on display. They also provided indications of some of the challenges to a too easily assumed perception of a segregated and insular culture. This was most clearly expressed in the case of the restaurant. Its setting on a prominent crossroads location, with a large car park, suggested that it was seeking to attract a broad base of clientele to keep the business going. In this sense, the restaurant formed a focus of global and local flows, interacting through the activity of its business.

The window and frontage of a small clothes shop offered a greater element of ambiguity, with respect to whom the display and signage was designed to attract (Figure 14). One of the things that I noticed is that although it was late morning when I passed by the shop, it remained shut, but I was reminded of other shops I have seen, for example along Oak Lane in Manningham, which open in the afternoon and stay open well into the evening. Nasser argues that 'the existence of various shops for Muslims and South Asians more generally, maintain the identity of these groups and meets the community's daily needs' (2003: 18). In this study of shops in Birmingham and London, as well as Bradford, she suggests that the wider contribution to urban life rests in the way that these businesses help to bring regeneration to an area. On the other hand, all the signage for this little shop on Bradford Moor is in English, showing, in principle at least, that this shop, and others displaying similar signage do so 'that the English-speaking majority population is not excluded from easy engagement with the commercial possibilities of the area' (Husband et al., 2014: 66).



**Figure 14 Clothes shop at Bradford Moor**

It was with these examples, of the restaurant and the small shop, in mind, that I arrived at the mosque. Passing the mosque served as a reminder that the distinctiveness of one of these markers in Bradford Moor was not just cultural but also religious: evidence of the Islamic faith, and of the substantial Muslim population, which has grown up in Bradford over the last half-century and more. The presence of mosques is part of the changing landscape of Bradford. Some mosques can have a prominence in terms of location – a minaret visible on the skyline, for example. Others are noticeable as converted former churches. Church buildings often occupy spaces on main roads, in visible places; historically, communities have built up around them. Mosques, on the other hand, have arrived later, and may be squeezed into smaller or less visible sites.

Nevertheless, the particular siting of the mosque I was looking at, set back from the main road behind another line of buildings presented a mixed message, as a presence, which was noticeable from the main road, but not dominating of it. Mosques have borne particular criticism of contributing to perceptions of segregation in Bradford (McLoughlin, 2005:

1063), and have often been seen as being at the forefront of discussion of Bradford as contested space. However, this is not the whole story, and it is the range of sites of encounter along this section of the second walk that gives the fuller picture.

Walking along this section of the Bradford Ring Road highlighted not only the contested nature of life in Bradford but also the many intersections, and the potential for deeper engagement, which go into the making of place. Like Husband after me, walking practice has proved to be helpful in adding to the description and feel of a place. But for my own purposes, there is a further step to be taken, in that a mobile ethnography has the potential to be more than just ethnography conducted 'on the move' (that is to say, the deployment of walking practice as a means of carrying out ethnographic study); it can also be an ethnography *of* movement, which emphasises the significance of looking more closely at the movements of others. By focusing on the specific movement of walking, my own intention has been to compare the movement of pedestrians with that of more dominant forms of city travel, especially that done by car. These movements, I argue, are 'hidden' in comparison to the prevailing movements of the city. In considering less dominant forms of movement, an opportunity is opened up to reassess such hidden movement as a means to change and renewal.

### **5.3.2.2 Bradford flows**

In making flow one of the main themes of the discussion, I draw on my experience of walking along those waterways, which form part of the physical environment of the Bradford landscape. One of the things of which I have taken note since living in Bradford, in contrast to other cities where I have lived, has been the absence of a significant stretch of water as part of the city's landscape – the nearest is the River Aire at Shipley and Saltaire some four miles out of the city centre. There is no dock or bay, riverside or even canal side in or near the centre of Bradford. This might be one of the reasons that Bradford has been lacking in major

redevelopment schemes in recent decades, as docklands and riverside locations often provide a focus for development projects.<sup>78</sup> It may also help to explain why the mirror pool with its fountains in the City Park has become a focal point in the absence of any other water in the centre of the city (Barker et al., 2014). In fact, there *are* waterways flowing through Bradford, the main one being Bradford Beck, but, as its name suggests, it is more of a stream than a river. Such a waterway should not be too readily dismissed however; for one thing, the waters of the Beck and its tributaries helped to power the mills in an earlier period of Bradford's history. As Reid comments, 'There can be few cities where such a modest stream has exercised such an influence on what became an urban landscape' (n.d.: 30).<sup>79</sup> By way of contrast, I want to offer the argument that whereas the waters of the Beck played a key role in the formation of Bradford's industrial landscape and to its evolution as a place of economic prominence, to experience the Beck today is to identify a counter story of 'hiddenness'. The Beck itself is covered over in portions, but I knew that it could still be seen at certain points along its length and my plan was to follow its course as closely as possible, and as safe access allowed.

My main experience of the Bradford Beck was that it was hidden, the result of it being culverted and covered over for significant stretches of its course. Others have also recognised this feature of the Beck. A common theme in an anthology of poetry about the Bradford Beck (The Friends of Bradford's Becks, 2015), is to be seen in the way that many of the contributors drew attention to this aspect of the Beck's character:

<sup>78</sup> In this, Bradford may be contrasted with the waterfront developments of Cardiff and Liverpool, my two previous places of residence as a Methodist minister.

<sup>79</sup> Reid is a retired Methodist minister living in Bradford, and a local councillor who served as Lord Mayor of Bradford in 2016-2017.

Disregarded water  
In gothic vaults encased

Culverted, covered  
Forced underground, hidden

Jane Callaghan, *Bradford Beck*

Callaghan's poem was the winning entry for a competition to provide words to go on plaques marking the course of the Beck under the city centre. The fifteen two-line stanzas of the poem have now been set on fifteen pavement plaques, forming 'visible' points along the Beck's hidden route. The poem, and indeed, the whole anthology, in its identification of this theme of hiddenness, holds a clear resonance with what I myself had recognised during the course of my walking.



**Figure 15 The beck emerges from underneath a renovated mill**

On my first walk I got my first glimpse of the Beck running along the back of a supermarket car park opposite the Valley Road retail park, and where the water emerged from underneath the site of the derelict Midland

mill, before passing under a renovated one (Figure 15). A further view of the Beck appeared, this time on my left in the company of a small patch of wasteground. A little further along the road, but now to its right, the Beck formed part of the landscape at Gaisby Fields, remaining visible for the most part for the remainder of its course, though even in this more open setting, the Beck had been culverted along one particular stretch. I could not get to the point where the Beck finally joined the River Aire, but I found two spots from where I could view the confluence, before heading down the riverside path from Baildon Bridge in Shipley towards Saltaire. The Beck's flow had become a subsidiary of the more significant flows of the valley: not only of the larger river, but of the railway line leading out to Shipley running parallel to the Beck, and the road artery of Canal Road/Valley Road, the run of which was responsible in part for the culverting of the Beck.

In the plan for the redevelopment of Bradford dating from 2003, the authors of the accompanying report commented, 'Our compelling theme throughout our initial conversations was that Bradford is 'hidden'' (Alsop Architects, 2003: 1).<sup>80</sup> In making this statement, they drew on the example of the city's 'buried water courses' to illustrate this 'hiddenness'. The report's main point for consideration related this sense of hiddenness with Bradford's position within the bigger picture of the economic and political landscape of the region: Bradford itself was being overlooked when compared with levels of investment and development in other locations such as Leeds and Manchester. My own focus is to relate this sense of hiddenness as a concern of the micro perspective, looking at the movements of individuals, especially pedestrians within the location of Bradford itself.

<sup>80</sup> One of the ironies of this report is that the recommendations it contained have, to a large degree, not been implemented. As an example of a 'grand narrative', the solutions offered were viewed as being too expensive and unachievable.

### 5.3.2.3 Hidden movements

Recognition of the hiddenness of the Beck had helped me to identify that the people I saw moving on foot were themselves hidden in relation to the more dominant forms of movement, which I witnessed during my walks. On the first walk, I took particular note of the movement of pedestrians, of whom I had been aware from the start of the walk where roads and pavements had been set over the site of the old ford, which had given Bradford its name. A scattering of morning pedestrians (unknowingly, I wondered) crossed over the line of the waterway. I became one of them and straight away I found myself walking along streets with which I had little if any familiarity, observed previously, if at all, only in a passing fashion through a car windscreen. I came to a small roundabout with cars turning off in different directions into the retail park on one side and the supermarket car park on the other. An older woman with a small child in hand, the only pedestrians apart from myself, followed the cars into the retail park, but I went in the opposite direction, rejoining the main highway of Canal Road, whose name reveals the route of another waterway, the Bradford Canal which closed as far back as the 1920s.

I was surprised by the presence of pedestrians along this busy stretch of road, more recently identified in one study as being the location of the most acute traffic hotspot in Bradford.<sup>81</sup> A regular car user of the road myself, I had previously paid little attention to the pedestrians using these pavements. At a pedestrian cut-through marked by an old stone gatepost, a young woman leaned whilst talking into her mobile phone. A woman pushing a pushchair walked past, with the traffic thundering past her. The large retail units gave way to a mixture of car show rooms and industrial units, where a couple of men dressed in suits had paused to look in one of the showrooms glazed fronts. Further along, the banks of the Beck formed the edge of the open green space of Gaisby Fields, where three

<sup>81</sup> As identified by INRIX in a press release dated 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016. Information accessed at [inrix.com](http://inrix.com) 18<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

dog walkers exercised their pets at different points of the green space. Along this final stretch of Valley Road there was a cyclist occupying the pavement opposite, and a couple of workmen engaged in clearing out a drain.



**Figure 16 High walls overshadow the path**

All of these pedestrian movements felt insignificant compared to the constant flow and noise of traffic, but I was particularly drawn by the variety of movement and activity of these people on foot: pushing and pulling, at work and at leisure, pausing and pacing, on their own and in the company of others; all of them competing against the faster flows of modern urban living. Later on that same day of the first walk, along a much quieter section of the route along the River Aire, the path entered a section enclosed on either side by high walls, each one taller than head height, and the passage in between no more than a metre wide (Figure 16). I found myself feeling quite overwhelmed, shut in by these large structures. This experience was emphasised at one particular point, where the wall on the riverside had tumbled over, and the gap (with a view down to the riverbank) brought relief from the high stonework. In a similar manner, those moving on foot along the busy Canal Road and Valley Road were overshadowed by the more dominant presence of the

flows of urban traffic along that corridor. Walking practice had helped to reveal something more of the overlooked flows of those moving on foot.

In highlighting these movements, I want to push the case for ethnographic study further, by arguing for an ethnography that pays particular attention to movement from below as offering resources for a politics of the city. In this way, my intention has been to present movement, not only as a means for making ethnographic investigation (walking practice as a method), but rather as a fundamental expression of the life of a city. By identifying certain movements as being characterised by their hiddenness, the ethnographic account presented in this chapter has become a means of telling a different story, forming a counter-flow to the prevailing way in which the Bradford narrative is told. In this understanding, flow is not so much the predominant story experienced as division and segregation, but a different kind of force for change and renewal.

#### **5.3.2.4 A resource for change and renewal**

This rearranged ordering puts less emphasis on big picture flows and more on the small movements of those who experience life in the city day by day. In this, these largely unnoticed flows bear resemblance to the covered flows of the Bradford Beck. The movement along small rivers has also proved of interest to other academics, for example, with Vergunst identifying how these waterways 'provide a close-up encounter with nature as organic growth and flow in the midst of what are often totally built-up and enclosed urban environments' (2017: 17). Like allotments, therefore, small urban rivers can offer a different view on regeneration in terms of relationships with nature and sustainability. Although it is arguable that the most consistent contact with nature on my first walk came whilst journeying alongside the River Aire rather than the Bradford Beck, it also made me reflect on the presence of the natural world within urban areas. It was whilst walking along the Aire that I realised that at some point I had made the crossing from the 'city' into the

'countryside', but I could not be sure where: a thinning out might be a better description, although of course this was still, in administrative terms, urban land, a part of the metropolitan area. On the other hand, I could also see that this transition was in part unclear because my experience of the natural world, at least in fragments, trailed behind me all the way back into the city centre. Vergunst argues that, 'These routes are 'other' to the architecture of the city' (2017: 22). From this perspective, I could identify the contrast to be made between the flows experienced on this first walk of moving along the waterways, and the second walk around a ring road designed to manage the circulation of traffic in a more efficient urban flow.

One of the ways in which these flows are 'other' is in providing quiet settings in the midst of the urban environment. In this, Vergunst's reflections bear some resemblance to the mushrooming of 'nature writing' as a literary theme.<sup>82</sup> But there is a more fundamental point to be made here, that the different ways that are being described are simply that – different. In other words, here are ways that run contrary to the prevailing flow and organisation of the city.

Part way into the second walk, I took a diversion away from the ring road through Peel Park, a welcome relief from the noise of the traffic (it was the only respite (other than stopping for lunch) that I had from traffic noise all day). I walked past the visiting fun fair setting up at the far end of the park. Here was an example of mobility, not only of the movement depicted by the various fairground rides, but also the travelling lifestyle of the fairground people. Bouissac (2013) highlights fairgrounds as heterotopias, as 'other spaces' (see Foucault and Miskowiec, 1986), in which the fairground is to be contrasted to industrial space as regulated and timetabled space. The fairground therefore represents a contestation of urban space: 'seasonal fairgrounds are examples of temporary

<sup>82</sup> See, for example, Macfarlane (2012), and Cowen (2012), in addition to the already referenced (in Section 5.3.1) Farley and Roberts (2011).

heterotopias...the presence of a circus or traveling fairground in a city means the irruption of a counterspace that displaces usual activities and imposes a heterotopy, a particular spatial logic to which one has to submit' (2013: 57). With respect to the kind of activities that the circus or fairground offers (for example a 'mirror hall'), this imposition is manifested in particular forms of movement: 'circus space involves detour and compulsory meanderings within its confines' (2013: 58).

This movement is not only apparent in the physical movements required by fairground shows, but also in the nomadic way of life of fairground and circus people: 'The circus originally was a strategy of ephemeral acceptance and precarious survival devised by ethnic minorities that were not allowed to settle for business in villages and towns' (Bouissac, 2010: 12). What for some might be perceived as a freedom of movement is, in reality, tied to centres of population, which will generate income. One consequence of this life of movement is the 'inequalities resulting from the ongoing sociocultural prejudice exhibited towards nomadic people' (Danaher, 2010: 242). Therefore, these flows of movement both disrupt dominant forms of urban space but are also reliant on it.

These seemingly very different flows – of those moving beside a small river and the travelling circus – both share the characteristic of 'other', flowing contrary to the prevailing forms of movement in which they are enmeshed. They have the potential to offer counter-stories to the dominant discourse of place. They may not have the power to overturn this dominance, because they themselves are caught up in that same discourse; but, through speaking with a different voice (Vergunst, 2017: 22) they do have the potential to change it in small but significant ways. In a similar fashion, the kind of ministry that I am seeking to develop here is one that takes on the description of 'other', whose movement runs contrary to the prevailing movements of more dominant forms of urban living, but whose actions are nevertheless significant because they comprise of the sorts of 'humble efforts of care' which bring the possibility

of change. The remainder of this chapter seeks to fill out this description of a ministry of movement as it operates in the realm of the everyday.

## **5.4 A ministry of gathered fragments and glimpsed flows**

### **5.4.1 Exercising ministry in the everyday**

In undertaking the two walks, I acted in the capacity of an ethnographer, but I was also aware of my role as an ordained minister in the Methodist Church. During the course of the second walk, I passed three churches related to my work as a Methodist minister. In Undercliffe, I passed the familiar site of St Andrews Methodist Church, surrounded by fragments and flows: the old graveyard, now covered over by grass, on one side and a set of allotments on the other; all of these set within the conjunction of a triangle of roads, of which the ring road formed one side. Coming out of Bradford Moor, and amidst continuing indications of the Asian community in this part of the city in the form of more small shops, I arrived at the crossroads in Laisterdyke, where the ring road crossed the equally busy Leeds Road, with the Baptist/Methodist church on one corner of the point of meeting. Moving on again, to the Dudley Hill roundabout, looking ahead I could see Ebenezer Methodist Church across the junction with the Wakefield Road, but getting across to it was easier said than done. Used to arriving at these locations by car, I now began to think of the settings of these three churches from the point of view of the pedestrian, including those church members (some, but not all), who make their way to church on foot. The way past St. Andrew's was negotiated easily enough along one side of the triangle of main roads in which the church lies. Laisterdyke came with the challenge of crossing the wide and busy crossroads where the Leeds Road traverses the Ring Road. And at Dudley Hill I felt quite daunted by the roundabout intersection on two levels as I negotiated my way around the system of pedestrian subways and footbridges (Figure 17).



**Figure 17 Pedestrian walkway and road bridge at Dudley Hill**

I was reminded of one of the features from the first walk that I had noted, where bridges crossed back and forth over other ways: road over road, road over rail, rail over road, and later, at Shipley, canal over beck. At one point over the beck, a sequence of three small bridges, each ran across the beck, the first just wide enough to take a vehicle, the second a footbridge, and finally a bridge carrying pipes. And at the Leeds Road in Shipley, I stood amidst a quite complicated arrangement as road went over the beck and the railway line crossed over both (Figure 18). At each of these points of crossing, the different ways were related and yet detached from one another. I knew of the churches that I saw on the second walk that each faced its own challenges and the surroundings of each seemed to reveal something of the complexity of the situations in which these churches find themselves. Churches themselves can be understood as intersections, meeting points of different paths created by those who use its buildings. But I was also aware that in a different way, the churches I saw could be viewed as standing apart from the intersections of their location, strangely aloof from the everyday world, as

it existed around them.<sup>83</sup> This sense of disconnection from the realities of everyday living is indicative of the way in which many people regard the institutional church today. Examples of everyday religious practice may continue to be evidenced, but they may also be observed as happening with little reference to religious institutions.



**Figure 18 Bridge crossings at Shipley**

Near the start of the second walk, I spotted evidence that could be regarded as indication of an everyday religious practice outside of the control of institutional religion - a bunch of flowers tied to the trunk of a tree marking the site of a fatal accident. This has become a relatively common sight along Britain's roadways in recent decades, a reminder of the seeming need for people to mark places of special (and spiritual) significance in locations other than those of traditional and

<sup>83</sup> In part, this impression may be added to by consideration of those members (some, but not all) of these congregations who travel in by car. See Section 6.4.2.2 for a further reflection on this theme.

institutionalised religion. The memorials not only mark the scene of the tragedy but show a relationship with place, which, in its focus on mourning, is personal and spiritual (Clark, J. and Franzmann, 2006: 594). Clark and Franzmann argue that roadside memorials of this kind mark a taking of authority into one's own hands and a disregard of religious institutions (2006: 582). However, as well as being a site of personal importance, such memorials may also serve as a network of communication, not only in making known the feelings of those who put the memorial in place, but also as an emblem inviting the participation of others, even strangers, in an acts of remembrance (Klaassens et al., 2009: 197). The memorials also challenge the boundary between private and public space. As contested spaces, they demonstrate a conflict with government authorities, which may view the memorials as occupying public space, representing a flouting of regulations and, as a distraction to road users, creating a potential safety hazard (Clark, J. and Franzmann, 2006: 586). It may be argued therefore, that roadside memorials embody the kind of blurring of personal, private and public space that Vergunst (2017: 22) argues is characteristic of a politics of the everyday.

It is my contention that the walking practice of the ethnographer and the practice of ministry as movement serves to identify, explore, understand and respond to these blurred boundary spaces of the everyday. A closer look at this blurring of space, understood especially as the public and private layering of space, is picked up again in the following chapter. For the present, the focus remains on developing an understanding of a ministry of movement as a practice of the everyday, which makes connections with the everyday movements of others, and finds its mode of operation in the boundary spaces of the everyday. In the final portion of the chapter, these aspects of a ministry of everyday movement are set out, firstly, as movements at, across and along boundaries, and, secondly, as a distinctive way of moving in boundary situations (the rhythm or 'gait' of ministry). This is done with continuing reference to the comparison of this ministry of everyday movement with the walking practice of the ethnographer.

### 5.4.2 Movements at the boundary



**Figure 19 The ford and bridge at Beckfoot**

Near the conclusion of the first walk, I found myself at Harden Beck in Bingley, a sight that I greeted with the silent exclamation, 'A ford!' I was now heading along Beckfoot Lane until the road sign told me that a ford lay ahead and I walked on until the Beck itself crossed the road at the ford. There was also a bridge, and I automatically headed across to it; but pausing, I took my pack off my back, stored my camera and wallet safely inside and tightened the straps before moving back to the watery passage (Figure 19). I felt obliged to take up the invitation (or the challenge) to cross over it. I was thankful for having worn open sandals, which made the stony bed easier to pass over; nevertheless I trod carefully so as not to lose my footing on the slippery stone. The bridge of course would have made much more sense to use as a crossing; in a situation of flooding or fast flowing water I would have been foolish to try and cross the ford as a pedestrian when there was a perfectly usable

bridge available. But I had begun to wonder about what might be said to be lacking in using the bridge rather than the ford. I had begun my journey by following the course of the Bradford Beck but I had concluded it near Bingley at Harden Beck, at *Beckfoot*. I had made the journey to the foot of the Beck *by foot* and crossed over it *on foot*. Walking practice had brought me into a closer contact with the environment and the context I was seeking to explore.



**Figure 20** The site of the 'broad ford', now covered over

I set down a title to add to my account of the day's proceedings - "From the broad ford to the narrow ford" - and began to wonder about the ford as a point of crossing. I noted that crossing the Beck at Bradford in the way that I had crossed over Harden Beck is no longer possible, and that crossing the Bradford Beck today is an all but unnoticeable act (Figure 20). According to the various histories of Bradford, there are two main possibilities for an explanation of the name of Bradford as the 'broad ford'. One is that the ford was situated where the Beck was at its *widest*, at the point where the Beck was joined by other streams, although by the

nineteenth century this was no longer apparent except in times of flooding (see, for example James, J., 1967, (1841): 2-3; Cudworth, 1968 (1876): 3). The other explanation points to the length of stream which was suitable for crossing –and that the stream at this point allowed for a broad path to cross the water, suitable perhaps for carts side by side or flocks of animals (Fieldhouse, 1978: 17).<sup>84</sup> In the following centuries there had been bridges built carrying Kirkgate and Ivegate across the Beck, but the process of culverting and covering over of the Beck, work carried out for the main part in the nineteenth century, has removed such landmark points of crossing.

