Christian Theologies of Culture in Hull, City of Culture 2017

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

In this thesis, I explore the theologies of culture emerging from Hull, one of the UK's most marginalised and deprived cities, in 2017, when Hull was the UK's City of Culture.

Using visual research methods and grounded theory method, I interviewed 20 church leaders from different denominations, both before