According to Lee, ‘Many cities seem to have their identity largely defined by their bridges’ (Lee, 2004: 6). Bradford has bridges of course – I had seen a number of them during my day of walking – but it is different from many other cities in its lack of those kind of river-crossing bridges which Lee highlights as being so influential in the establishment of a civic identity. In the absence of bridges across its main waterway, Bradford is left, on the one hand, with the legacy contained within its name, that of the *broad ford*, and on the other hand, the current reality of the covered over culvert. So what is offered by these understandings of crossings that are different to the crossing of the bridge?

#### **5.4.2.1 Movements across the boundary**

Despite the absence of landmark bridges in Bradford, there is still merit in emphasising *bridging*. Strohmayer highlights ‘built-over bridges’, a particular feature along the rivers of European cities in the middle ages (Strohmayer, 2011: 122). These were bridges lined with buildings and facilities, and thus contrasted with modern bridges, which are designed purely for the flow of traffic. Whereas the latter generally offers views of the landscape, the former gave no such perspective, and indeed offered

<sup>84</sup> Although Fieldhouse himself rejects this meaning as a possible origin of the name.

a seamless blending between the continuing streets on either side of the river (Strohmayr, 2011: 124). For Strohmayr, these 'living bridges' are more comparable to the airport terminal or the large railway station offering the 'possibilities of mingling, of shopping, of producing and of living – in short, of being mobile and immobile simultaneously'. By contrast, modern bridges are much more specialised 'facilitators of movement and views' (Strohmayr, 2011: 125, 128).

This kind of depiction of built-over bridges offers an interesting parallel with the culverted-over Beck in Bradford. Here too is an environment where the passing of the water underneath is unnoticeable. The water is covered over not only by the crossing points of roads and pavements, but also by mills, factories, offices, car parks, shops and pieces of wasteland and other open ground straddling the line of the waterway. The boundary of the Beck, in Strohmayr's terms, is a place of both mobility and immobility. Furthermore, in this Bradford example, the understanding of a built-over bridge is pressed to a greater degree because the built over area is so much more extensive – not just the width of a bridge, but the continuing width of many bridges side by side. The width of the Beck to be crossed from bank to bank is never great, but the length of Beck that is available to be crossed is considerable, and in this one is reminded of whether the 'broad' of the 'broad ford' is defined by the width of the Beck or the length of stream available for crossing. Again, the nature of the boundary demands a fresh look, marked not so much by single, clear points of crossing but by the jumble and spread of the built environment along the boundary's length.

The points of crossing in the diversity of Bradford life are many and varied. Such crossings may not have the elegance of landmark bridges, but consist of the ordinary encounters made as part of daily living. That is not to say that these crossings are always taken, but rather that the opportunities are there in the openings afforded in the everyday world. An opportunity may be missed but another opening is never far away. Paying attention to the realm of the everyday through walking practice had

resulted in a taking notice of discarded fragments and hidden flows, which hold the promise of a renewed and reinvigorated urban life.

#### **5.4.2.2 Movements along the boundary**

Having considered the boundary movements resulting from a covering over of the waters of the Beck, consideration might be given to the experience of the ford. As a proponent of walking practice, Lee is interested in the ways in which place is constituted by movement. He draws on Heidegger's example of the bridge:

[The bridge] does not just connect the banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream. The bridge expressly causes them to lie across from each other. One side is set off against the other by the bridge. Nor do the banks stretch along the stream as indifferent border strips of the dry land. With the banks, the bridge brings to the stream the one and the other expanse of the landscape lying behind them. It brings stream and bank and land into each other's neighbourhood. The bridge gathers earth as a landscape around the stream (Heidegger, 2001: 150; also quoted in Lee, 2004: 2).

He looks to highlight the sense of movement which the bridge offers: 'Bridges are, par excellence, facilitators of movement' (Lee, 2004: 2). He considers how movement across the bridge connects what lies at either side, and also the metaphorical movement they incorporate ('Bridges 'go' from one side to the other'), in order to present his argument of showing how such movement is constitutive of place (Lee, 2004: 2). However, a look at the source of the Heidegger quote shows that Lee ignores the immediate continuation of Heidegger's illustration of the bridge about the flow of water under it:

Thus it guides and attends the stream through the meadows. Resting upright in the stream's bed, the bridge-piers bear the swing of the arches that leave the stream's waters to run their course. The waters may wander on quiet and gay, the sky's floods from storm or

thaw may shoot past the piers in torrential waves – the bridge is ready for the sky's weather and its fickle nature. Even where the bridge covers the stream it holds its flow up to the sky by taking it under the vaulted gateway and then setting it free once more (Heidegger, 2001: 150).

In this extended account, movement is both *across* the bridge and *under* it. For Heidegger, the bridge lifts the water up to a new level to connect with the sky. From Lee's perspective however the impression is given that the bridge is above the water in the sense of being removed from it, and so this transverse motion of the water under the bridge is neglected or forgotten. But my own walking practice had reminded me strongly of it, as the flow of the water at the ford dragged at my feet and legs, a crossways movement, even as I made my own way from one bank to the other. It seemed to me that the stream as a boundary was characterised, not only by the movement *across* it, but in some way also by the movement *along* it. The ford had provided a point of contact, not only of one side with the other, but also with the ground beneath my feet and the flowing water. The ford had provided a grounded understanding of the boundary that is missing from the construct of the bridge.

In that experience was an invitation to at least consider the flow of movement indicated by the flow of the beck, not only a movement across a boundary but also a movement along a boundary. What seemed a straightforward crossing was in fact open to a counter-flow, running contrary to my direction of travel. This is not to confirm that such understanding required me to keep my feet in the waters of the beck – putting my feet into the ford at Beckfoot was the only time I got my feet wet all day! I had not spent the day wading along the stream. But my grounding was as much in the routes that ran in the vicinity of and *alongside* the beck – road and path and off-track. It was grounded also in fragments and feelings, in diversions and distractions, those dynamics of place, which also formed a part of this extended experience of the boundary as a place made up of many different and entangled flows.

Having discussed a ministry of everyday movement in terms of its boundary movements, attention is now turned to the second aspect of this ministry *as a distinctive way of moving in boundary situations*. Those studying walking as an ethnographic technique refer to the *rhythm* of walking (Edensor, 2010: 1-18; Vergunst, 2010; see also, Lefebvre, 2004), and in the following sections I argue here that a ministry of everyday movement has a rhythm that can be understood as its *gait*. Use of this term requires explanation.

### 5.4.3 The gait of ministry

My use of walking practice began with steps taken along Kirkgate in central Bradford at the start of my first walk. Along with Westgate and Ivegate, it formed the earliest layout of streets in Bradford, dating from the Saxon period (Hall, A., 2013: 19). The name *Kirkgate* is a Viking one, meaning ‘church street’. There is significance, perhaps, to an exploration of the ministry of the church that begins with the street ‘to and from the church’.<sup>85</sup> But I am just as interested in the name attached to all three of these streets, the title of *gate*. The word as used here is from the Norse name for a *through way* and is common in areas which came under Viking influence, and which in Yorkshire comes with its own distinctive shortened pronunciation when used as part of a street name. By contrast, the modern use of the word ‘gate’ is used almost exclusively as a *barrier* to a way through (see Cudworth, 1968 (1876): 3), although we may wish also to note that a gate in this modern sense is designed to open as well as to close. It strikes me that in a Bradford context, then, this term may be a helpful one in speaking of boundaries, not only of their crossing (as a

<sup>85</sup> The church in question is the present day cathedral, the former Bradford Parish Church, on the site of the first church in the settlement, which grew up by the *broad ford*.

gateway), but also as a continuing journey (or through way).<sup>86</sup> But I also want to press this argument further by reference to an additional term which sounds the same but is spelt differently: the word *gait*. It is unclear as to whether or not these three terms share a common word origin (Oxford English Dictionary, 2013) but I wish to claim this term as being of relevance to my own research. 'Gait', of course, is a way of moving, and I use it here in reference to a walking practice designed to offer insight into this study of boundaries and the ways in which boundaries facilitate as well as limit movement.

Gait holds the meaning of a length of stride or a particular manner of walking. In using the term here my main emphasis falls upon the second meaning, because there is that sense of the term which relates to the way of moving that is distinctive of an individual; an idiosyncratic form of movement, an awkwardness of movement even, that distinguishes it from the consistent movement implied by a length of stride. It is in this way that I want to contrast gait from rhythm, although it needs to be recognised that rhythm is used by researchers of walking practice to refer to, for example, a broken rhythm of movement or the time it takes for a rhythm to become established. It is the acknowledgement of awkwardness in movement rather than the establishment of a smoothness of rhythm that is my chief concern here.

During the walks I had experienced something of this awkwardness - this lack of rhythm. Firstly it had been made apparent in the form of *distraction*, as already discussed in consideration of my second walk, in terms of the fragmentedness of my own ministry. Secondly, it had been made known in *diversion*, as the result of walking through 'disruptive spaces' (Edensor,

<sup>86</sup> A similar argument could be made about a further variation of the word also apparent in a Yorkshire context: 'goit', another Viking word which can be applied to both the channel through which water flows, and to the sluice gate which controls that flow. I am aware that even today there is a Goitside area in Bradford, along the Bradford Beck, a little upstream from the city centre, in the vicinity of the Thornton Road.

2008: 129). This latter sense of awkwardness was evidenced during the conduct of the first walk, as I passed through woodland beyond Saltaire. Gone were the hard and surfaced paths, now replaced by the different feel of a path made up of dried and crushed leaves. But there remained a complexity to the lie of the land before me as I meandered along through the open wood with its numerous pathways. I made a choice of path, which led me to the railway rather the river, until eventually realising that I could not get to where I wanted to be without taking a longer way around - the graveyard stood between the river and myself, and there was no obvious place to pass through the cemetery wall. I retraced my steps back across the train track (over the level crossing), and found another way under the railway and past the cemetery on the far side (and of course an open gap into the cemetery from this side!). Finding no clear access to where I wanted to be; backtracking; delayed in getting 'back on track'; disrupted in my rhythm, these were all the results of diversion. When movement is perceived as gait, it is to give recognition to both distraction and disruption in the relationship of self and landscape.

The gait of ministry as a way of moving is one of both fragment and flow as it relates to the everyday world of which it is a part. It is a ministry that pays attention through *taking notice of discarded fragments* and *hidden flows*. As an everyday ministry, it embodies a *taking care* through processes of *gathering fragments* and *glimpsing flows*. Both of these processes indicate the character of this humble task of care.

As a gathering of fragments, this ministry concerns a bringing together of fragments of diversity and decline, which would otherwise be discarded or dismissed by the prevailing discourses of Bradford as a place. The term *together* stems from the meaning 'to gather', and it is here applied to relationships of everyday life. Husband explores this 'capacity to live together' as coexistence, which he spells out as 'the possibility and reality of a viable and enduring coexistence within a shared urban context. This

may include routines of mutual recognition and dialogue, as well as patterns of non-confrontational mutual distancing' (2014: 5).<sup>87</sup> An everyday ministry contributes to the task of an authentic living together through a gathering of fragments in a process of becoming which can be expressed as the making of a collage.

As a glimpsing of flows, an everyday ministry acknowledges the significance of what cannot, as much as what can, be seen. What is viewed of the flow is only partial, but it is enough to indicate a direction of travel. An image to hold in mind is that of the thread running through material, repairing a tear. At different points the thread is seen and then unseen, present then absent, but both modes are required if the thread is to do its job of mending what is broken or divided. The result is a seam, a landscape common to both pieces yet belonging wholly to neither. As flows, they are also glimpses of possibility, less about grand claims and more like what Vergunst calls 'a series of leaps and hops through the city' (2017: 20). Like the series of plaques displaying lines from Jane Callaghan's poem, or the occasional sightings of the Bradford Beck during my first walk, these glimpses point to the shared space of a continuing journey. In glimpsing flows, an everyday ministry might also glimpse new possibilities in the on-going process of the creation of place, in which hidden flows might be given fresh meaning and worth, in a city of many and varied flows. It offers snatches of promise and surprise, which, when entwined with the threads of other glimpsed and hidden flows, may become entanglements of hope.

<sup>87</sup> An earlier consideration of this topic came through a report from churches on the Bradford Metropolitan District, which set itself 'the purpose...to try and stimulate a public debate within the District about the ways in which we want to live together, and the sort of future we want to build for our children and grandchildren.' Taking the form of a series of 'Hearings', the report sought to address the challenge of 'how to help people from the various communities to meet and talk [about common concerns, hopes and intentions] and find ways of working together.' See Bradford Metropolitan Faith in the City Forum (1995: 7, 40).

## 5.5 Conclusion to Chapter 5

The conclusion to this chapter has been to suggest that gait is a distinctive way of understanding the rhythm of a ministry of movement in the everyday. This gait of ministry is one way by which the discarded fragments and hidden flows of modern urban living might be noticed. These fragments and flows, which might otherwise be seen in a Bradford context as being a part of the wider narrative of decline and diversity that has become the problematic discourse of division, offer different possibilities for building relationships of care. Through processes of gathering and glimpsing, these possibilities emphasise boundaries, not as the problematic markers of segregation, so much as the opportunities of new encounter.

By using the results of walking practice as an analysis that emerges from 'paying close attention to walking and its ways (both *of* walking and *along* which people walk)' (Lee and Ingold, 2006: 83), the opportunity has been raised of reflecting on the experience of walking around the Bradford area, and on the routes and rhythms of those who move around it on foot. It has also allowed for the emergence of a collaged picture of the Bradford landscape, which consists of gathered fragments and glimpsed flows. This has led to the assertion that an appropriate form of ministry in this context is one of everyday movement, which through processes of gathering and glimpsing has the potential to contribute to the making of Bradford as a place.

In the next chapter this description of the activity of ministry of a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows continues to form a pivotal part of the argument. This interest in highlighting a ministry of movement is translated into an interest in an understanding of Methodism made up of itineraries. As has been the case in this present chapter, movement and

collage continue to be held together as the controlling themes of the thesis. But in the next chapter, the theme of collage is brought to bear on that of movement. What insight does a focus on churches as parts of the collaged Bradford landscape offer into an understanding of the movements of Methodists, and of Methodist circuit life?

## **Chapter 6 Reading the Methodist circuit through collage**

### **6.1 Introduction: taking readings of the Methodist circuit**

In Chapter 6 continuing use is made of Stringer's framework, which has been designed to help take readings of religion in relation to the urban environment of the city. In Chapter 5 a reading of the Bradford landscape was offered through the lens of movement. Using Stringer's analysis, a top-down macro view of Bradford, drawn from established narratives about the city, was set alongside a bottom-up macro perspective, which was derived from the experience of walking practice. In this new chapter, application of Stringer's framework is shifted from the macro to the micro part of the analysis, with a focus on the micro-culture of the Methodist circuits in Bradford. The chapter also continues to build upon features (a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows) introduced in the preceding one. The aim is to establish a reading of the Methodist circuit taken through the lens of collage.

In the chapter, the top-down micro perspective is presented through the use of documentary evidence drawn from Methodist circuit preaching plans for the Bradford area (Figure 7). The resulting series of maps offers an overview of the Methodist presence in Bradford viewed over a period of 50 years (Figure 21 - Figure 26). In this instance, the maps are used as an expression of a top-down perspective on religion in the city, and as a means of exploring the changing influence of Methodism in Bradford over time. The bottom-up view of the Methodist micro-culture is made through taking a closer look at pieces drawn from the Bradford collage. The first of these collage methods, already described in Chapter 4, involved a group of church members being invited to create collages from photographs of noticeboards found in the grounds of Methodist circuit churches. As an exercise, it consisted of gathering and arranging fragments. The second of the collage methods, also introduced in Chapter 4, is focused on the

grounds of churches (as pieces of collage), and the movements of people through them. The process therefore involved glimpsing and recognising flows.

## **6.2 Mapping the Methodist circuits in Bradford**

As part of this study, and using the names of churches listed in circuit plans for the Bradford area, I have constructed a sequence of maps showing changes between 1963 and 2013, and these are displayed on the following pages. These maps (Figure 21 - Figure 26) show both the location of Methodist Churches and, through the use of a colour-coded key, the arrangement of the churches in circuit groupings. All the circuits shown on the diagrams (with two exceptions) contain at least one church that is currently a part of one of these two circuits (Bradford North and Bradford South) in existence in the main built up area of Bradford in 2013. The exercise could have been extended to include churches across the Bradford Metropolitan District but this would not have added to the resulting analysis. The area covered, however, does go wider than the boundaries of the pre-1974 city of Bradford, including (for example) Shipley and Bingley. Interestingly, the geographical scope of the exercise bears resemblance to the original Bradford Circuit, as it existed in the 1790s (see Terry, 1999). For consistency and ease of reference, the same background map has been used throughout, although this means that some features of the map will be anachronous in all but the most recent of the series.

At one level, that of the descriptive, the maps offer patterns of continuity and change relating to the circuits, with an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of boundaries in that context. But the maps are also used in further sections as illustration of changes in circuits in relation to changes in wider society, and as a way of visualising how the experience of circuit life in Bradford can be understood in terms of collage and movement.

Together, the maps form an overview of Methodism in Bradford for this period. They are also helpful in regard to establishing Methodist understandings of the spatiality of circuits. Two models in particular emerge from the discussion which follows as to how the circuit may be understood when viewed from a top-down perspective; these are, firstly, the circuit as territory, and, secondly, the circuit as network. These models are discussed in Sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 respectively.

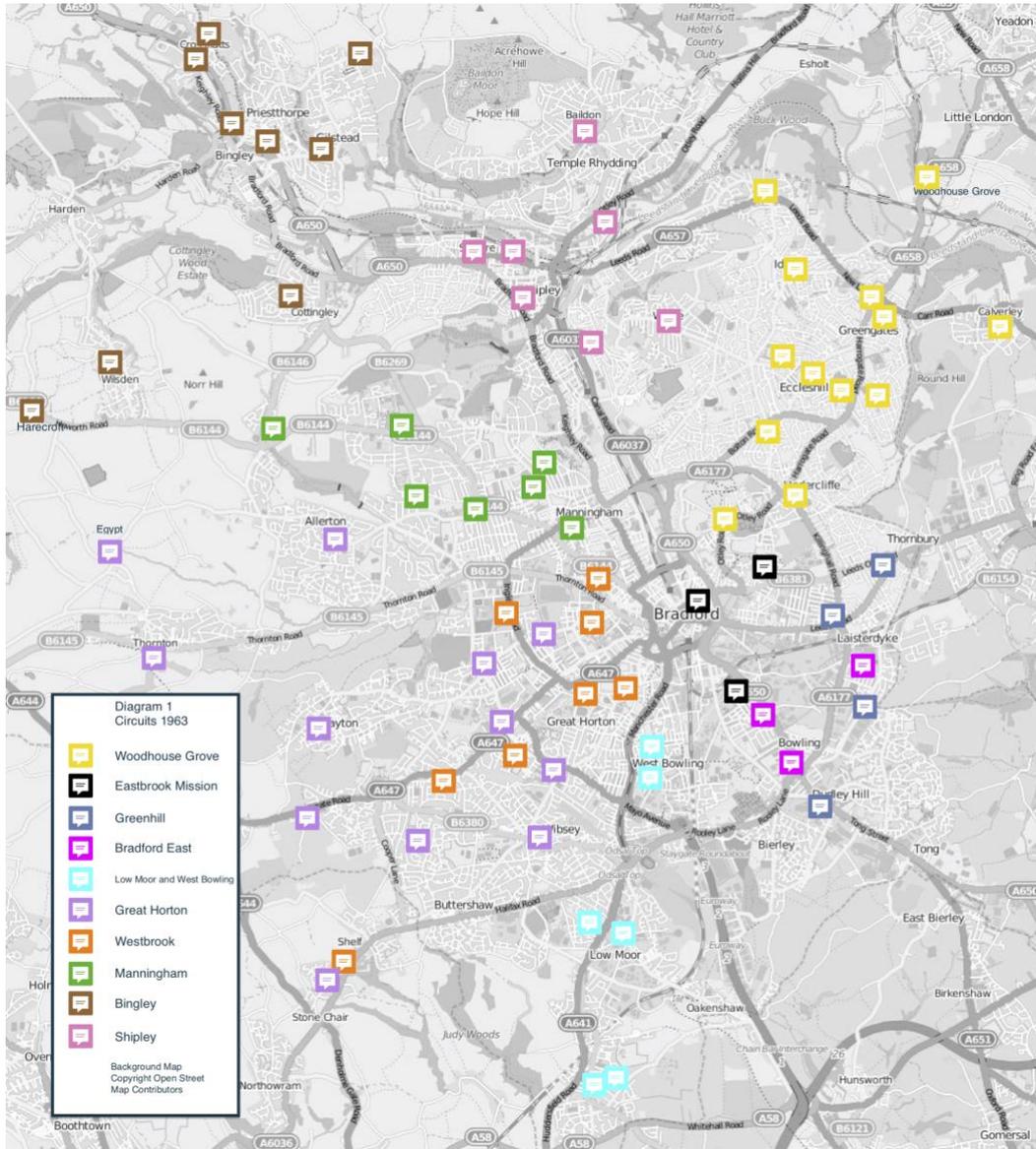


Figure 21 Bradford circuits 1963

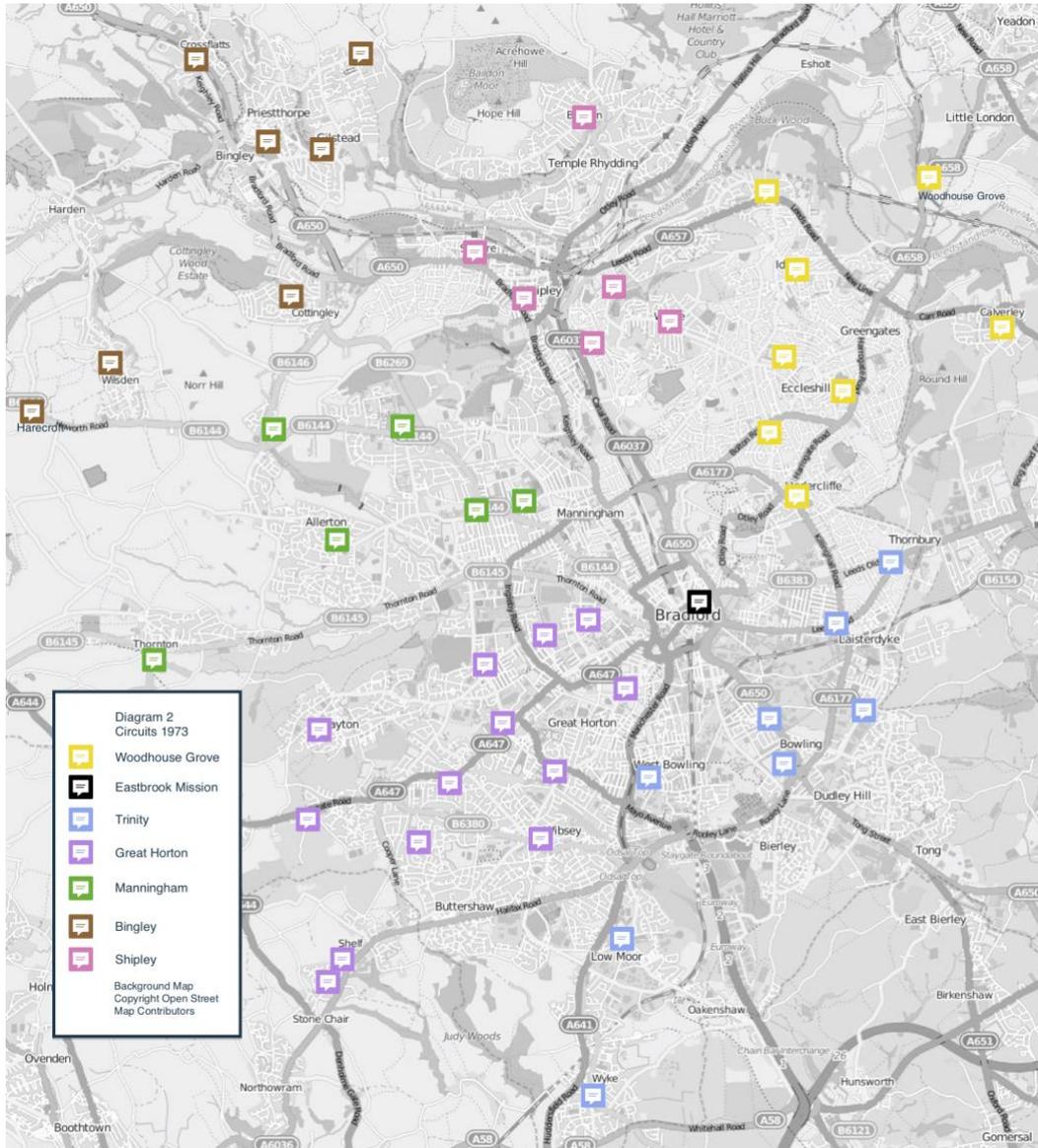
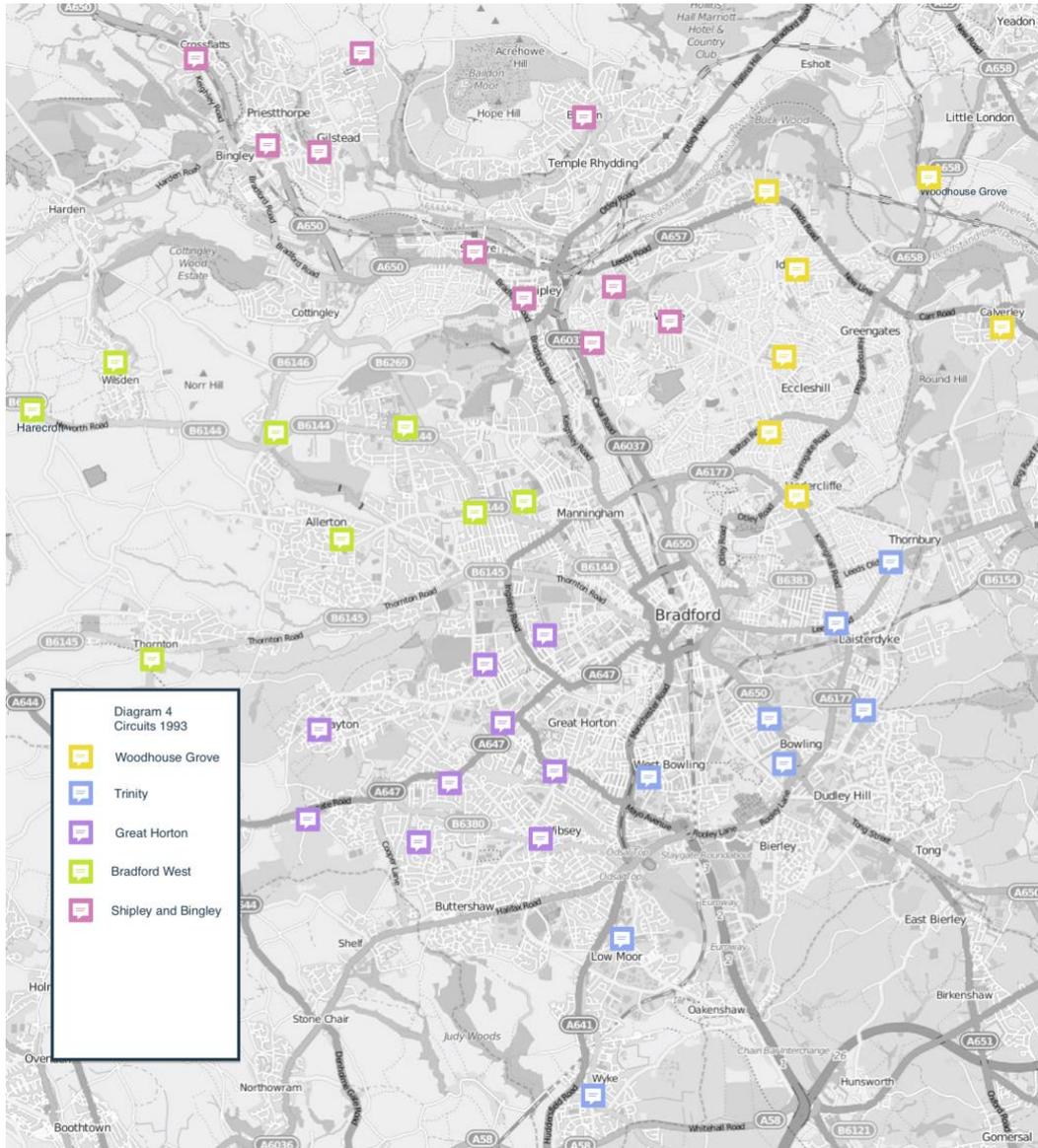


Figure 22 Bradford circuits 1973





**Figure 24 Bradford circuits 1993**

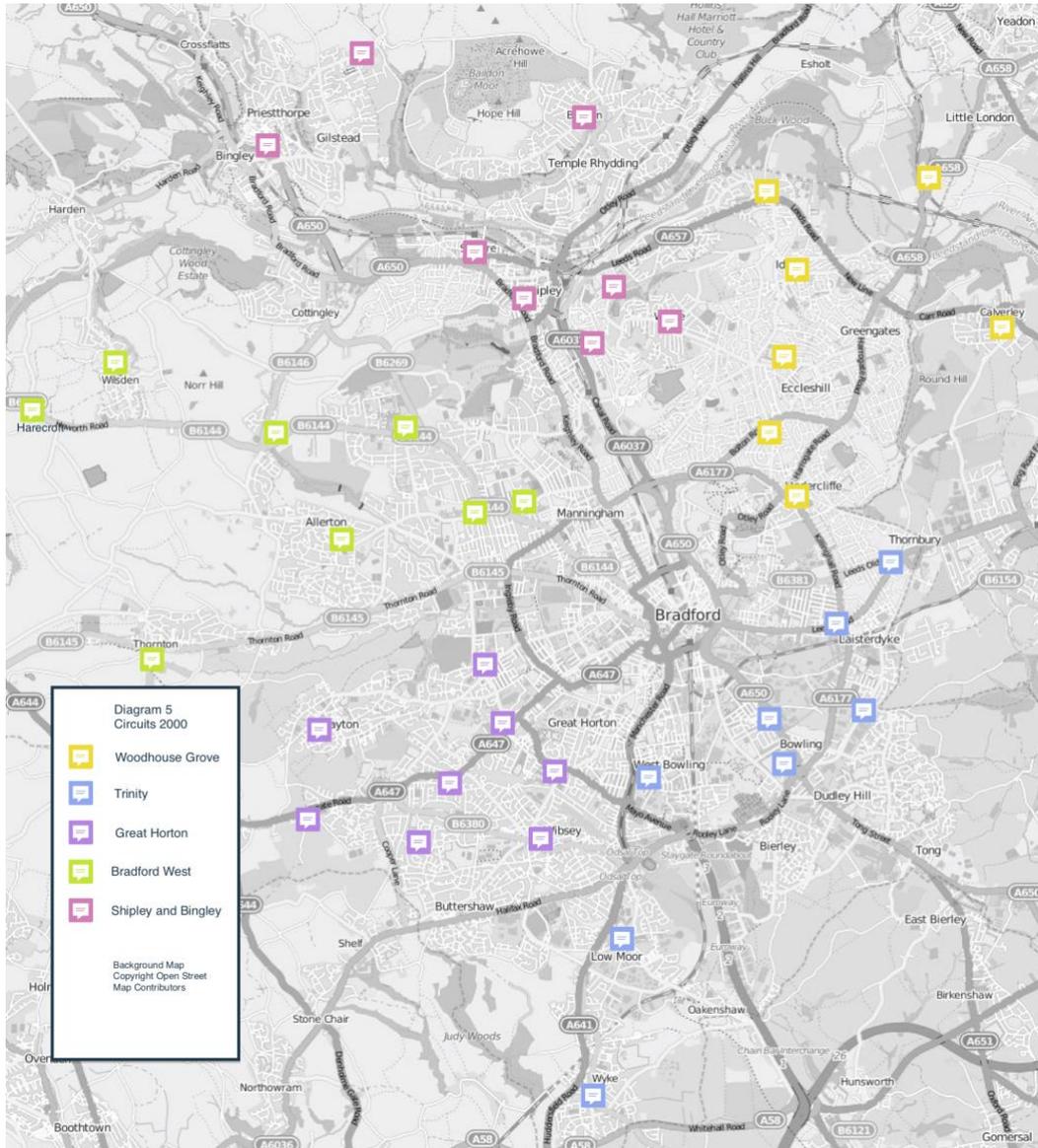


Figure 25 Bradford circuits 2000



### 6.2.1 The circuit as territory

In the model of circuit as territory, circuits can be viewed as exercises in covering the ground. Greaves (1969),<sup>88</sup> in a study of nineteenth century Methodism in Yorkshire, points out that in city areas, circuits often took on the pattern of wedge shapes, moving out from a main church in the centre, often along lines of transportation, which offered an efficient way of operating as a circuit amongst the more densely packed populations of urban areas. This pattern is also evident to some extent in the maps used in my own study. Central to Greaves' work is the way in which the features of a circuit can be expressed in terms of size and shape, with boundaries that could be drawn as lines on a map.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Greaves' unpublished thesis on Methodism in Yorkshire 1740-1851 (1969) probably remains the most thorough geographical analysis of Methodist circuits. In his study, Greaves applies elements of Central Place Theory to an analysis of Wesleyan Methodist Circuits in East Yorkshire, looking at how the size and shape of circuits relates to the placement and sphere of influence of higher order settlements in the region. He establishes that the circuits in East Yorkshire could be broadly characterised as being hexagonal in shape, with each circuit centred on one of the larger towns in the area. The boundaries of circuits tessellated together and this pattern allowed for circuit efficiency, both in terms of ease of movement for preachers and other Methodist officials, and in terms of allowing the fullest 'packing' of circuits so that they covered the whole area. The main church in a circuit ('the circuit head') was usually, though not exclusively, situated in the central town. Of equal significance is Greaves' admission as to the limits of the theory's application. Greaves highlights some of the limitations of the standardised pattern of circuit, which his theory supposes, in that it assumes an even-ness in the topography and spread of resources. The theoretical pattern also fits more readily to the demography of a rural setting rather than an urban one (1969: 253-254, 267, 283).

<sup>89</sup> Greaves (1969: 253) points out that the development of Wesleyan Methodist circuits by the nineteenth century had become, in effect, a 'division of territory', with the circuit system covering the country in a system of 'discrete, non-overlapping territories'. It may be added that, in this sense, the territorialised nature of circuits came to parallel the construction of parishes as territorialised units, despite the original impetus of the Methodist mission as a 'breaking open' of the boundaries of the parish system.

Characteristics of this territorialised understanding can be seen in the way in which the Methodist Church viewed circuits in a review process begun in 2007, entitled *Mapping a Way Forward: Regrouping for Mission* which encouraged the development of ‘sustainable and relevant circuit structures’ (The Methodist Church, 2007: 20), with an emphasis on producing effective units for mission.<sup>90</sup> A report presented to the Methodist Conference the following year, which highlighted examples of circuit mergers, enlarged circuits and the ‘re-drawing’ of circuit boundaries, interpreted this as a review of ‘the Circuits in terms of their fitness for mission and, in consequence, their relative size and boundaries’ (The Methodist Church, 2008: 104).

Across the Methodist Connexion, circuits engaged in the process with varying degrees of enthusiasm, but whereas some circuits resisted change, larger circuits also resulted, as was the case in Bradford. The sequence of maps gives some insight into this process. The earliest maps in the sequence (Figure 21 & Figure 22) suggest that this process of re-ordering was not a new one, but that similar changes, of merged and enlarged circuits took place in the 1960s and 1970s. The maps for 1983 (Figure 23), 1993 (Figure 24) and 2000 (Figure 25) also suggest part of the reason for the renewed call for change in 2007, in that circuits between 1983-2000 went through little or no change during this period. The final map (Figure 26) shows the shaping of circuits (reduced from five to two in number) as a consequence of *Mapping a Way Forward*.

<sup>90</sup> Whilst in part this was a response to changing circumstances facing the church, including the on-going decline in Methodist membership, it was also driven by the need to create more flexible structures in order to take up new opportunities for mission, described in one discussion paper as ‘fresh expressions of circuit’. See Deeks (2006: , discussion paper presented to the Methodist Council, ([www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk), accessed 6<sup>th</sup> February 2015). The comments made in this footnote refer to paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4 of that paper.

In *Reshaping the Mission of Methodism*, David Clark's aim is to press on with the process begun in the *Mapping a Way Forward* report and to provide a more 'coherent and comprehensive strategy' for the circuit as a unit of mission (2010: 3-4). Working with the concept of a city as a *zone humaine*, 'that is, a region, city, town or rural area with clearly identifiable economic, as well as social and administrative "boundaries"', Clark has in mind 'a move to align circuit "boundaries" with city "boundaries"' (2010: 194-195). He suggests that the Methodist circuit, not bounded in the way that Anglican parishes are, should have the flexibility to adapt to such an approach, and be able to utilise its resources accordingly in a city-wide circuit. Following Clark's example, the case could be made for a single Methodist Circuit to cover the whole of Bradford. Yet, which 'Bradford' would form the natural grouping for such a circuit – the pre-1974 city area with its sense of historical identity (Duckett, 2005), or the post-1974 Metropolitan region, defined by the flows and movements of its population (Richardson, 2002)? Furthermore, Clark is perhaps disingenuous in suggesting that the rigidity of the Anglican parish system offers a disadvantage when it comes to discovering a city-wide perspective; surely to some extent the modern local authority boundaries have their origins in that very same parish system, which have marked out boundary lines for hundreds of years. Given that Methodism had its origin in seeking to work beyond the set boundaries, in a dynamic movement of mission, does it now make sense to be constrained within them?

Clark's espousal of city-wide circuits has not found favour with all Methodists. He points in his texts to some cities where this idea has come to fruition, and since the time of publication further cities (for example, Sheffield) have been added to that list. In other cities however, the concept has been rejected as being unworkable and although larger circuits have been created in these areas (such as Leeds), the vision of a city-wide circuit has not been realised. Clark recognises that 'bigger is not [necessarily] better', and looks instead for what Shier-Jones describes as

a 'fresh expression of circuit' (2010: 238),<sup>91</sup> but a more recent trend in Methodist thinking seems to have shifted away from the idea that 'one size fits all' (The Methodist Church, 2013: 386). Clark's model of city-wide circuits as a standardised pattern has not been accepted by all, and the most obvious reason for this would seem to be that it does not fit all situations. Against this theoretical model, localised studies might help to show the particular circumstances for this more clearly, and whether, for example, the impracticality of city circuits is simply about size, or whether people relate only to the portion of the city, which they inhabit. This should not rule out city-wide circuits but nor would it make fitting to the boundaries of a *zone humaine* as the most compelling reason for circuits to take this form.

One of the issues with the concept of a city-wide circuit is the way in which it makes the circuit too bounded as an entity. It is possibly a symptom of a denomination in a period of decline that makes it fasten itself to other institutional and organisational structures rather than being free to follow a different agenda. Clark's theology is one of what he calls 'communal holiness' as being a distinctive part of the Methodist character. He makes the link between the terms holiness and wholeness in searching for the good of the whole city. What is less convincing is the extent to which this desire to find wholeness for the city can be linked to the organisational boundaries of the city limits, especially when it is considered that boundaries themselves are important sites of communication and exchange, and of flows. It is for this reason that it is of relevance not only to consider a model of circuits as territory, but also as networks, and this is considered in the following section.

<sup>91</sup> See also (Shier-Jones, 2008)

### 6.2.2 The circuit as network

Following on from *Mapping a Way Forward*, a further review was undertaken in 2013, which gave consideration to circuits as part of the wider structure of Methodist districts. The emphasis contained in the earlier report on extended boundaries and the creation of circuits as larger units had changed in this later report to accommodate a different approach which would '*prioritise relationships, connections and networks, rather than boundaries*' (The Methodist Church, 2013: 392-393, my italics). An understanding of circuit was presented in this report as 'not primarily territorial' and 'boundary-based', but as reflecting 'a relational, indeed connexional, approach' (The Methodist Church, 2013: 373). The fresh emphasis on connection moves the focus away from the circuit as territory to the circuit as network.

The shift of thinking in the 2007 report marked a move from viewing circuits as bounded entities to circuits as part of a larger network structure and as networks themselves. In the model of circuit as network, emphasis is placed not only on developing relationships and new ways of working within the circuit, but also, and especially, as emphasised in the 2013 report, of cooperation with other circuits and with other parts of the Methodist structure. Circuit as network, then, offers a more dynamic expression of circuit than the static image of the circuit as a bounded entity, and the circuit 'space' is to be understood, not as bounded space, but as a networked space of flows. Here, the emphasis is not so much on the geographical location of churches within the bounded space of the circuit, as on the flow of resources (financial and human) between them.

However, this understanding of circuit as network is not simply to be viewed as a set of arrangements between circuit churches: when seen in the context of the city and its people, whom the church seeks to serve, this flow takes on new significance. A look at the sequence of Bradford circuit maps reveals a distinctive pattern. Whereas the earlier maps (for

1963 and 1973, see Figure 21 and Figure 22) show quite clearly the presence of circuit churches in the city centre and inner city areas, the developing sequence shows a change as churches in these parts of the city closed. By the 2000s the effect was one of an absence of Methodist churches within the line of the city ring road (marked on the maps as the A6177). Often, this reflected a church population, which was vacating the inner city areas, moving out to take up residence in more suburban locations. In some cases, this movement entailed a transfer of membership to a church in a nearby suburban location. In other instances, members may have retained membership at inner city churches and travelled back in to attend services and other activities; but as numbers grew smaller, closure was only delayed rather than avoided.

The pattern, to make reference to Castell's (2000a) construction of a networked society, and as discussed in Section 2.3.2, is one of a space of flows contrasted with a space of place. Whilst members of churches tended to move out to more affluent suburbs, neighbourhoods in the inner city were left without a Methodist presence. Of course, the situation is more complicated than this: absence of Methodist churches does not mean an absence of all churches, although there is probably a broader pattern that could be identified here. Nor should it be assumed that other portions of the inner city population remained static. For example, there have been many Muslim members of the population who have moved to areas further out; in turn, inner city areas have become populated by newcomers from outside the city, for example, people arriving from Eastern Europe.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, there is a general pattern here, as the flow of Methodist circuit resources, both financial and human, has been,

<sup>92</sup> Knott, for example, makes reference to the Chapeltown Road in Leeds, 'as it developed from being a road between places...to a migratory route for groups escaping the squalid socio-geographical confines of the inner city...In this sense the road became a flow of migrating bodies, some of whom settled whilst others moved through' (2009: 157-158).

on the whole, away from the inner city and towards the suburbs. Within this pattern, the Methodist circuits no longer serve the majority of the city, but only certain portions of it. This flow of Methodist resource marks a mobility that can be contrasted with the immobility of those with whom the church has increasingly lost contact. In this argument, there is an important reminder that networked forms of relationships have the potential not only to create new patterns of connection, but equally, may present problematic disconnections, in which the Church's disconnectedness with wider society echoes rifts in society more generally.

In this section, the series of maps has been used to explore and illustrate Methodist understandings of the circuit as territory and as network. The difficulties with both understandings are those raised earlier in Section 2.3.2, with reference to Massey's global sense of place. If the model of territory raises problems of an understanding of place that is too closely constrained by its boundaries, then the model of network runs the risk of being disconnected from place. It is with these criticisms in mind that the focus of discussion shifts from one in which circuits are modelled on territory and network to one in which circuits are characterised by movement and entanglement. The shift is based on a consideration of *the circuit as itinerary* rather than, as has been the case so far in this chapter, the circuit as map.

### **6.3 The circuit as itinerary**

As part of his discussion of spatial practices in relation to travel, Certeau (1988: 118-122) highlights the distinction to be made between itineraries and maps as different, yet related, ways of organising space. He contrasts maps, as the dominant way in which the modern world of scientific discourse has organised space, with itineraries, as the organising principle of 'ordinary' culture through the deployment of

everyday 'tactics'.<sup>93</sup> Maps may have become dominant in form, but they owe their origin to the desire of those who actively travelled from place to place and set their itineraries accordingly. The distinction between the organisation of space as represented by maps or itineraries, argues Certeau (1988: 119), is the difference between 'seeing' and 'acting', or 'observation' and 'operation', or 'tableau' and 'movement'.

The layout of the Methodist circuit preaching plans resonates in some ways with Certeau's discussion of maps and itineraries. Derived from Latin terms for level ground (*planus*, plane) and to set in place (*plantare*, to plant), the very meaning of the term plan is one that is suggestive of the same top-down perspective offered by the map (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018b). Because of the nature of the circuit preaching plans, not only as a source of official information, but also as inherently 'from above' in character, it has been appropriate to use some of the information they contain in the form of maps, as presented in Figure 21 - Figure 26. As an official document of the Methodist circuit, the preaching plan offers an overview of church services, showing the allocation of preachers to churches. The plan has been a feature of Methodism from its earliest days, as an outlining of the movements of preachers, as a guide to where they needed to be on a particular Sunday.

The circuit plan may therefore be understood as a fixed representation of a series of movements; but it is the static form of the plan (what is happening at set times in set places) that has subsumed the dynamic itineraries of preachers. Of course, in this sense, it is a reflection of what has been happening in Methodism more generally, with the decline in importance of itinerancy for ministers that is unlikely to be recovered. Nevertheless, the continuing endeavour contained in this thesis to put forward a case for a notion of place defined by its local and wider

<sup>93</sup> See 1.1 for discussion of Certeau's use of the term, 'tactic'.

connections, and as understood through a Methodist sense of connectedness, gives cause to explore an understanding of circuit as itinerary rather than map. In this understanding, the model of circuit is distinguished by movement rather than territory, and entanglement rather than network.<sup>94</sup> For Certeau (1988: 115), the itinerary is a narrative of journeying: ‘Every story is a travel story’. The itinerary offers a picture of circuit when understood as stories of movement. As separate stories are caught up with one another, it becomes an experience of entanglement.

However, it is not sufficient simply to make a binary opposition of maps and itineraries. One feature, which has arisen here from using a sequence of maps over time, is that maps themselves can help to tell a story of movement. Firstly, one of the most helpful aspects of the exercise conducted as part of this research is that it shows movement over time; that circuits have changed over a period, and where it has not happened, that has been the driver for fresh calls for change. Methodism, in its official documentation, has continued in its claim that circuits are a means rather than an end. There needs to be flexibility in circuit structures so that the circuit system serves the needs of the mission, and does not become an end in itself (The Methodist Church, 1999a: 53). There is indeed a *provisionality* (The Methodist Church, 1999a: 55) about circuits which may not only be about re-configuring circuits but may question the necessity of the circuit structure as a part of future mission. The result of this exercise of the mapping of Methodist circuits has not been a recording of an unchanging scene.

Secondly, if circuits are to be understood as being formed from story, rather than structure, once again the sequence of maps reveals insights into the stories out of which circuits develop. To take an example based on the story of Methodism prior to the Union of 1932 when different

<sup>94</sup> On the discussion of Ingold’s distinction between entanglement and network, see Sections 2.4.3 and 2.6.

strands of Methodism existed as separate denominations (Wesleyan, Primitive and United were the main three). Some thirty years following this act of union, as evidenced from the 1963 map (Figure 21), it might be seen how an essentially former Wesleyan circuit (the Great Horton Circuit) and a previous Primitive/United circuit (the Westbrook circuit) continued to exist. Circuits, which were at one time (prior to 1932) parts of separate denominational structure, could now be seen from the map as parts of an interwoven, but single, denominational structure. It is a reminder of the way that Methodism's sense of connexionalism, post union, is itself a messy mix of inherited understandings of what it means to be a connexional church.<sup>95</sup> It is in itself a relationship of entanglement, in which there is a shared story, but also different stories to be told. Such accounts are themselves recounting the journey of a people, the on-going story of the Methodist movement.

Nevertheless, as has been already considered through the example of the circuit plan, such itineraries are not always easily identifiable in official accounts of Methodism, being subsumed as part of the bigger picture. If the top-down perspective, as has been the main argument here, predominantly obscures the understanding of circuit as itinerary, where then is evidence of movement and entanglement to be found? The

<sup>95</sup> Methodist history is marked by a series of divisions that resulted in a number of separate Methodist denominations. By the time of the First World War, the main denominations were the Wesleyan Methodists, the Primitive Methodists, and the United Methodists, with each operating its own form of circuit structure. These were the bodies, which came together as the result of a process of Methodist union, creating the Methodist Church in 1932. The basis of the union was an amalgamation of the different branches – and a mix of their respective connexional systems (Turner, 1998: 5-6, 8-10). Although the intention of the union was to bring about an amalgamation of the former denominational circuits, in some instances this did not happen for some considerable time. The map of 1963 (Figure 21) shows evidence of this delayed process, showing the existence of what was, in effect, a former Wesleyan circuit in close proximity with a former Primitive/United circuit.

following section (6.4) marks an attempt to make this search from the perspective of the final quadrant in Stringer's analytical framework, the bottom-up micro. It offers the argument that where itineraries are lost within the 'totalizing stage' (Certeau, 1988: 119) of the map, they appear again in the lived space of everyday experience. They re-emerge, collage-like, through a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows. A ministry of everyday movement, itinerant in character, can be said to have an itinerary consisting of fragments and flows, gathered and glimpsed through daily journeys made as a part of the practice of everyday life. In addition, and with this same understanding, resources may be offered to regard the construction of the Methodist circuit plan itself as a collage, consisting of gathered fragments and glimpsed flows.

#### **6.4 Paying attention to connected place**

With the shift of focus to Stringer's bottom-up micro perspective, the emphasis falls on *pieces* of Bradford Methodism, rather than a *plan* of it: to a concern with the *overlooked* rather than the *overviewed*. Taking this approach allows for an understanding of the Methodist presence in Bradford, not as fixed locations marked on a map, but as fragments of the Bradford collage. What evidence of circuit as itinerary, and of ministry as movement, is apparent when Bradford Methodism is read through the medium of collage? As presented in the remainder of this chapter, this 'bottom-up' reading is arrived at through ethnographic study, which uses the methods of collage-making and observation and interviewing introduced and described in Sections 4.4.2 and 4.4.3.

The focus of each of these methods was on outside spaces, which might also come under the general heading of church grounds. Situated between the buildings of the church and the road, I wondered whether these spaces might be regarded as church space or as community space, or as a 'space between'. Gorringe is critical of Eliade's picture of

the church as 'precisely located' sacred space, whereby 'You step off the street and you are in a "different world"'; for Gorringer, this is a too formalised picture, which does not take account of spaces other than those that are overtly religious, and that take on 'religious or pseudo-religious significance' (2002: 37). However, in making the point that the religious and secular cannot be rigidly separated in the manner of Eliade's proposal, Gorringer does not address the point that many church buildings are not accessed as a step in from the street, but have a space to pass through in order to do so. For this reason, I also considered the extent to which these grounds might be considered as overlooked, and as such regarded as pieces of collage. In other words, they are to be considered as fragments of the Bradford landscape, in the way that I have discussed this aspect of the city's character in Section 5.3.1.

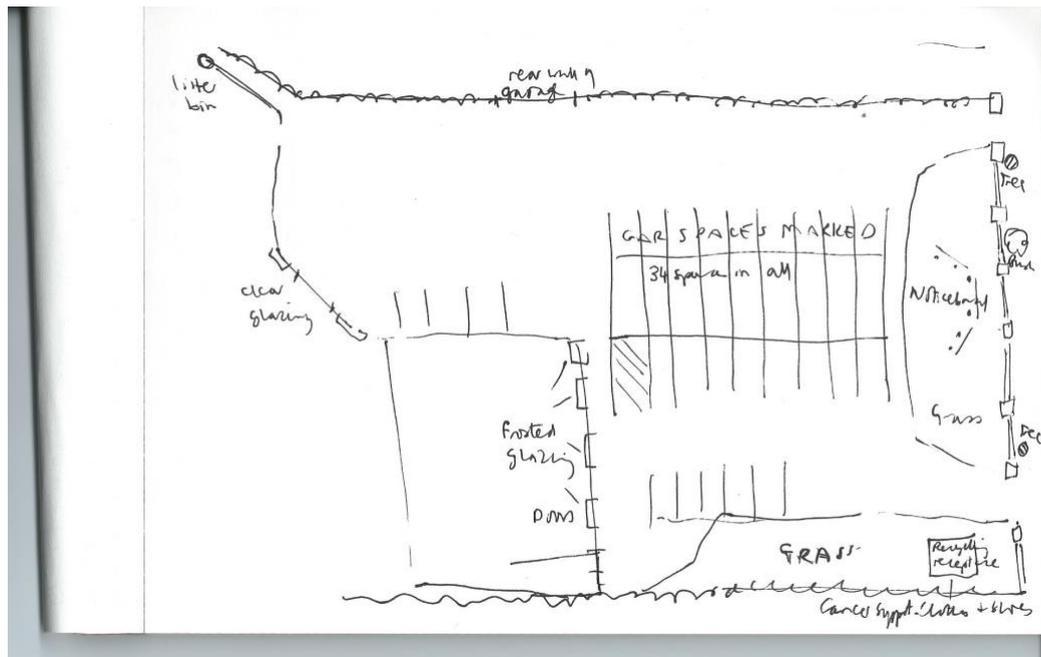
Two features of these spaces were studied. The first were the outdoor noticeboards to be found on these sites. The grounds themselves were marked out by a variety of signs and boards, and their presence formed the basis of the collage-making exercise, using a compilation of photos of noticeboards, collected from the sites of churches in the Bradford North and Bradford South Circuits. These noticeboards are designed to form an interface between church and community, and as such, a point of crossing between the two. The second feature was the presence of people passing through, and here the focus changed to include just two of the possible sites, where interviews would be conducted and observations made. These were people who were not entering the space in order to get access from the street into the building, but moving through the site in order to get somewhere else. They might therefore be regarded as people who are not moving across a boundary (between community and church) so much as along one. As developed in Section 1.2.2, collage is offered as a way of giving recognition to the overlooked and as a means of reimagining the everyday - a form of paying attention, which constitutes not only a taking notice but also a taking care. The

analysis of the results coming out of the methods is organised under these two main headings of 'taking notice' and 'taking care'.

In developing these collage methods I have been particularly influenced by the use Hall (2010a; 2010b; 2012) makes of collage, and her application of collage techniques of mixing, layering and overlapping in understanding the shared spaces of diversity and change in the world of the everyday. Characterised by processes of movement and settlement, and understood in terms of crossing and containment, the boundaries she discusses form an exploration of what it means to belong in a changing world. Building on this thinking about 'the boundaries of belonging', and taking belonging as its theme, the latter sections of this chapter set out an idea of *belonging at the boundary* which emerges from a process of paying attention to the overlooked.

#### **6.4.1 Recording evidence of movement and entanglement**

The most obvious form of movement to be recognised in the methods was that of the pedestrians passing through the church grounds. In all, approximately 150 people were noted passing through the two sites. Most were individuals, but some were couples, or an adult with a child or children, and a few were in small groups. Where people were together, there was often talking going on, and this was also the case with some individuals if they were using a mobile phone, but it became apparent that no one was stopping for a chat with those going the other way. Everyone was walking, with the exception of some children either running or in a pushchair. I found it hard to keep records on age and cultural background because I did not want to be seen to be stereotyping those passing through. But the impression I came away with was that both sites were being used by people of a mixture of ages and backgrounds going about a variety of tasks.

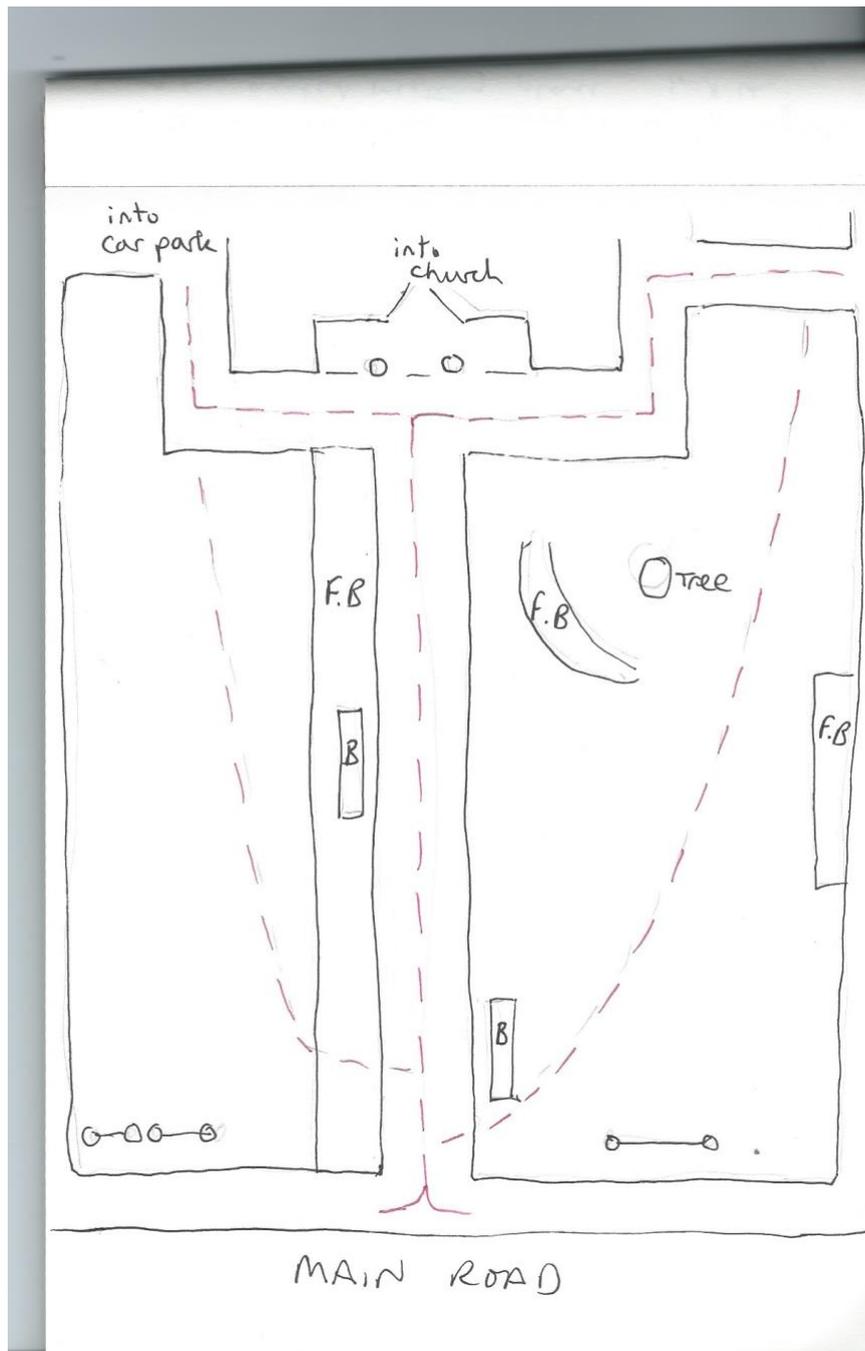


**Figure 27 Sketch plan of Site 1**

Some people passed by whilst I was already interviewing and so were not observed in the same way that others were. I found this frustrating as I felt that opportunities were being missed for further interviews, but without an additional interviewer there was not much that could be done about it. Some of the passers-by were also returnees, those on the way back from wherever they had been. On interview days, the return journeys proved to be a fruitful part of the research. Firstly, there were those on the outward journey who said that they would stop on the way back for an interview. Secondly, there were two people who, having been already interviewed, stopped on their way back for a further conversation. Twenty-four people completed the short survey-style interview. All the interview sessions took place in the daytime period on weekdays. There were eight questions in all: the first three were concerned with the movement of those being interviewed; the next four questions asked participants to consider aspects of the outside space of the church grounds; a final question, asking interviewees whether they looked at the exterior noticeboard of the church, acted as a rounding off to the interview.

As part of the recording the use of an arrowed notation against logged entries was developed in order to identify the path taken by individuals and groups. At Site 1 this was much more straightforward, and there was a clear pattern as to the route taken through the site, this was between the entrance nearest to where I was sitting and the rear entrance through the alleyway, and vice-versa. Only a few people used the far entrance from where I was sitting to get to and from the alleyway. The only people who came in through one front entrance and out of the other were the group who arrived by car and left by car; and the man who came in a car but left out of the far entrance by foot.

Site 2, however, proved to be much more complicated on this matter. The route most commonly taken was one between the entrance from the main road, following the path and taking the narrow passageway at the left hand side of the church into the car park beyond. However, there was also a gap in the boundary wall to the right hand side of the church, which I had not previously noticed, and a number of people came and went through this way. This opened up the possibility of people taking a route across the front of the church building between these two side entrances. Again, at interview times, this proved to be a cause of frustration as it meant people could pass through the site without passing me. The most interesting routes however were the ones people took across the grass on both sides of the site. On the left hand side, this involved jumping over or walking through a flowerbed and seemed only to be done by schoolchildren. There were not enough people doing this to wear a path across the grass, but on one occasion one of the children left a clear footprint in the flowerbed. The route was not an obvious one, but on this occasion here was a lasting indication of its existence.



**Figure 28 Sketch plan of Site 2**

Those passing through usually went straight through with one or two exceptions at Site 2. A couple of people were walking dogs and they tended to linger and move more slowly.<sup>96</sup> There were also some people

<sup>96</sup> There are no signs prohibiting the walking of dogs; nor is there any provision for dog waste in the grounds.

who used the benches, one person reading a newspaper and two others who had stopped to smoke. It struck me that requests for interviews were themselves changing the pattern of movement of those passing through, either for a brief moment or a longer period if they agreed to participate, as they paused in the course of their journeys. I also had to be prepared for those who wanted to know more about myself, and what I was doing. Although I had information sheets which interviewees were led through prior to interview, there was often a follow up question after the interview was concluded. One person latched on to the word 'religion' and this led to a further conversation. On two occasions, individuals returned at a later point after the conclusion of an interview for further conversation. Both seemed to have thought of additional but related matters that they wanted to talk about; but it may also have been the case that they had been given more of an opportunity to weigh me up before coming to talk to me for a second time.

With respect to the times of observation, there was a need to work at technique. As both sites were quieter than, for example, a shopping centre or a main railway station would be, I realised that I could not simply sit and stare in a way that would be overly intrusive, following an individual's every move. I therefore developed a way of doing things that was based on 'looking while not looking' – an awareness of what was going on using glimpses, the view out of the side of my eye, or looking whilst trying to appear as if I was focusing on taking notes. I also became aware that others were viewing me in a similar fashion, taking a sideways glance as they walked by, or offering a puzzled look. A smile or a 'hello' was often helpful in establishing a rapport. Posters explaining my presence had been put at the entranceways, and, although I noted some people reading them, not everyone did. On one occasion, a man read the poster, looked at me, and then walked away and across the car park as if deliberately avoiding me. All of this gave me an awareness of how odd I must appear to others in conducting the research. I felt like that I was

engaging in a dance, with delicate moves and gestures being offered and received.

Less obvious were the movements involved in the conduct of the collage-making method. The workshop involved three participants from a bible study group at a church in one of the Bradford circuits. The aim was to produce collages from photographs of church noticeboards, and to record the conversation that took place during the making.<sup>97</sup> Four collages were produced. The first (Figure 29) highlighted the difference, as understood by the group, of positive and negative images. Examples of each were found, gathered together into two separate piles and then arranged as a collage. The group chose to make a cross shape out of the positive images and put the negative images around it. For the second collage (Figure 30), the cross shape was retained (with the same photographs) but those around it were replaced with a variety of pictures which the group saw as expressing something more about church and community life. With the third collage (Figure 31), the group decided that a fresh approach was needed, with the group collecting photographs of those noticeboards that displayed the names of churches. These were then placed in rows and columns. The resulting collage was photographed, but had to be re-photographed (thereby producing the fourth collage, (Figure 32)) when the group realised that there were other noticeboards, which the group wished to include. The exercise as a whole produced useful material with which to work. The use of photographs was particularly

<sup>97</sup> The conversations were then transcribed, and the resulting transcription forms the basis of the report given here. The transcription process itself raises difficulties, not only the length of time it can take to transcribe the material (Bryman, 2012: 484). Denscombe (2010: 276-277) offers three particular areas of concern, namely: that recorded talk is not always easy to hear, that people do not often speak in straightforward sentences, and that elements such as intonation, emphasis and accent can be hard to set down in transcript form. Poland (2008: 884-885) suggests taking a more reflexive approach to compiling transcripts, with an acknowledgment that transcription needs to pay as much attention to context and interaction as to the verbatim setting down of the spoken words.

helpful in aiding the conversation. The group quickly got into the stride of using the photographs, and as a result was able to identify and work with themes as highlighted above. In this sense, the photographs helped the exercise to be participant-led rather than facilitator-led. There were a large number of photographs and this may have been too large a total to work with in a satisfactory manner. However, the group showed a good capacity to sift, sort and arrange the photographs in an organised way.

The process followed involved making both an audio and video recording of the workshop. The voice recording on the video proved more than adequate, with there being only one or two instances where what was being said could not be clearly heard. A recording was made of each in turn and the two recordings provided approximately 1 hour and 6 minutes of material for transcription. The room was set out with two large separate table areas, one for spreading out and viewing the photographs and the other for organising and composing the collages. One drawback of the video recording was that the camera could only be pointing at one table or the other. In the event, the video recording proved helpful, as in part the exercise was a visual one involving photographs, but also in relating the interaction between the participants more fully. The movements emerging from the method arose not only from the arranging of photographs into collage form, but also from the movements of the participants themselves, especially as they moved between the tables and in and out of the video recording.

Reviewing the material and the transcript, it became apparent that each participant was fulfilling a distinct role within the group. Emma<sup>98</sup> had a particular concern with the overall themes and, consequently, with the composition of the collages. By contrast, Ruth was much more focused on individual photographs and what they were saying, and spent most of

<sup>98</sup> Names have been changed in order to preserve anonymity.

her time browsing rather than arranging. Ann was quick to make an initial assessment of photographs, and was often the one who the others went to for further opinion or comment on either individual photographs or the emerging arrangement.

The interaction between the three participants produced an informative conversation. Features of the conversation can be understood in terms of collaging practice, with elements of the conversation complementing or contrasting with one another. At some points these elements overlapped, either as interjection into the midst of someone else's sentence, or as crosstalk, or even, in a couple of instances speaking the same words at the same time. Sometimes the person speaking would interrupt herself with some new thought, or pause in silence until ready to speak again. Silences, laughter and even singing added to the texture of the conversation. The process of making collages was revealing an entanglement as the participants interacted as a part of their task.

## **6.4.2 Paying attention to connected place: Emerging themes**

### **6.4.2.1 Taking notice**

The noticeboards formed a common means for presenting information about the churches to those passing by. However, in the interviews conducted with those passing through the church grounds, a question was asked as to whether they looked at the church noticeboard; the answers given were variable, with the majority indicating 'sometimes' or 'occasionally'. In this sense, the noticeboards were largely, although not wholly, overlooked, and to this extent my photographs of them in effect formed a set of disregarded but 'found' objects, which would constitute the material for the construction of collages. It was an exercise that quite literally involved 'taking notice(boards)' as its theme. How might a group of church people view images of the boards and signs from a variety of churches? The collage-making exercise gave an opportunity to gauge their response on this issue. What would they notice about these largely

unnoticed objects? Alongside discussion of the results of this process of collage-making is set discussion drawn from the interviews and observations. As has already been commented upon, those interviewed in indicated that they had relatively little inclination to view the noticeboards erected at the two sites; instead, they were prompted to take notice by a different question from the interview (Question 6), which asked ‘What are you aware of as you cross this space?’



Figure 29 Collage 1

The collage-makers' production of the first collage (Figure 29) was marked by surprise at what they noticed from amongst the images. For them, an initial contrast between what they regarded as positive and negative messages of the noticeboard messages was quite quickly established:

Ann: We've got a few that say 'Don't do' – no parking, no right of way, no public right of way. They don't put the church in a right good light, I don't think.

Emma: Perhaps if we, what do you think to, maybe, one that says very obviously 'welcome'...

Ruth: [cross talk] I like that one.

Emma: ...Then, if you have an obviously 'welcome', maybe you could have a lot of 'no's', couldn't you...with 'welcomes'.

(lines 3-8, 12-13)

The comparison being drawn was that between the positive and negative images. One idea that came through was the centrality of welcome, and the desire to establish the prominence of welcome as a theme, even in the face of evidence that would seem to discount it:

Ann: There's not a lot of welcomes, isn't it awful that you don't realise until you are looking for them

Emma: Oh, 'Methodist Church – all welcome'.

Ann: That's a good one.

Emma: That's quite nice for a sort of middle one...

Ruth: [looking at the same photo] Oh, that's a nice one.

Emma: ...because it does not say which church.

(lines 87-98)

The sense expressed by the group was of a positive welcome emerging from a collection of quite negative images:

Ruth: Are we thinking more of welcoming all the time?

Emma: Well...

Ann: Well...We've got a fair number of 'don'ts' down here.

Emma: We were looking for the one's that are quite negative and maybe making a big thing of having the welcome...

Ruth: Yeah.

Emma: You know...

Ruth: 'A warm welcome to you all'. Oh, that's [name of church]

Ann: Well, it's still a welcome, isn't it?

Emma: Well, we could collect the ones that say welcome and these that are quite forbidding and then see [Pause] what we've got. You see, that would work if...you could actually see it.

(lines 111-132, 136)

The negative images caught Ann's eye from the outset of the collage-making, and she quickly outlined her feelings to the others:

Ann: [looking at a photograph] That's awful, that's terrible.

Ruth: Which one's that?

Ann: That's awful [laughs]

Emma: Well it is a bit blunt, isn't it.

Ann: Very blunt

Emma: But maybe they've had a lot of problems, though.

Ann: They might have done

Facilitator: What's that?

Ann: [Name of church], don't park here or you will get carted away – clamped.

Emma: It's quite interesting. That's quite interesting, isn't it, the don'ts?

Ann: It is. Don't come here. Like those – no parking.

(lines 15-35, 39)

Emma's attempt at providing an element of understanding, 'But maybe they've had a lot of problems, though', was met with a response from Ann, the tone of which suggests she was not wholly convinced. She retained this sense of dissatisfaction with the number of negative signs to be found in the church grounds, as she commented later in the process: "There's a lot more 'Don'ts' for churches than there is 'Welcomes'" (lines 438-439).

Despite the arrangement of the photographs into positives and negatives, there remained a number of issues, which were, for the group, grey areas. One such issue revolved around the place and purpose of warning signs, and whether they created a forbidding space or a safe space. In Emma's words: "[Turns to look at another photo] 'Warning'. I suppose a warning is... Oh, that's a lovely one. [Now referring to another photo] Sometimes I suppose you have got to warn people of things, haven't you?" (lines 98-99, 159-161).

There was also an interesting discussion on a couple of occasions about noticeboards, which had either faded or had been left blank. In the first instance, Ann found a photograph of a board with faded writing, preferring another photograph relating to a different noticeboard at the same church:

Ann: That doesn't give a very good impression does it? You can't read this...

Facilitator: No, the writing's very faded, isn't it?

Ann: ...But that's the other one for [name of church].

(lines 77-82)

A bit later, Ann presses the case further for categorising such a board as being negative, although her statement was qualified with an ‘almost’: “Well, that in actual fact is a negative because it says ‘welcome’ but it’s not easy to read” (lines 140-141). A similar discussion was to be found relating to noticeboards, which have been left blank:

Emma: [pointing to a photo of a blank noticeboard with nothing on it] Lovely [i.e. meaning, ‘not lovely’].

Ruth: No one ever looks at that.

Facilitator: Why is a blank noticeboard negative, do you think?

Emma: Well, it doesn’t say anything, does it? – I don’t know.

(lines 377-384)

As in the conversation relating to a faded board, there remained an element of uncertainty in categorising a blank board as negative, expressed in Emma’s “I don’t know.” Later, Emma, looking at another photograph of a blank board, added the opinion that, “This is what happens ...it ends up with nothing in it. That’s when you’ve got to think of something you can fill it with” (lines 1181-1182). In the first arrangement, the group used some of the warning signs, and the blank and faded noticeboards, to illustrate the negative rather than the positive. Although the later conversation left enough evidence to suggest an area of ambiguity between the two, the group struggled to overcome what they regarded as the negativity of some of the signage, and the message it put across about the churches.

The making of this collage challenged the view of a sense of place that developed out of a growing familiarity (see Section 2.5.1). This was emphasised in the conversation of the collage-makers, who were surprised by what they noticed from amongst the photographs. An assumption that churches should be regarded as places of welcome was not matched by the message given in a lot of the signage, and this was made apparent in the element of juxtaposition of negative and positive

images included in the collage. The creation of their first collage, therefore, provided an example of what Jacobsen terms 'defamiliarization' (see Section 1.2.2.1), in which the everyday is made to appear strange. The collage work, as an exercise in noticing the unnoticed, had helped to produce a notion of the *unfamiliarity of familiar place*.

By way of contrast to the collage-makers, the interviewees were more inclined to view what they saw positively. Only a few of the comments had a negativity about them, noting rubbish, the lack of bins, covered up broken windows, and a time when children had been seen pulling up and throwing around plants. On the other hand five people noticed the mown grass or the flowers, and four the general tidiness of the garden. A further voice added that it is a peaceful place and that he sometimes brings sandwiches to eat. Someone else mentioned the usefulness of a recycling point for clothes.

A number of people connected the site with the presence of the church. Some people mentioned how they noticed when there was activity at the church – cars or mini-buses arriving or men cutting the grass. Others commented on the building itself; for one person this reminded them that they had attended the church when younger. At Site 1, one man said that he knows that it is a church and he 'feels that it is a nice place.' He expressed the thought that it is good knowing that there are people in the church praying sometimes, and restates that he feels that it must be a good place. He did not live far from the church, and mentioned that visitors to his home comment that the church being there is 'good luck for you – it is a positive on your doorstep.'

Most of the interviewees were regular users of the paths through the church grounds,<sup>99</sup> and in this sense were following a familiar route. This sense of a growing familiarity with place was expressed in the observation that, 'It's never really changed much in all my lifetime'.<sup>100</sup> This familiarity with place was something that was taken for granted rather than overtly noticed. Only occasionally was an element of surprise expressed, for example, by the respondent who suddenly interrupted the interview to point out a bird pecking at the bird-feeder hanging next to a side door into the church, concluding that this provision was a good idea. The very act of being stopped and interviewed had led her to a new awareness of her surroundings. This contrast between the familiar and the strange was summed up by the individual, who expressed the point of view that he was prevented from 'seeing the place' by the familiarity with which he viewed it; this did not stop him from adding the insight that he had seen a fox on the site at night. However, the full range of responses indicated that the interviewees were not so much surprised by what they noticed, but rather accepting of it. For example, the signage regarded negatively by the collage-makers was not raised as a subject for comment by those interviewed. As such, the answers of the interviewees indicated that a noticing of the unnoticed resulted not so much in a defamiliarisation of place, as experienced by the collage-makers, but a simple recognition of the ordinary and the routine. There was an acceptance of place in its 'everydayness'.

<sup>99</sup> In answer to Question 1, eight people said that they took the route every day, with four more saying that they used it more than once a day; nine people reported a usage of two or three times each week, whilst only five indicated an amount less than this (recorded as 'less than every week', 'not often' or 'hardly ever').

<sup>100</sup> For an understanding of familiarity with place as it relates to an unchanging picture from the past (for example, Heidegger's imagery of the Black Forest farmhouse), which gives a sense of stability of place in an otherwise changing environment, see Section 2.5.1).

The method of interviewing and observing in a closer fashion at the two sites offered a more nuanced understanding of the everyday to that contained in the production of the collages. To the extent that the collage-makers produced a negative view of the everyday (Figure 29), which was starkly contrasted with a picture of the church as it ought to be (Figure 30), they reflected a strand of everyday life studies (identified by Felski as a cultural studies approach) which tends either to demonise or idealise the everyday (see Section 1.2.2.1). Felski's (1999: 31) preference is to look for a phenomenological approach to everyday life studies which 'takes seriously the ordinariness of everyday life without idealizing or demonizing it'. When the everyday, as she wants to argue, is recognised phenomenologically as 'a way of experiencing the world' rather than a particular set of practices, it explains the routinisation of much of everyday life, whilst at the same time offering a reason why the routinisation of others' lives might be different (or, indeed, similar) to one's own. Likewise, the interviews conducted in the grounds of the two churches helped to show not only the ordinariness of much of the everyday experience of those interviewed, but also helped explain their comments on the everyday lives of others.

#### **6.4.2.2 Taking care**

Paying attention to the everyday involves not only taking notice as a noticing of the unnoticed, but also taking care, as concern is shown for that which is noticed. It is this latter theme that forms the focus of this new section. In speaking about taking care, my interest is not primarily with patterns of care-taking (Relph, 1976) or establishing fields of care (Tuan, 1979b) which were discussed in Section 2.5.1 as characteristic of a notion of fixed and bounded place, but with the exploration of a geography of care (Massey, 2005) marked by processes of becoming (Sections 2.5 and 3.4). During my period of observation at one of the sites, this point was illustrated for me by the figure of the gardener, a church member who had taken it upon himself to maintain the garden areas of the church grounds. He gardened once a week and mid-morning

was joined by a neighbour who helped him. One of the sessions of observation coincided with this weekly presence in the garden.

The first task the gardener set himself on his weekly morning of gardening was to go around with his gloves and bag, picking up strewn rubbish. With the grounds being situated by a main road and because of the seating offered within the grounds, they tended to gather quite a lot of rubbish blown in and around by the wind. Most of it ended up around the perimeter of the site, caught at the foot of the boundary walls. This activity took him all the way around the boundary of the garden site. Initially, the action struck me as being akin to that of 'beating the bounds', and a marking out of territory. Later I reflected that this missed the point, and that his actions were more about the task he undertook, which was quite literally a gathering of fragments as he went about the work of collecting other people's waste. The two men had the same routine each time – cutting the grass for the gardener; tidying the flowerbeds for the neighbour. At one point in their labours, the two of them paused in order to offer a brief greeting to a man who swept by along the path. As well as covering the ground (through their work of mowing the lawn and digging the beds), they were glimpsing the flows of others who pass through the site. The taking care that I want to highlight in this section is not the care of maintaining territory so much as the care offered in a gathering of fragments and the glimpsing of flows.

The collage-makers explored the topic of taking care through developing the theme of welcome. As part of the process of producing the first two collages, this theme was identified as an expression of the positivity that the group found in some of the photographs:

Ruth: [cross talk] 'Welcome to all to the Methodist Church'.

Ann: [Responding to Ruth] A warm welcome.

Emma: Sadly, I haven't found any one that says welcome yet, so I hope there's one here...There's one – 'Welcome'.

(lines 37, 44-47, 51)

This theme, quite literally, struck a chord, as one of the group began to sing, and with it came the realisation that there was some promising material to work with their chosen theme:

Emma: 'Welcome', 'All are welcome' [starts singing from a hymn],  
'All are welcome'

Ruth: We were singing that on Sunday.

Facilitator: Oh, yes.

Ann: We did, didn't we...two extra verses.

Facilitator: Oh, right.

Emma: All are welcome in this place – A warm welcome – oh,  
there's quite a few isn't there?

(lines 61-73)

It was as if the action of singing was in itself a source of encouragement to search for further images of welcome. This expression of a 'welcome' that was central and common to all and any church remained a key feature, not only of the first collage (Figure 29) but also of the second (Figure 30), with the relevant photographs being formed into a cross shape in the middle of each of these collages. Despite the recognition by the group that many of the messages being offered could sound negative, the 'welcome' message was one that the group was keen to promote. This open sense of welcome was pushed further with a strong note of invitation. At the centre of the two arrangements, the group chose to place alongside the sign that said 'All welcome' another sign with the invitation to 'Join us'.

Emma wondered whether a second collage might consist of the 'welcome' cross, surrounded by evidence of the activities that take place in the church:

Emma: Do you think we could have done exactly the same thing with the cross in the middle and things that happen in the church round the outside?

Ruth: That's just what I'm thinking.

Emma: Do you know what I mean. Like Slimming World.

Emma and Ann together: Leave that cross-

Emma: -take all the negative things out and put all the positive things in-

Ruth: That'll be alright.

(lines 481-494)

This expression of positivity from whole group is to be reflected in the positive character of the second collage. The whole collage, made up of the 'welcome' cross and the surrounding images, would not provide a contrast (as between the positive and negative images of the first collage) so much as a complementary and wholly positive message. The proposal then would result in a contrast, not within a collage, but between the two collages. The 'welcome' cross would embody an element of sameness, but there would be a marked difference between the two. This thinking was confirmed in a later conversation:

Facilitator: What is it you are trying to say this time then?

Ruth: Things in the church

Ann: Things that happen within church.

Emma: -within the church, so this would be a positive against the warnings, the negatives

Facilitator: So it's kind of giving a bit more explanation to that phrase 'All are welcome'? It's showing how it actually works out?

Ann: Yeah, it's telling you what else is happening.

(lines 526-533, 540-543)



**Figure 30 Collage 2**

If the first collage highlighted a stage of defamiliarisation - a making strange of the familiar - then this second collage was suggestive, in Jacobsen's schema, of the stage of refamiliarisation (see Section 1.2.2.1), the process of making the strange less strange. The participants' understanding of churches as places where all are welcome was reasserted with a fresh urgency, with their inclusion of the varied activities that happen in churches.

The making of the second collage, with its 'Welcome' theme, elicited conversation as to how the various images should be deployed, a conversation instigated by Emma: "Actually, there's two things isn't there? There are things that are church linked and there are things that, you know, other people do, isn't there?" (lines 502-504). A bit later, this problem is raised again in a further exchange about the same collage:

Emma: It's whether we can manage to do two [collages] or one but we probably won't will we?

Ann: We can have one lot on one side and the other lot down the other.

Emma: Maybe if we just have the activities a bit nearer to the- because we are not going to have any activities are we – unless we have the activities- whether we keep them separate or whether we mix them up, isn't it. Well, we haven't got enough unless we sort of have them a bit nearer, but I don't know that people will notice that. It's all stuff that goes on in your church isn't it?

Ruth: Bring all the community into it.

(lines 591-599, 610-615)

There was an emphasis in the group's thinking as to the importance of this sense of community, and the way in which it does away with the boundaries of the church:

Facilitator: So what is this one you're creating telling you about boundaries?

Emma: It's telling you there aren't any.

Ann: The boundaries are wider than the church door. Invite everybody.

Emma: So-

Ann: There's no boundaries, 'cos-

Emma: No, there's no boundaries.

Ann: No, nothing – just come and sing, come and play, no nothing.

(lines 638-652)

However, Emma was still concerned about a lingering division, which had apparently been created in their arrangement of the photographs. So the conversation continued:

Emma: Maybe it should be more mixed up then. Maybe it's all about church activities and other things all going on together so that you're not all, do you know what I mean.

Ann: So it looks like we've segregated them doesn't it?

Facilitator: Ah, that's interesting isn't it, so you've almost separated out church-run events-

Ann: -from the community.

Facilitator: - from other groups using the building.

Emma: So really we need to move-

Ann: Some of them white posters, swap 'em over.

Emma: These are better now. But do you know what I mean- if we are saying everybody's welcome maybe, perhaps, we should have an activity up there – a Slimming World- and a Sure Start down here. Do you know what I mean, so we put the activity up there, so we've got not only church things but the fact that we are not just a church, maybe we'll make the other things important too. So a lot of the church activities would not necessarily be so close together.

(lines 654-677)

The group seemed happier with this rearranged order, with its emphasis on making 'the other things important too', and the second collage (Figure 30) was concluded with photographs of the completed composition. But in offering a picture of churches that are open to all, there must be some question as to whether this was a representation, in the minds of the collage-makers, of how churches *ought to be* rather than how they are;

that it was in some way an idealised picture that had been produced as a result of the process of familiarisation, an overcompensation which arose because of their experience of constructing the first collage.

For the interviews conducted in the grounds of churches, the theme of welcome was prompted by the question 'Do you find this space welcoming or unwelcoming?' (Question 5). The responses offered to this question may be associated with those given for the following one (Question 6: 'When you cross this space do you feel safe or unsafe?') because there was a crossover in answers given as to what may make the sites unwelcoming and unsafe. Most people found the spaces to be welcoming, exemplified in the response, 'It's nice and quiet here compared to the road.' Some were attracted by a particular facility on offer – a bench on which to sit for a smoke or to read the newspaper, or a place to let the dog run around. One or two commented on the openness of the space, in one instance saying that it was a space 'with a view', by which they meant that the whole site could be seen from where they were standing. This sense of open welcome was expressed by one person in terms of the access offered - that you could go through at any time.

With respect to the question about safety, there was a general feeling that both sites were safe, to the extent that one person said, 'It feels safe all the time, including evenings.' Another put it in a more reserved way: 'I have never felt unsafe'. The lack of any reported trouble eased the minds of two respondents: 'It's nice and there's no trouble around here that I have heard about'; and, 'There's been no incidents.' One person indicated that they would possibly choose to walk around rather than through the site. Some people recalled an occasion when there was a particular person there who made them feel unsafe. Three main factors were raised as to why the sites might prove to be unwelcoming or unsafe. One was about time of day, with some respondents saying that they would not go through the site at night, especially along its narrow parts. On one of the sites, this issue was connected to groups of young people

who sometimes gathered there. However, the evidence was mixed, with one man saying that he did not mind going through either at night or with a group of young people on the site. According to one woman, this was no longer an issue, as the group of young people seemed to have stopped gathering there. Thirdly, there were also some comments of a racist character, that the site was 'unwelcoming when you see foreigners'. For someone else, the site could be unsafe because 'Asians and other foreigners may make others feel uncomfortable.' This question of who belongs to this space, and to whom does the space belong is revisited in Section 6.5, but for the present, discussion is moved onto the topic of behaviour.

A number of interviewees highlighted behaviour, which they considered different from their own. This was apparent in one topic, which was raised, namely that of the consumption of alcohol. For one person, this did not raise a particular cause for concern - he said that there are sometimes people on the site having a drink, but 'they are chilling out and it does not bother me.' Another person said that sometimes, there were 'foreigners on the grass, drinking,' but this respondent did not seem able to make a distinction between prejudice against people of different nationalities and cultures, and drinking as a social problem. Here were different perspectives on a single issue, but only for one was it problematic. Here were differing views emerging from the lived space of those using the site, but one noticeable feature was a lack of a contribution from the 'official' space of the church authorities, especially when the Methodist stance on alcohol is taken into account.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Methodist Standing Orders prohibits the consumption of alcohol on Methodist premises, but there was no indication to those drinking on the sites that this was the case. It was also difficult to see how the church authorities might enforce this rule in the open spaces of the church grounds. Despite this continuing ban on alcohol on Methodist premises, more generally Methodism has moved away from a position of an expectation of abstinence to one of responsible drinking, and the use of alcohol in moderation (The Methodist

One particular area of concern expressed in the interviews related to the grassed over graveyard at Site 2. One person commented on the behaviour of others, that he had seen them playing football on the grass, which he felt was not right because it was also the site of a graveyard. Two respondents said that they did not walk on the grass because they knew that it was a graveyard. It was not clear how widespread was this knowledge about the presence of graves underneath the grass surface, and even if it was known, for example to those playing football, whether it would have changed their behaviour or not. There were, of course, indications of a graveyard - displaced headstones set at points around the walls - but this did not seem to impact, for example, on the movements of the children whom I saw crossing the grassed areas of the site. A discussion of graveyards as sacred space is one that may raise a number of possibilities, amongst them the sense of 'space saturated with the stories and memories of people' or as a 'space of peace and quiet' (Stringer, 2011: 58, 65). Stringer, however, does not address a situation where the graveyard has been covered over, and it is this process that has contributed to the ambiguity of meaning associated with Site 2. This act of covering over had made a palimpsest of the site, a layering of space through which glimpses of a previous layering could still be seen, but which created an ambiguity of meaning in relation to the kinds of behaviour that were acceptable or not.

The graveyard was covered over in the 1970s, as a means of implementing a more effective management of the site. The action taken by the church of grassing over of the graveyard has helped to create this ambiguity of meaning attached to the site: what remained a site with

Church, 1987). The consumption of alcohol in outdoor settings has become a more prominent feature of life in cities and is one that Methodism could usefully seek to address, in asking in what situations does this phenomena become problematic, and what resources might be brought to bear on this issue.

sacred significance for some people has become a site of recreational activity for others. The church instigated the changes with the aim of making the site easier to maintain (as the care of territory), and continues with this duty of care, for example, filling in the depressions caused by subsidence of the graves. But it may also be asked as to how effective the church has been in stepping back into that new situation, where the grassed site is understood and used in varying ways, and where the sacred and the secular have been blurred as a product of its own making. There was an opportunity for engagement here with those using the site, and to this end, I suggest, it is helpful to learn to see the site not just in terms of maintenance but also of movement.

This challenge involves churches being prepared to look again at those forms of movement, which help to constitute the practice of church life, and to reinterpret them in the light of the movements of others. At Site 1, I noticed that those coming to the church were nearly all arriving by car. This pattern could largely be explained by the population movement discussed in Section 6.2.2, as church members moved away from housing in the vicinity of the church, to residences in suburbs and villages further out of the city. On one occasion, an opportunity arose to talk with a church member who was early for a meeting and did not have a key to get inside the building. When I mentioned my concerns about the impact that Ramadan might have on the research (that the observance of the season might reduce the footfall through the site), she got out her diary to check on the dates of period of fasting. She talked about the increasing Asian presence in the community and that the Uniformed Organisations based at the church had created links with Asian families in the area. She herself used to live near the church but now lived in a village further out, but she still returned for services and mid-week meetings. She expressed a concern about what would happen when she could no longer drive to get to the church of which she had been a part of for so long. This person seemed to me to express something of the dilemma facing the people of

the church: that they are in tune with the local community and yet at the same time detached from it.

In order to facilitate this movement of travelling to and from church, the site had been laid out as a car park, an extensive facility with parking spaces marked out for 32 cars. This purpose dominated the site, as fixed and bounded in this official capacity as the individually apportioned and marked out parking spaces. It was a maintaining of territory aimed at facilitating a movement by car. Those passing through the site, however, paid little or no attention to this laying out of space, and, in the absence of church people arriving in cars, continued to use the site in their own way.<sup>102</sup> Interestingly, at Site 2, the church event that was referred to the most by those being interviewed was the regular car boot sale held in the car park at the side of the church. This was one of the reasons expressed by a number of respondents for looking at the church noticeboard, to see when the next sale would be happening. In answering the question, as to whether the site was welcoming, one person made specific mention of the car boot sale, as an event, which that particular individual liked to attend. Here, then, is an example of way in which these differing forms of movement – those made by car, and those by foot; people who attend church, and people who pass through the site – are caught up with one another, creating interaction between different groups of people who usually do not interact. It is an example of a way in which the church can

<sup>102</sup> This is in contrast to Lund's experience of walking through a supermarket car park in icy conditions and whilst carrying bags of shopping, and in which she 'felt vulnerable in this car-dominated space' (2012: 227). Here, Lund is speaking about a clash of differing forms of movements rather than the mismatch that I am attempting to describe at Site 1. The behaviour of those pedestrians passing through whilst cars were arriving, departing and occupying the car park spaces, did not form a part of my gathered evidence. For example, it would have been interesting to see whether the presence of cars parked in the car park would have been taken by those, who might otherwise pass through, as a sign that the route was unavailable to other users during that time.

engage with its grounds not just as an area of maintenance, but also as a site of movement.

The picture of the everyday that emerges from the study of these two sites is not a harmonised one, but one that contains differing behaviours and attitudes towards the behaviour of others. In hearing some of these concerns, and in highlighting such practices, those aspects of the everyday revealed through the interviews of those passing through church grounds were shown in part to consist of unresolved differences and tensions, and how those using the sites could offer varying, and sometimes conflicting, interpretations of what went on there. These sites might therefore be helpfully regarded less as 'empty' sites, a sort of no-man's land between church and community (as one respondent put it, 'No one asks you or stops you'), and more as a space of entanglement. This is best seen when the sites are viewed not as territory to be maintained, but as pathways of movement, in which individual itineraries become entangled with one another. This might be in small, almost unnoticed ways, as referenced in the comments made by two interviewees who stated the welcome of the place as being seen in the simple presence of people from the church; for one person it was the fact that they smiled at her; another commented on the gardeners, who talked to her, and she found it reassuring that it was always the same two men doing the gardening. But through a ministry expressed as a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows, acknowledgment might also be given to the role of the church in engaging, not only with sites that they have responsibility for, but also with issues that Methodists have views about. Here, then, are opportunities to step back into these sites, and the chance to express a care that is not only indicative of a maintenance of territory, and much more a concern focused upon the entanglements of movement.

## **6.5 Entanglements along the boundary**

### **6.5.1 The layered space of the boundary**

The closer look taken at the two sites helps to establish them as boundary spaces. The understanding of boundaries that emerges is not so much that of 'spaces between' but more like what Hall (2012: 31) describes as 'saturated spaces' of containment and crossing. One of the ways that she understands this 'dense accumulation' is in terms of a process of layering, which 'encapsulates how space is differentiated by patterns of use, including fluctuations across the time of day, and public and private layering of space' (2010b: 2). In the interviews conducted in the grounds of churches this sense of layering became apparent in the responses to Question 7, 'Do you regard this space as a public place or a private place?'

Some of the answers offered an acknowledgement that the sites were private property, owned by the Methodist Church, as indicated by the following response: 'It's a church – you're going through church property.' The question of public access to the site raised a number of differing positions. One response implied that it did not matter whether there was permission to access the site or not, indicating that people will come and go as they please. Whilst this person gave recognition to the site as private property, they also added the comment, 'but no one cares'. This point of view was echoed in another response, arguing that the site is public 'because they can't stop people'. Others mistakenly identified the route through the sites as forming a public right of way, leading one interviewee to intimate, 'I understand it is a public right of way.' One interviewee picked up on this theme, arguing: 'It's a public right of way because there is no barrier or gate'. He emphasises the point, saying, 'Do you know that? If there was a gate or a barrier it would make it private property.'

Regardless of such misapprehensions, the more general point remained, that movement through the sites was a common occurrence, as observed by one person, who said, 'all sorts of people walk through...' Several people implied that the sites were shaped in their public character, not by the granting of access, but by the use made of it as a cut through:

It's like a public place because people use it (She argues that people choose to come this way rather than going on the street).

It's public because everybody uses it...

It's public, because I use it every day.

A development on this theme concerned a respondent who said, 'I've always come through here.' They went on to say that they had been living in the area for fifty years. This was an argument based on a right enforced not by law, or by permission, but by an on-going practice, which had produced an established route.

Although the sites were marked as offering no public right of way, the responses gave evidence that the sites could be read in an ambiguous manner with respect to the question of public access. One element of ambiguity was provided by the ease with which pedestrians could access both sites. Marked out in part by a series of walls and hedges of significant height, at other points the walls are low and easily climbed, with none of the entrances having gates preventing access. People were not explicitly invited to use the grounds, but nor were they prevented from doing so. One person suggested that there was an implicit permission given to use the sites: 'I believe it is a private place [but it is also public] because no one stops them...It's very kind that they don't stop you.' A different interviewee took this a step further, arguing that these are 'private grounds to which the public have access if they behave themselves.' This answer presented the point of view that access granted was contingent upon the behaviour of those using it.

The ambiguous character of the sites was further complicated by the question of whether a church is inherently a public or private place because of its religious status. One person suggested that the public character of the church shaped her understanding of the grounds: 'because it is part of the church, it is everybody's'. A similar rationale may have belied the thinking of the interviewee who asked 'I wonder if it is a public thoroughfare?' before connecting this suggestion about the access through to the rear of the site with the thought that 'Most of the people that lived [at the back of the site] came to the church.' Another person was less clear on this. Beginning his response with the statement, 'It's public', he then questioned his own answer: '...You'd have thought it was private though...because it is a holy place, to be used for that purpose only'. The idea had occurred to him that the religious purposes of the site might separate it from a more general public access. A further response to the question suggested that public access might be restricted, but only at certain times: 'at prayer times it is, like, private'.

These complexities, then, reveal something of the layering of the sites not only in terms of public and private space, but also as religious and secular. As boundary zones the sites could be understood in terms of an overlapping of both public and private layerings of space. Those passing through the grounds illustrate one particular use of the sites, as a short cut incorporated as part of a longer journey. In effect, they were bringing the life of the street into the grounds, helping to make a distinctive feature of how the grounds were being used and which added to the public character of the sites. But I would also want to offer the other side of this argument, which would be to claim that churches also might enhance their public character by bringing something more of the life of the church into these very same spaces.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>103</sup> One of the contrasts that I noted during my observation was that the distinction between the church grounds and the street sometimes felt less pronounced than that between the grounds and the church

Hall's assertion is that:

It is...valuable when more particular public spaces, such as a school for example, touches a street to make a forecourt, interim space or social 'chaperone' to encourage a space between general and particular public life. Often it is in these rudimentary or very ordinary spaces that informal exchange can occur, precisely because such spaces don't explicitly belong to any one group or institution (2012: 124).

Her argument, therefore, is that these spaces do indeed play a helpful role as zones of exchange. Of course, the boundary zones that have been the focus of my own research (that is to say, the grounds of churches) do belong (as territory of the church) to one particular institution. The sites are in the ownership of the church. However, I am trying to explore the life of the church as a dynamic expression of movement rather than a static occupation of territory, and as an entanglement with the movements of others. To this end, I want to suggest that this relationship of belonging needs to be turned on its head: in this new paradigm, an understanding of how the boundary zone of the church grounds belonging to the church (as territory) might be transformed into an understanding of *how the churches themselves belong to the space of the boundary*. In this fresh understanding, the life and mission of the church, I argue, becomes less about the maintenance of territory and more about a ministry of movement. This notion is discussed further in the following section.

building. For example the lack of a barrier between street and grounds (as noted above) contrasted with the line of barbed wire along the edge of the roof at Site 1 or the protection across the windows at Site 2, and which acted as a reinforcement of the idea of the wall of the building as a demarcation between grounds and building.

## 6.5.2 Belonging at the boundary



**Figure 31 Collage 3**

The third collage (Figure 31) offered a contrasting approach, as the group was working on a theming using the names of churches. Emma in particular has a sense of the power inherent in a name: “I think it would be good to sort of just see all the names all jumping out” (lines 944-945). Later she wondered, “Are some names more considered than others?”

How important some people feel their name is” (lines 966-967). For Emma, then, a name says something significant about identity, and she wants to highlight the importance of the names of the churches represented in the exercise by gathering them together:

Facilitator: I come back to that then. What is the significance of the names then? You say you want to see all the names. Why? What does it mean that all the churches have names? What’s that saying about the church?

Ann and Emma [together]: It’s saying where it is.

[Pause] Emma: To me it’s sort of saying we’re all different places, different shapes, different colours, different sizes, different ideas of-

Ann: Of what’s what.

Emma: -of what is important.

Ann: We’re all here to do the same job.

(lines 948-964)

Here we can see how a shared view (“It’s saying where it is”, they say together) works out in varying ways. What for Ann, it is about ‘sameness’, is for Emma about difference. In this third theme, then, there was insight into the way in which boundaries can be understood in terms of creating both unity and diversity (see Section 3.2.3), and presenting, in Hall’s (2012: 28) terms, the collage as a ‘differentiated whole’.

For the collage-makers, the aim of the third collage had been to gather together the names of all the churches. However, photographing this collage proved not to be the end of the process. Emma realised that there was a church missing from the completed collage, and commented, ‘We need to take another photograph [of the collage] with [name of church] on’ (lines 1124-1125). In their eagerness to include all the churches in the collage (as Emma said, ‘[to] see all the names all jumping out’ (lines 944-945)), as an expression of diversity-in-unity, the group had succeeded only in creating a picture of exclusion with the realisation that one of the churches had been left out. This meant that the group required that the

collage be rearranged, and a new photograph taken – in effect a fourth collage had been created.



Figure 32 Collage 4

In his own discussion of difference, in the context of a debate about disability, Swinton makes the point that inclusion and belonging are two different things:

To be included you often have to conform or have your context conformed to a relational, social, or legal norm. To belong you simply have to be noticed as yourself. *To be included you just need to be present. To belong you need to be missed* (2012a: 184 Swinton's italics).

This was what had happened with the construction of the third collage. In their desire to see 'all the names' fitted in, the collage-makers had overlooked one of the churches. Collage-making as a process of paying attention to the overlooked comes close to Swinton's definition of belonging as a being missed; his argument about being 'noticed as yourself' holds resemblance to the 'noticing the unnoticed' and the 'showing concern for that which is noticed' that has formed an important part of the study of the everyday in this thesis. The collage-makers had raised the possibility that churches can be themselves overlooked pieces, which also 'need' to belong. The fourth collage was an illustration of churches belonging together as a gathering of fragments. In a similar fashion, churches can be overlooked by the communities, in which they are set. Once important places (the grand façade of the church at Site 2 is an illustration of this, as a reminder of the founding of the church at a time of Methodist growth, by those who made their money from the flourishing woollen trade of nineteenth century Bradford), they have become more like pieces of collage.

One counter-intuitive comment made in one of the interviews, in relation to public and private space was that 'the church belongs to the graveyard'. It is an odd comment in that it inverts the views expressed by others that the grounds belong to the church. Theologically, there may be room for an argument about the presence of Christian graveyards carrying an important message about death and new life, that says something profound about the way in which the church 'belongs' to a story of death and resurrection (especially in the light of the argument in Section 3.3.2 which interpreted death and resurrection in terms of immobility and mobility). But as part of an ethnographic study it is

indicative of the way in which the church might be seen to belong to the space of the boundary. It is a *belonging at the boundary*. A church that finds itself - and is to be found - in this space of movement (as a glimpsing of flows) may also become a church that is missed and noticed by others.

A helpful step in this process is to review how churches inhabit these grounds, not as territory but as movement. The grounds are spaces not just to be maintained but also to be missed. This may be done as a noticing of the unnoticed (as a glimpsing of flows) and a showing concern for that which is noticed (as a gathering of fragments). In order for this to happen churches are required to engage with their grounds not just as the space of territory but as the space of movement. As a zone of entanglement, the space of movement may form a place of belonging and becoming, through a mutual relationship of care and concern.

## **6.6 Conclusion to Chapter 6**

In this chapter the case has been put forward for understanding the life of the Methodist circuit as an itinerary consisting of the gathered fragments and glimpsed flows of an everyday ministry of movement. Drawing on the distinction between maps and itineraries, perspectives on the circuit from below have been preferred to top down views of the circuit as territory and network. As a consequence, boundaries have been seen to take on a significance, which is neither *the rigid boundary of territory* nor the *dissolved boundary of network*, but as *boundary zones of encounter characterised by movement and entanglement*.

The two ethnographic methods used to explore the grounds of churches show how these zones of encounter emerge out of the boundary spaces of everyday life. As methods concerned with the piecing together of collage rather than the conceived space of planning, these methods emphasise the lived space of experience as the arena for a reimagining

of the everyday and made apparent through processes of paying attention. This analysis of the overlooked, organised under the headings of taking notice and taking care, is itself a product of an overlapping of the results arising from the conduct of these two methods. This feature of the analytical discussion serves to further highlight the distinction between the mapping method that was the focus of the earlier part of the chapter and an ethnographic approach to an exploration of everyday movement made up of a collage of layered complexity.

At both sites, I had spent time considering the character of the spaces and the movements of those passing through as contributing to the making of these sites as places in their own right. I had come to see them as boundary zones, with potential as places of engagement for church people looking beyond the confines of their own buildings, seeking to meet the communities in which they are set in new and varied ways. The responses from interviews and the observations of the researcher revealed a number of ways in which those passing through engage with the grounds of churches and highlight the way in which various issues including religious ones can become apparent in these settings.

Recognition of the church grounds as collaged pieces of the Bradford landscape has helped to identify them not only as spaces of layered and dense meaning, but also as sites of belonging. This sense of belonging is defined not by boundaries of containment and crossing (territory and network) so much as experiences of belonging at the boundary. Where these experiences take the form of paths of movement, which become entangled one with another, they offer not only the potential for moments of encounter but also the possibility of a more extended exploration, as part of a shared and continuing itinerary.

## 7 Towards a theology of itinerary

### 7.1 Introduction: exploring theology as itinerary

Chapters 5 and 6 have laid out discussion arising from an ethnographic study of Bradford as a place. In Chapter 5, the focus on movement highlighted how the experience of moving in, around and through the city contributes to the making of ministry as well as the making of place. The argument was put forward for an understanding of everyday ministry as consisting of a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows. The discussion contained in Chapter 6 considered how the everyday qualities of this ministry are not only made apparent in the lived spaces of the urban environment but also have the potential to be constitutive of it. It is this itinerary of everyday movement which enables exploration of the boundary spaces of lived experience, and gives recognition to such spaces as zones of entanglement through movements made at, across and along these situations of the boundary.<sup>104</sup> It is the theme of itinerary, which has emerged as a key part of my reflection on ministry that comes to the fore in this chapter as part of the discussion of the relationship of theology and ethnography.

In this new chapter I look to 'make good' on a research project that aims to be both an ethnographic *and* a theological study of place. As a theological consideration, this involves a return to the material from Chapter 3, and the theology of connected place, which was developed as part of the theoretical work on social space. However, the work on theory did not happen apart from the ethnographic research but as the

<sup>104</sup> The way that I have sought to use 'itinerary' as a distinctive term is therefore broader than the use of the term itinerancy in its strict Methodist sense and as it relates to the deployment of ordained Methodist ministers.

'purposeful wandering' of theory in and out of the ethnographic context, and in this, I take up once more Tweed's (2008: 9, 11) argument that theory travels – theories are itineraries and theorists are itinerants, as they move 'back and forth between fact and value, inside and outside, the familiar and the strange, between the home and the field...' (2008: 182). Like the religious people, who are the focus of his study, Tweed asserts that, as a theorist, he too is dwelling and crossing, as he takes a positioned sighting before moving on to take a new one. In a similar way, in offering a theology of connected place, I too am positioned – located in particular by my ecclesial tradition of 'living in connexion' and my itinerant practice as a Methodist minister - and 'criss-crossing', not only in the inter-disciplinary nature of the research, but also between different sites of study (at home or in the library, as well as 'in the field').

In embarking upon a project that has sought to relate a connected and itinerant understanding of ministry more strongly to place, there has seemed to me to be a requirement to study places, in a particular and concrete sense, and which I explored by walking around Bradford and through a focus on the grounds of churches in the Bradford area. The study has therefore been necessarily both theological and ethnographic, not only in discussing the church's ministry in a normative way, but also to get closer to the lived reality of ministry as part of the everyday world. The result has not been a complete picture, of course, but, as I have stressed throughout my research (and as exemplified by the results from the walking practice) an argument that has emerged out of consideration of the partial and the possible. In this way, for example, the collage makers were able to offer a (collaged) understanding of how they would want the church to be (that is, as a place of hospitality), which also recognised a reality that fell short of this ideal; in a similar way, my work of observation and interviewing in church grounds was able to offer a picture, not only of these sites as boundary zones of entanglement, but how churches might come to see themselves as belonging more fully to these spaces of movement.

If I have come to this research with a commitment to conduct empirical research, I have done so in agreement with the observation made by Ward that ‘theologians have tended to avoid fieldwork’ (2012: 1). But I have also embraced Ward’s desire to encourage a closer relationship between the two:

We want not only to talk about the theological significance, but also to reflect on the experience of doing fieldwork. We want to explore how the practice of engaging in ethnographic and qualitative research shapes the way we do theology and reflect on the church (2012: 2).

In taking up this challenge in this chapter, I consider, firstly, what it means, not only to engage in fieldwork from a theological perspective, but also the implications of viewing *fieldwork as itinerary*, and how this might impact on an understanding of *theology as itinerary*. The theology that is apparent in the ethnography contained in the previous two chapters, I claim, is that God is made known *itinerantly*. It is a contention that has come out of a Methodist tradition of itinerancy *and* a mobile way of conducting ethnography.

Secondly, and as I consider on the process of reflecting theologically on an ethnographic study of Bradford as a place of boundaries, I focus on the question of how theology gets done in these spaces of movement. The answer that I offer is the assertion that *theology is done itinerantly*, with respect to the dynamic processes of a ministry that is conducted as a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows, namely those processes of movement and paying attention which were of key significance in the generation of data and the resulting analysis as part of the ethnographic study. I contend that where churches are understood as spaces of movement they provide a ‘way in’ to such a theological itinerary.

In a further and final move, I seek to indicate how this contribution to theological study - of doing theology itinerantly - has something to offer those engaging in other fields of theological research. I illustrate this with reference to Green's (2009) use of the action-reflection model, commonly associated with those conducting practical and contextual theological projects.

## **7.2 Theology and itinerary**

### **7.2.1 Theology and ethnography: an on-going conversation**

In considering the relationship between ethnography and theology, I come from the position of someone who has been trained theologically for the purposes of church ministry, and who, in pursuing theological study has discovered an interest and a value in ethnographic research. Scharen and Vigen identify two distinct ways of looking at the relationship between the two. In the first,

The goal...is to explore and describe as fully as possible what is – what is seen, heard, witnessed, experienced. And in such complex descriptions of a specific time, people, person or place, ethnography can help to keep researchers honest because before we can offer up any theological or normative conclusions about what ought to be, we must ensure that we adequately understand – perceive and appreciate – what is (Scharen and Vigen, 2011: xxii).

They contrast this approach with a second, preferred, way,

which brings the two even closer together...this view argues that the situation or context of the study has embedded and embodied within its life substantive contributions to theology and ethics...rather than pairing ethnographic facts to universal theological truth, the ethnographer – through apprenticeship to the situation/people – aids in the articulation of those embedded theological convictions as primary theology itself (Scharen and Vigen, 2011: xxii).

One of the reasons for acknowledging a preference for this second option is the potential contained in the first option for reducing theology to an additional step in the research process. As Swinton expresses it, 'a second-order activity that takes place after the rigorous work of ethnography has been carried out' (2012b: 75). Neither theology nor ethnography is a value free exercise. Both are open to the subjectivity of the researcher; hence the need for reflexivity as an essential requirement for the conduct of ethnographic research; equally important is the recognition that theology does not consist simply of the application of already established truths. Theology and ethnography have a closer relationship than might at first be acknowledged, and this can be fruitfully explored. Whilst for Swinton (2012b: 92), hospitality becomes a helpful metaphor for investigating the relationship between theology and ethnography, for myself I look to metaphor of itinerancy as achieving the same. In looking to itinerancy in this way, I continue to work with understandings developed in my research - of the Methodist tradition of a ministry that is itinerant, and my reinterpretation of it, exploring movement as part of the everyday practice of all Christians.

Scharen and Vigen, for their part, assert that even though their preference is for his second option - of finding theology that is embedded and embodied in the situation or context of study - there is still room for 'bringing into the conversation other theoretical or theological materials' (2011: xxiii). In principle, I agree, but I do have two points of issue with the way Scharen and Vigen present their case. The first is the assumption that these other materials in some way stand outside of the ethnographic process. To counter this aspect of the argument, I turn to the discussion from earlier in this section, that the development of the theory/theology and the ethnography is made through a process of criss-crossing between the two; that is to say, in the instance of my theology of connected place, the theology has not been an additional layer added to the ethnography, but an entanglement with it, an illustration of theory as itinerary.

Secondly, whilst I am content to speak with Scharen and Vigen of theology that is *embodied*, I have greater reservation about theology that is *embedded*. I do not dismiss the term completely – there may well be circumstances where it is perfectly fitting to use such a term. But for my own purposes, it is as a description too static, like a theology that is simply waiting to be uncovered from the ethnographic groundwork. It is for this reason that my own preference is to speak of a theology that is *embodied and itinerant*, a part of a continuing journey of discovery. The following section continues to develop this idea of an embodied, itinerant theology. This is done as part of an on-going conversation between theology and ethnography, and in that spirit I look in the first instance at an ethnographer's use of 'itinerant' thinking, which focuses on the idea of fieldwork as itinerary.

### **7.2.2 Theology, ethnography and itinerary**

Tweed's (2008: 8) use of the metaphor of travel was referenced to Clifford's (1997) anthropological thinking. However, Tweed did not reference his use of itinerary to the same, although the term is clearly used by Clifford as well. I take time here to comment on Clifford's reflections on the theme of itinerary. His use of itinerary is concerned with how ethnography is conducted in the field, but he also offers the same term as a description of his writing: 'location, in the perspective of this book, is an itinerary rather than a bounded site - a series of encounters and translations' (1997: 11).

As translations, Clifford seeks to take a comparative approach by using 'comparative concepts in a situated way' because there 'is no single location from which a full comparative account could be produced'. Translations provide the means of comparison of concepts 'built from imperfect equivalences'. Rather than offering an overview, translations give a situated analysis, which is 'contingent, inherently partial'.

Reminiscent of the way in which I used a series of tables in Chapters 2 and 3 to make theoretical comparisons, Clifford's use of translation gives cause to look again at my own comparative analysis less as mapping and more as itinerary, offering not what Clifford refers to as 'overview and the final word' so much as a route through the theoretical landscape (1997: 11). Clifford also identifies itinerary as a series of encounters. Itinerary is first and foremost about travel – as he emphasises, it is an understanding of 'fieldwork as *travel encounters*' (1997: 67, Clifford's italics). Secondly, this itinerary highlights the aspect of relationship; it is about 'field *relations*' constituted by routes rather than the fixed field of an (exotic) elsewhere (1997: 67, Clifford's italics). Thirdly, Clifford notes how the idea of fieldwork is, in effect, being 'reworked' (1997: 58, 63); like the pieces that make up his written volume, fieldwork, as a series of encounters, is 'unfinished' (1997: 13). With these characteristics of travel, relation, and an unfinished reworking, Clifford's depiction of the field as itinerary bears comparison to my own evocation of connected place as relational, motional and transformational. In this sense, these two understandings (Clifford's and my own) might be regarded as a translation. In other words, through such translation the idea of a *disciplinary field* becomes less about a bounded site and more about an itinerary of encounters.

Following Clifford's lead of fieldwork as itinerary and Scharen's indication of a theology embodied in the situation of the study, my own proposal is that this embodied theology is itself an itinerary, arising out of, and apparent within, those processes of moving and paying attention, through which the situated analysis of the ethnographic study has been conducted. The work of ministry – and I have emphasised throughout my thesis this work of ministry as an activity of all Christians - is helpful in this respect. This ministry, which I have taken time to compare to the conduct of an ethnographic study, also has a theological intent. As an itinerary of everyday movement, this ministry of gathering fragments and glimpsing flows is not only a way of operating but also a theological construct – it

carries theological freight. On both counts – the theological and the ethnographic – ministry with an itinerant character can indeed prove to be a ‘purposeful wandering’!

The content of this theological itinerary is the disclosure that *God is made known itinerantly*. In this, I make reference back to the discussion of Chapter 3, and the key presentation of theology that is characterized by relation, motion and transformation. If the novelty of my approach has been to highlight theology that is motional, and to emphasise practice in terms of its movement, I have been equally clear that such practice needs to be grounded in everyday relationships, and ‘lived out’ as experiences of care. By setting out a theology that is relational, motional and transformational, my work has also been to offer an everyday ethic of care, through which everyday spaces characterized by fragmentation and brokenness might become places of hope and becoming. It is in this ethical dimension of daily living that the God of relation, motion and transformation is made known in concrete ways in the everyday world of human interpersonal relationships. In the ethnographic study of Chapters 5 and 6, by focusing on processes of movement and paying attention – of moving and taking notice, of being moved and taking care – I have endeavoured to show how an everyday ethic of noticing the unnoticed and building relationships of care arises out of the movements and the sensitivities of the human body. My claim is that the research contained in those chapters has not just been of ethnographic value but also of theological worth; that out of the study of those dynamics of moving and paying attention has emerged the theological insight that God is there to be known itinerantly in human experiences of movement and care.

As an embodied form of theological knowing the insight that God is made known itinerantly does not provide a full overview – a ‘God’s eye view’, as it were – but rather a sense of the partial and the possible, glimpsed in the hidden flows of everyday life and gathered from its discarded

fragments. Clifford's claim is that fieldwork as itinerant is 'always marked by a "way in"' (1997: 31).<sup>105</sup> In starting a discussion about theology as itinerant, consideration should be given to churches, as marking such a 'way in'; that where churches are understood (or understand themselves) as spaces of movement, they can become 'ways in' to this theological itinerary. As connected places, and with theological reference points of relation, motion and transformation that are the features of a theology of connected place, churches might become communities that *learn to do theology itinerantly*.

### 7.2.3 Learning to do theology itinerantly

Despite claims that itinerancy is on the wane as a feature of Methodist life,<sup>106</sup> the figure of the itinerant minister is one that has exerted a powerful claim on the Methodist imagination, in a similar way as the figure of the pedestrian has done among those social scientists conducting research into the significance of mobilities (Vergunst, 2017: 18). The comparison is a helpful one. Vergunst (2017: 14) makes a contrast between the way in which the presentation of the pedestrian as a heroic, often male, figure contrasts with the meaning of the word when used as an adjective (that is to say, to act in a *pedestrian* fashion), a meaning which emphasises rather the ordinary and the commonplace. His reminder is that, despite the prominence that has been given to Certeau's depiction of the figure of the pedestrian, Certeau was in fact more interested in the action of walking than the walker as actor: 'I read his use of the word 'pedestrian' as being an adjective more often than a noun – describing the ways or manners of inhabiting a city rather than a boundary around a particular group of the city's inhabitants' (2017: 19).

<sup>105</sup> Clifford uses the example of hotels as a way in to the kind of itinerary he proposes.

<sup>106</sup> See thesis Introduction: Methodist ministry as movement, for a Methodist understanding of itinerancy.

Despite the prominence of the pedestrian, especially amongst those researchers influenced by Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Vergunst (2017: 14) points out that, in origin, the use of pedestrian was in contrast to that of the equestrian, as one who travels around on horseback. Without trying to push the analogy too far, Methodists may be prompted to associate the figure of the equestrian with John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, whose itinerant ministry was conducted on horseback, and who was said to have travelled some quarter of a million miles by this means. Whilst it may not be apt to describe Wesley as 'heroic', this imagery of Wesley on horseback<sup>107</sup> can be read as a picture of him as the itinerant *par excellence*. Today, Methodist ministers are unlikely to be seen riding on horseback; nor is ordained ministry in the Methodist Church any longer a solely male domain.<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, the itinerancy of its ministers endures as one of the distinctive characteristics of the Methodist movement.

An important part of my own research has been to wrestle a notion of itinerancy away from the figure of the itinerant minister, through an understanding of the role of movement in the everyday and as a feature of the ministry of all Christians. Therefore, I am not attempting to establish a theology of itinerancy, if by this term is meant the particular set of specialist theological skills and knowledge required to equip a particular set of people ('itinerant ministers') for the conduct of their ministry. To this extent I am not interested in developing an 'itinerant theology' of concern only to a distinct group of ordained ministers, but

<sup>107</sup> For example, the sculpture outside of the 'New Room' at Bristol of Wesley on his horse is a familiar one to many Methodists.

<sup>108</sup> Women were admitted to the presbyteral ministry in 1974; women had served in the Wesleyan Deaconess Order founded in 1890, and there were examples of itinerant women preachers in Primitive Methodism earlier in the nineteenth century. See *Called to Love and Praise* (The Methodist Church, 1999a: 47).

rather a way of doing theology in a particular manner and as a way of experiencing the world – ‘doing theology itinerantly’ – and of drawing out the theology embodied in those activities of moving and paying attention, which I have utilised in my own study of the ethnographic field. It is therefore a way of conducting theology that is of special relevance to all, both lay and ordained, undertaking the task of ministry. It fits also with an understanding of churches as spaces of movement, and the way in which the movements of ministry, when entangled with the movement of others might contribute to the making of places.

Furthermore, and with respect to Vergunst’s reflections on pedestrianism, I seek to imbue a notion of doing theology itinerantly with those pedestrian qualities of the ‘ordinary and the commonplace’ in the exercise of practices of moving around, taking notice and taking care in the everyday world. God is the itinerant, and Christians are called to be a part of God’s activity in the world, as they embody a theology of relation, motion and transformation. Out of patterns of moving amongst and paying attention to the discarded fragments and hidden flows of modern urban life, God is there to be known - itinerantly. Through an itinerary of ministry, as a gathering and a glimpsing of the partial and the possible, we might participate in the purposes and transformational activity of this itinerant God.

## **7.3 Doing theology itinerantly**

### **7.3.1 Doing theology itinerantly: working with practical theology**

In focusing on how theology is done itinerantly, the intention has been to offer a manner or style of conducting theological research rather than trying to establish a branch of theological study (‘itinerant theology’). In this section I try to demonstrate the applicability of this way of doing theology across theology as a disciplinary field, and for which I continue

to use Clifford's notion of the field as an itinerary rather than a bounded site. In other words, I view this field as a series of encounters and translations.

The focus of my thesis has been on movement as an everyday practice, through which I have sought to bring theology and ethnography into conversation with one another. In this part of the chapter I retain the emphasis on practice, but I bring the theological to the fore as I relate my own work to the area of study referred to as practical theology. In other words, I seek to facilitate an encounter between the two in order to explore further a notion of doing theology in an itinerant fashion. My own approach to theology and ethnography and the practical theological approach I describe here I regard as (in Clifford's use of the term) translations – equivalences, which are not identical but which bear comparison. Indeed, I have already drawn to some extent on the thinking of practical theologians, such as Veling, Forrester and especially Swinton, in setting out my own understanding of a theology relevant to investigating spatial relationships and spaces of movement.

The renewed interest in recent decades in practical theology has tended not to see it as applied theology so much as situated or contextual theology. In this way, practical theology (or the closely associated term, pastoral theology) is no longer the specialist domain of those practising church ministry but has moved much more centre stage, even to the extent that it is possible to argue that all theology is practical theology (Browning, 1996: 7-8). One of the most succinct definitions of practical theology is that offered by Swinton: 'Practical theology is critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God's redemptive practices in, to and for the world' (2006: 6). Practical theology, then, takes as its starting point lived experience

and seeks to move towards a transformed practice that accords more closely with the Gospel.

This way of doing theology is often thought of as a practical wisdom (*phronesis*) (Browning, 1996: 2-3), 'which combines theory and practice in the praxis of individuals and communities' (Swinton and Mowatt, 2006: 26). As Graham (1996: 199) points out, this kind of reflective *thinking* (as opposed to abstract thought) is itself a kind of practice. This wisdom is 'performed' (Graham, 2000: 110) or embodied as a *habitus*, a disposition through which faith is inhabited or lived out (Swinton and Mowatt, 2006: 27). In viewing these understandings of practical theology alongside my own work on theological itinerary, the reader might be reminded of Ingold's work on knowing and moving: that to inhabit the world is not to dwell in a static sense, but to move along paths, and in doing so to invoke a form of knowing which might be summed up as 'we know as we go' (see Sections 2.4.3 and 4.3).

Some practical theologians have already acknowledged the role that movement plays in the formation of theological reflection. Veling, in a chapter bearing the heading of 'Practical Theology Is "Like a Rolling Stone"', states that practical theology is

like an unruly itinerant, always on the move, on the way...It resembles its teacher, who had "nowhere to lay his head" (Matt.8.20), and his disciples out into the world to move from town to town, "with no bag for your journey, or sandals, or a staff, proclaiming that "the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Matt.10.10,7). In this chapter, I would like to explore this movement of practical theology in the experience of people whose lives are similarly marked by movement – the immigrant and the refugee (2005: 215).

Reflecting on his own experience as an immigrant arriving in the United States, he argues that theology is 'generated by concern', that is, affected

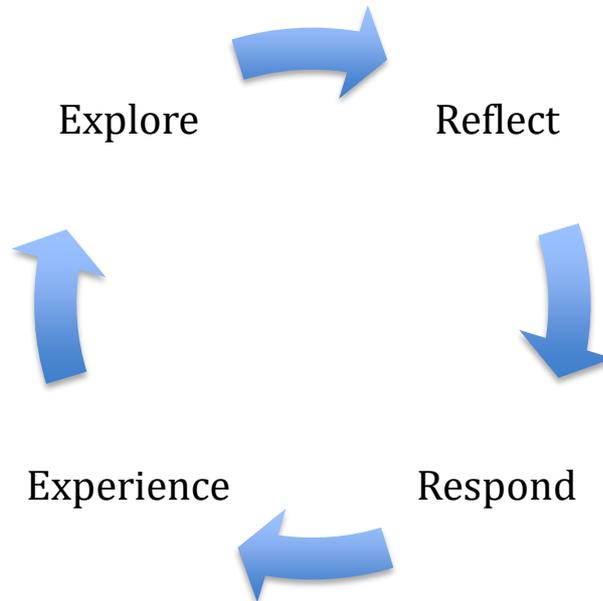
by what is going on in any given situation (2005: 217). Here might be identified a pattern of movement and reflection on movement (both his own and of other people), which offers both a taking notice and a showing of concern for the situation of others.

In the study of practical theology, the human relationship with God might be summed up in terms of movement. In moving towards those in need, and being prepared to travel the extra mile where necessary, we can be surprised to find God already moving to meet us – just as the returning prodigal on his way home is greeted by his father coming out to meet him (Luke 15). Swinton (2006: 11) offers the reminder that the starting point for practical theology is not strictly to be found in human experience, but rather in the human response which is prompted by the action of God in the world. In other words, moving towards the God who first moves to meet us in Jesus Christ.

### **7.3.2 Doing theology itinerantly: developing a practical theological model**

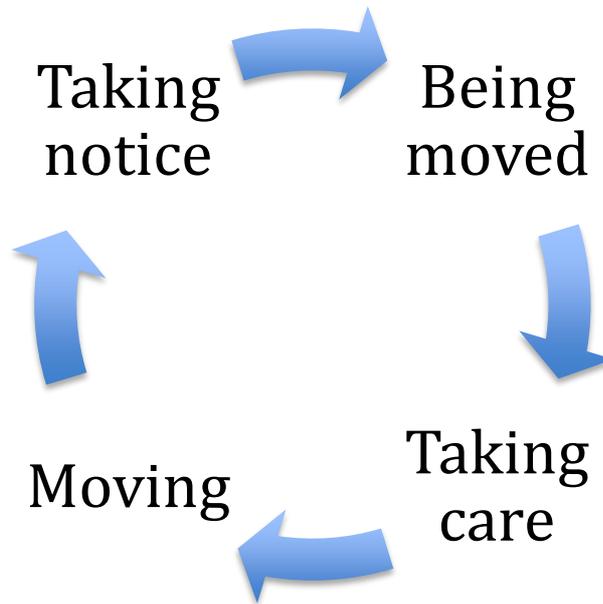
In order to illustrate how the praxis model of doing theology might be influenced by the theological itinerary that has been the subject of the discussion in the earlier part of this chapter, I use the example given by Green (2009). Taking up his enthusiastic cry, ‘Let’s do theology!’ I seek to offer an adaptation along the lines of ‘Let’s do theology itinerantly!’ Green’s model is itself a variation on the action-reflection model of the ‘pastoral cycle’, and designed to be used by churches and small groups of Christians. The action-reflection model (and its variations) is one of the most commonly taken approaches used by practical theologians. I use Green’s version here, because of the way it lends itself for use by those in churches, who would not necessarily regard themselves as theologians in an academic sense, but have a desire and a purpose for undertaking theological tasks as part of their ministry and mission. Green’s aim is to do theology that is both contextual and transformational, and to this end

he views the circular nature of the model as being in effect a spiral, in the sense that it should lead to a new and changed situation.



**Figure 33 Pastoral cycle based on Green's model**

The model consists of four stages: experience – exploration – reflection – response (2009: 19-24) (Figure 33). Experience of a real situation forms a starting point, with a focus on initial feelings and reactions, especially to a situation ‘which has an element of worry or anguish about it’. The second step is one of exploration, which members of the group do ‘by immersing themselves in a thorough analysis of the situation’, gathering facts about the situation and additional information from other sources. The third stage consists of reflection, in order to gain a fuller understanding of the situation and providing an opportunity ‘to see how the treasures of the Christian faith might relate to what they’ve found’. Finally, the group uses these insights in order to make a response, as ‘the group sets about experimenting with a range of different responses to see which one works best in practice’. In offering an adaptation of the model, I re-label the four stages that Green sets out, in order to take account of a theology that is done itinerantly. I call these: moving – taking notice – being moved – taking care (Figure 34).



**Figure 34 Adaptation of Green's model 1**

Moving, I liken to Green's stage of experience. Throughout my research I have emphasised the action of moving in, around and through the environment as experiential. Such movements, and the senses and feelings aroused by them, are fully a part of the way in which we experience the world. To focus on our movements is to emphasise the embodiment our experience. As embodied practice, our mobility can form the starting point for making theological reflection.

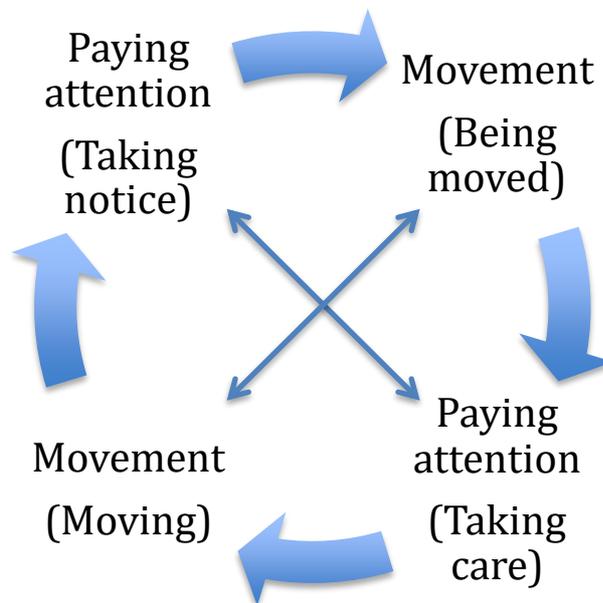
Green's stage of exploration I compare with a taking notice of the situation in which we find ourselves. Situations, especially those generating (as Green intimates) anxieties and worries, now demand our attention. We begin to wonder what exactly is going on within this situation. There may be complexities and as yet unrecognised factors affecting the situation, which need to be noticed and processed. This process of taking notice takes time as we begin to immerse ourselves more fully into the situation.

Thirdly, I make a connection between Green's stage of reflection and a sense of being moved. I want to give recognition here to the way in which the given situation imposes upon our whole selves. We are given cause not just to reflect but also to be moved by what we have noticed and experienced. In other words, reflection is more than just thinking something through. A significant role can also be played by the movements of others and the impact these movements might have upon us. Green is right to acknowledge the resources which faith might bring into the situation at this point, so long as we acknowledge that faith inspires as well as informs; it can move us to action.

This sense of action as response forms the fourth stage of Green's cycle. Here, I want to present this response as a taking care. In seeking to respond to the situation at hand we come to that point in the cycle where we show our concern in a concrete way. As a form of paying attention, this showing of concern is demonstrated through acts of justice, service and commitment. With Green, I concur that this response is aimed at bringing about change, which may affect not only the situation but also those making the response.

Two particular points can be added as to how my adaptation helps to positively develop Green's model. Firstly, Green points out that one of the dangers inherent in this cycle is that it might too readily divide action from reflection; a gap may develop between action (steps of response and experience) and reflection (explore and reflect). In my adaptation, the process of moving around the stages of action and reflection are given additional ties across the cycle, as links are made between processes of movement (moving and being moved), and of paying attention (taking notice and taking care) (Figure 35). It creates the circumstances for a more nuanced approach to the way in which theology is done, giving a greater sense of balance between the elements of the cycle. In this sense, the stages of moving and being moved may be seen as forms of

movement which necessarily complement each other; in a similar way, stages of taking notice (of the hidden and the discarded) and taking care (as a glimpsing and a gathering) may be regarded as complementary aspects of the process of paying attention. Secondly, there is the danger that the cycle as presented by Green becomes too much of a cerebral process – predominantly about thinking. The emphasis on movement and being moved, I would argue increases the affective as a part of the process, and helps it to be more about the whole person rather than an intellectual exercise. There is a greater engagement with the role played by feelings and by the senses.



**Figure 35 Adaptation of Green's model 2**

Green's cycle is recognisable as a dynamic approach to doing theology as the group proceeds through the stages of the cycle. What I have aimed to show here is how such a dynamic might not only be apparent in the structure of the cycle but also in its content, and how working with processes of moving and paying attention is not just a way of doing theology, but of doing theology itinerantly.

## 7.4 Conclusion to Chapter 7

In this chapter, I have looked to demonstrate how theology might be done itinerantly in the context of modern urban living, and how such an approach might lend itself to others studying theology in an urban setting. By engaging with the landscape of place ethnographically and theologically in terms of itinerary, I have shown how place might be considered as a dynamic location of movement and change. Identifying a way of doing theology embodied in processes of moving and paying attention and as part of the patterns and practices of everyday living, resources have been offered for understanding how, through gestures of glimpsing and gathering, life in the city might be transformed. As itinerary, it marks out a journey from neglected to connected place. By speaking of place as neglected, I draw upon features apparent in this thesis. One has been the impression I have brought to this thesis of Bradford as a neglected place, not only in terms of policy and social and economic reality, but also depicted in the ‘wilderness’ spaces of the city. I have also endeavoured to bring something of my own faith tradition, which in origin was formed from a mission of itinerant preachers to take the gospel message to places neglected by the established church.

The word *neglect* (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2019; Oxford English Dictionary, 2019) is itself of interest. In the way that it is most commonly used today, to be neglected means to be disregarded, a description that fits in well with the assessment of the everyday world that I have worked with, as one which is overlooked and to which I have sought to glimpse by taking proper notice of life in the everyday. But etymologically, the derivation of the word as we use it today relates to a sense of being ‘not selected’ or ‘uncollected’. From this perspective, place, as I have argued it, needs not only to be glimpsed but also gathered – brought together from those discarded and wilderness fragments that are themselves suggestive of neglect as that which is also unnoticed. There is also a third way to look at the meaning of neglect, because the root of the word shares a commonality with *legere*, the Latin word for ‘read’. In its neglect,

place, therefore, is 'un-read'.<sup>109</sup> It is this lack of a reading of place and its boundaries that I have tried to address through the discussion and arguments of this thesis. I have attempted to offer a reading that both holds place in regard, so that it is no longer quite so overlooked, and picks up its pieces, so that it is no longer quite as disjointed; a glimpsing and a gathering of the flows and fragments of place, of Bradford in its diversity and decline, and of finding signs of hope and change in the partial and the possible.

As connected place, I have already shown in the earlier part of my thesis how a theology of relation, motion and transformation presents opportunities for developing relationships of care especially in the entanglements of the spaces of boundary situations. In the ethnographic study of Chapters 5 and 6, the potential for such connections were revealed in a ministry of moving and paying attention, and through the possibility of belonging at the boundary. It is in the dynamics of the boundary – movements at, across and along – that the potential for learning to do theology itinerantly emerges.

<sup>109</sup> *Legere* has also been offered as one of the possible roots of the word 'religion'. In this sense, my thesis has been an exploration of how religious understanding can contribute to a 're-reading' of place. As a further point of interest, a different possible origin of 'religion' as a term is the Latin *religare*, to bind fast; in this definition, my own research may be interpreted as the way in which religion helps to bind places (cf. Ingold's 'place-binding'), through processes of movement (including those of Christian ministry) and entanglement. For discussion of the different word origins of 'religion' see Flood (1999: 44).

## **Main conclusion**

My thesis has offered an ethnographic and theological study of places and boundary as spaces of movement. Using the resources of the spatial and mobilities turns, I have shown not only how places consist of the movements of everyday living, but are also actively constituted by them. In this main conclusion I present the key findings of my research: that the extent to which a notion of Christian ministry understood as movement offers a means of engagement with the many boundary situations apparent in modern urban living is a measure of its *connectedness*, with movements at, across, and along the boundaries of place; that movement is a form of *practised connectedness*; that ministry as explored in the thesis operates through *everyday processes of moving and paying attention*; that this ministry contributes to the making of places through *an itinerary set out as a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows*; and that, when *done itinerantly*, theology is a resource for producing *theology that is relational, motional and transformational*. In this conclusion I also consider the contribution that the thesis makes to wider knowledge, both through the outcomes of the research and the particular methodology established for its conduct. Finally I indicate some of the limitations of the research, and some directions of potential further study.

## **Key findings**

The main aim of the thesis has been to test the extent to which a notion of Christian ministry understood as movement offers a means of engagement with the many boundary situations apparent in modern urban living.

The research has also addressed a number of other questions deriving from this main aim:

- How does ministry as movement operate in the everyday spaces of urban life?
- In what ways does a ministry of movement contribute towards the making of places?
- What kind of theology helps to take account of these movements of ministry in relation to the boundaries of place?

To structure the answer to each of the questions, I return to Lefebvre's understanding of social space, and make use of my adaptation of his trialectic.

*The main aim of the thesis is to test the extent to which a notion of Christian ministry understood as movement offers a means of engagement with the many boundary situations apparent in modern urban living.*

My answer to this main research question has focused on my adaptation of Lefebvre's threefold formulation of social space (as conceived, perceived and lived) in terms of the connectedness of spatial relationships. The key way in which I have addressed this main aim of the study has been through the theme of connection. Using Massey's notion of the connectedness of place, I have developed her appeal for 'practised, grounded connectedness' through a focus on movement as an embodied form of practised connectedness, and on relationships of care as a demonstration of grounded connectedness. By focusing my study on everyday spaces of movement, I have shown how Bradford might be seen as a place made up of local and wider flows, with many and varied points of intersection. In a similar way, I have claimed that where churches are also understood in terms of their local and wider connections, they too can be recognised as expressions of connected place. With this definition of places that are connected and open rather than confined and closed, boundaries become less about lines of separation and division and more like zones of encounter and exchange. My particular argument has been that to view boundaries as dynamic

spaces of movement is not only to emphasise movements at and across boundaries (Tweed's dwelling and crossing), but also movements along them as an extended exploration of the situation of the boundary.

My answer to this main research question therefore has brought to the fore the connectedness of spatial relationships. My ethnographic investigations have provided the evidence necessary to give consideration to Bradford as a place made up of local and wider connections, and in which the everyday lives of the city's inhabitants are enmeshed and entangled. In the thesis, through my own experience of moving around Bradford and by examining the day-to-day movements of others, I have shown the significance of movement for creating spatial relationships that are connected. By focusing on movement as a spatial practice, I have demonstrated not only that such connectedness is to be conceived but also lived, that is to say grounded in the experiences of daily living. I have argued that this everyday practice of movement, as seen in the results of the walking practice, offers a reading of the Bradford landscape as collage, marked by the boundaries of difference. Equally, my work on the 'in-between' spaces of church grounds has given recognition as to how these pieces of collage might themselves be given meaning as lived spaces of movement and encounter. My research into movement as a spatial practice has shown Bradford as a place of boundaries; and its collaged pieces have been given recognition as boundary spaces of movement.

If my thesis has offered support for theoretical ideas about the connectedness of place, with an understanding of place as it is made up of local and wider connections, it has also served to highlight the hesitancy and fragility of many of those encounters. In investigating everyday boundary spaces, attention has been given to the transient nature of these passing encounters. My argument has been that these largely unnoticed interactions are nevertheless significant in the creation

of the character of such boundary spaces, and more generally in the making of places. My appeal has been for churches to pay more attention to these 'moving encounters', and their potential for building relationships of care and concern for others. As regards the practice Christian ministry, I have emphasised the need to recognize this transience of relationship as a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows.

My endeavour has shown the relevance of Christian ministry to these spaces of the boundary. My claim has been that Christian ministry might be more fully understood when account is taken of its movements; with my experience of walking around Bradford, as well as my Methodist inheritance of itinerant practice in mind, I have evidenced that ministry can indeed be viewed as a 'purposeful wandering'. Equally important to my research has been my finding (demonstrated in the brief encounters with those observed and interviewed in the grounds of churches, and in the relationships of care expressed by the collage-makers) that the movements of others are just as significant in creating the entanglements of place. Therefore, I argue that the extent to which a notion of Christian ministry understood as movement offers a means of engagement with the many boundary situations apparent in modern urban living *is nothing less than a measure of its connectedness*.

*How does ministry as movement operate in the everyday spaces of urban life?*

Whilst the answer to the main research question emphasised the connectedness of spatial relationships, my answer to the first of the sub-questions has highlighted spatial practice as the perceived space of practised connectedness. The bulk of my answer to this research question is contained in Chapter 5, and here I draw out and summarise that answer. My research has indicated the way in which ministry as movement operates through dynamic processes of moving and paying attention. Reflecting on my roles both as minister and ethnographer, I

found evidence in support of my argument for minister as ethnographer. Emphasising the mobility involved in each role, and in interpreting acts of paying attention both as a taking notice and a taking care, I was able to construct a model of ministry based on a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows. The exercise of walking practice resulted in taking notice of Bradford as a place of discarded fragments and hidden flows. This experience of place enabled me to challenge the dominant depiction of Bradford as characterised by a narrative of decline and division. Whilst this prevailing narrative offers policy solutions of regeneration and cohesion, ministry as movement, by contrast, consists of an itinerary of gathered fragments and glimpsed flows. Although this practical way of operating is low key, its effectiveness is to be found not in a grand solution of an overarching narrative, but in gestures of hope and concern, which bring with it the promise of change and renewal. If the features of this way of operating are to be described in terms of its gestures (of gathering and glimpsing), the style of operation I have referred to as its gait. In making the walks, I was aware that it was not just the encounters and exchanges that were drawing my attention, but the whole experience of moving about the built environment, including its distractions and diversions. This experience of the environment as 'disruptive' led me to reflect on the awkwardness of movement that I labelled as its gait.

As a ministry that emerges out of the discarded fragments and hidden flows of place, I have argued that this everyday ministry of movement is one which speaks into the boundary spaces of modern urban living, especially in my identification of such spaces characterised by their movements. If in the theoretical work my focus had been on movements at and movements across the boundary (following Tweed's distillation of the boundary dynamics of dwelling and crossing), my own ethnographic study led me to describe a movement *along* boundaries. This I showed to be not so much a third form of boundary movement so much as a different way of looking at the other two. If a movement at the boundary is to highlight encounter with 'the other' in a negotiation of difference,

movement along the boundary emphasises the potential for an extended stay at it, as part of an on-going journey – not just face-to-face, as it were, but side-by-side. Likewise, if movement across a boundary might be described in terms of the crossing of a bridge over a river, a movement along describes a different kind of crossing – that of being crossed *by* the boundary (the image I gave was that of waters moving over the ford), that is to say, of being caught up in the experience of the boundary. In other words, *a movement along* indicates a potential for a further exploration of the experience of the situation of the boundary. In an adaptation of Ingold's work, I suggested that this shared journey had the character of an entwinement, made up of movements in the vicinity of the boundary. The main example I gave came through the work observing and interviewing in the grounds of churches, where I viewed the movements of those passing through as taking a journey along a boundary, and indicating how spaces characterised by fleeting moments of encounter might provide opportunities for a deeper relationship. For this to happen, the evidence suggested that churches would need to view their grounds not simply as a space for 'crossing over' from street to church, but as spaces of belonging. This is addressed further in highlighting the answer to the next research question.

*In what ways does a ministry of movement contribute towards the making of places?*

In summarising my answer to this next sub-question, I turn to the third of my adaptations of Lefebvre's triad, the lived space of grounded connectedness, with special reference to the material from Chapter 6. A ministry of movement contributes to the making of places through its itinerary of fragments that are gathered and flows that are glimpsed. The work of Chapter 6 showed how such itineraries, concerned with the overlooked rather than the overviewed, with pieces rather than plans, help to create places out of the partial and the possible. The research conducted in the grounds of churches has helped to show how these spaces produce places consisting of the entangled paths of those who

use them. From a Methodist perspective, I have indicated that when these itineraries of movement and entanglement are recognised as the substance of Methodist circuit life they become the means by which the life of the Methodist circuit interacts with the everyday movements of others.

I have argued in the thesis for an understanding of place as the product of relationships of care. The collage-making exercise demonstrated how the gathered fragments of place might create collages of care, not only as a picture of welcome that churches can offer, but also as a particular concern for the overlooked as that which is missed. Through the observing and interviewing of those passing through the grounds of churches, I have evidenced that the movements of those using these spaces form an expression of care not based on the maintenance of territory but through the possibility of entanglement with the lives of others. Continuing the work of Chapter 5, where I argued that the evidence arising out of the walking practice was not just a means for offering a description of place, but actively contributed to the making of place through an entanglement with the paths of others, the gathering of fragments and the glimpsing of flows represented by the research of Chapter 6 offer a resource out of which relationships of care and concern might be built.

In presenting the church grounds explored in Chapter 6 through exercises in collage-making, observing and interviewing as spaces of movement, my research also showed these overlooked places as boundary spaces, with boundaries negotiated through relationships of care. By regarding these spaces less in terms of territory and network (with boundaries to be understood in terms of containment and crossing) and more as itinerary, with entanglements created by paths of movement, I identified the importance of a 'belonging to the boundary'. In this understanding, the grounds studied were neither the containment of a fixed and bounded

'space between', nor simply the point of crossing between street and church, but places of open connection and new possibility.

*What kind of theology helps to take account of these movements of ministry in relation to the boundaries of place?*

The main responses to this question have been presented in Chapter 3 in which I set out a theology of connected place, and Chapter 7 with its consideration of theology as itinerary. The thesis as a whole represented a conversation between theology and the social sciences, with an approach that involved a criss-crossing between the ethnographic study and the theoretical work. The theology that was developed in the research came out of the study of ministry as movement, to which I brought to bear the resources of the spatial and mobilities turns in social and cultural thought.

The theology contained in Chapter 3 consists of the theological interpretation that I constructed out of the threefold structure developed by Lefebvre, which I also related to Massey's understanding of place as grounded, practised connectedness, and my own adaptation of this thinking as the conceived space of connection, the perceived space of practised connectedness and the lived space of grounded connectedness. The resulting theology displayed a similar threefold pattern of relation, motion and transformation, and this 'theology of connected place' is my own distinctive contribution to the development of theological content arising out of a study of ministry in the spaces of everyday living. Through it I was able to demonstrate theologically how divine and human relationships, expressed as movement and demonstrated through an ethic of care help to make everyday spaces experienced as brokenness into places transformed by a hope of becoming.

In Chapter 7, I explained how a theology of connected place emerges from the situation of the study contained in Chapters 5 and 6. I supplemented the question of ‘what kind of theology’ with an important rider of ‘how is theology done in these spaces of movement’. Continuing the conversation between ethnography and theology, I used the thinking of Clifford around fieldwork as itinerary, and my own continuing interest in the Methodist practice of itinerant ministry, to develop an approach to theological work that entailed ‘doing theology itinerantly’. Arguing for an understanding of theology that is embodied, I also proposed that to focus on a ministry of movement is to have an understanding of theology that is both embodied *and* itinerant. The accompanying claim, which I made, is that God is to be known itinerantly, through the everyday movements of ministry as it becomes entangled with the movements of others. From this, I also made the wider assertion that those studying theology in different ways could benefit from taking the approach of learning to do theology in an itinerant fashion, following the dynamic and everyday processes of moving and being moved, and of taking notice and taking care.

### **Contribution to research**

The scope of the research has covered both a particular interest and a general concern. In its particularity, opportunity has been given for Methodists to revisit their own self-understanding, through looking at: firstly, ministry in terms of its movement and as an everyday practice; secondly, circuit as an itinerary that becomes caught up with the everyday movements of others; and thirdly, Methodism’s inheritance of ‘living in connexion’ as it relates more closely to spatial theory and ideas about the connectedness of place. In its generality, the thesis has sought to offer an understanding of ministry in terms of spatial relationships and everyday movement that is of potential interest to all engaged in the academic study of Christian ministry. A focus on an ethnographic approach has highlighted the prospects of pursuing a theology

characterised by relation, motion and transformation (that is, a theology of connected place) through a ministry conducted as an engagement with everyday spaces of movement. By depicting this ministry as a gathering of fragments and a glimpsing of flows, at, across and along the boundaries of place, I have set out a resource for the building of relationships of care out of the partial and the possible.

Methodologically, I have aligned my research with those who have broken new ground in opening up the relationship between ethnography and theology. By viewing ministry as a practice that might be investigated by a methodology that is both theological and ethnographic, my own distinctive contribution has been to explore a methodology that takes seriously the everyday movements of ministry. By combining elements of a methodology in the way presented in this thesis, I have offered my own idiosyncratic way of conducting research. As part of this interdisciplinary, multi method approach, the aspects that stand out most prominently are the use made of 'alternative' methods (the walking practice and the collage-making alongside the more usual methods of observing, interviewing and examining documentary evidence) and the emphasis placed upon movement in a multi-sited approach. In putting a focus on a notion of itinerary, I have brought together the use of a mobile form of ethnography with my own proposal for a way of doing theology itinerantly, by which theological research might be conducted through dynamic processes of moving and paying attention. In giving thought to the limitations of the project, recognition needs to be given to the experimental nature of a significant part of the methodology and its overall approach. If I was to conduct a similar exercise again, more could be done in terms of the alternative methods. For example, it would be interesting to have compiled evidence through conducting the walking practice in the company of other walkers, or to have repeated the collage-making with other groups, especially those who were not church members. Similarly, more could be done in gathering views of church

members as to how they viewed the grounds of their churches in contrast to the views of those who passed through them.

Finally, I indicate some possible options for the conduct of further research. Most obviously, this would involve researching the extent to which the theoretical proposals and the methodological approach tested here would offer similar or contrasting results when carried out in different locations. This research was not only conducted in, but also emerged from, Bradford as a city and my experience of it as an itinerant Methodist minister. If my intention has been to produce a methodology with a more general application, it would be interesting to see how it fared when applied to other urban settings, and in relation to other religious traditions. I would also wish to offer encouragement to those that might be inspired to pick up some of the threads of my own research. Firstly, to encourage those who may be prepared to give consideration to the use of alternative methods in research – the use of images, the making of collages and the mobile method of walking practice among them – and to continue to explore the benefits which these methods can bring to the work of academic study. Secondly, to encourage those who see themselves primarily as theologians to give thought to ethnographic means of research, not only in giving a clearer understanding of churches as they are but also as they might be (and even ought to be); and also to take seriously the prospect of studying theology as it arises out of those experiences of movement, which are fully a part of day-to-day living.

In concluding, I make comment on the experience of conducting research alongside my on-going journey of ministry. The length of time spent planning and pursuing academic study has matched the period of my appointment in Bradford thus far. To tell the story of my time living and working as a Methodist minister in Bradford is also to be caught up with the exercise of producing this thesis. The course of study, with all its joys and frustrations, has helped me to understand more clearly my practice

and setting in ministry, and increased my appreciation of Bradford and those who live here. My hope is that others will also find benefit as they engage with this research.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Consent form used in the collage-making



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School of Philosophy, Religions and the History of Science

#### Consent to take part in Boundaries in Ministry project

	Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated December 2014 explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. I have received contact information about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.	
I understand that my responses will be kept confidential. I give permission for the researcher to have access to my responses, and to directly quote me. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials.	
I agree to take part in the above research project.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	
Signature	
Date*	

\*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/ pre-written script/ information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents which must be kept in a secure location.

Project title [Complete table]	Document type	Version #	Date
	Eg consent form for...		

## Appendix 2 Poster for observation and interviews



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**School of Philosophy, Religions and the History of Science**

### **Notice of Research Project**

I am a part-time research student at the University of Leeds.

I am studying the topic of boundaries and their relationship to the church. I am interested in people who pass through the grounds of churches whilst on their way to somewhere else.

The research involves me being present in church grounds, observing people as they pass through, and requesting some people to stop for a short interview.

Over the next few days I will be present on this site as part of that research.

Some of the time, I will be on site for the purposes of observation. This means that I will be watching people as they pass through and making notes about what I see. I will NOT be taking photographs or making a video.

If you want to know more about what I am doing, you are welcome to come and speak with me. I will be wearing my university card as a badge so that you will be able to tell who I am.

For the remaining time, I will be on site to conduct some short interviews with passers by. I may ask you to stop to answer the questions. It is up to you whether you choose to stop or not. Those taking part will remain anonymous – I will not be asking for your name.

If you have any questions or wish to contact me about this research, please do so at:

Philip Drake, Research Student  
c/o Dr. Mel Prideaux  
School of Philosophy, Religion and the History of Science  
University of Leeds  
Woodhouse Lane  
Leeds LS2 9JT  
Email: [trpnd@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:trpnd@leeds.ac.uk)

## Appendix 3 Information sheet for participants in interviews



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

**School of Philosophy, Religion and the History of Science  
Information Sheet, Pilot 3 Mapping**

**June 2014**

**Information about the project**

**This project is about church boundaries.**

Would you like to take part in this project?

Before you decide it is important that you understand why I am doing this project.

**What is the project about?**

I am interested in church boundaries, and how these boundaries are understood.

I am doing this project because I am a research student at the University of Leeds.

**Why do you want me to take part?**

My aim in this part of the research is to look at the boundaries around the grounds of a church.

I would like to learn some more about people as they pass through the grounds of this church.

I would also like to find out if people are aware that they are passing through the grounds of a church and whether this makes a difference to them.

**Do I have to take part?**

Not if you do not want to.

If you agree I will ask you 8 questions, and I will record your answers by writing them down on a sheet of paper.

I would like to use the answers I get in my research work.

I will not ask you your name and you will not be able to be identified in any report I write.

**Contact details**

Philip Drake, Research Student  
c/o Dr. Mel Prideaux  
School of Philosophy, Religions Studies and the History of Science  
University of Leeds  
Woodhouse Lane  
Leeds LS2 9JT  
Email: trpnd@leeds.ac.uk

## Appendix 4 Question sheet for interviews



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School of Philosophy, Religion and the History of Science

Boundaries in ministry project

Interview questions.

1. How often do you take this route through the grounds of the church?

2. Will you be crossing back through the grounds later on today?

3. What times of the day or week do you take this route?

4. Do you find this space welcoming or unwelcoming?

5. When you cross this space do you feel safe or unsafe?

6. What are you aware of as you cross this space?

7. Do you regard this space as a public place or a private place?

8. Do you ever read the church noticeboard?

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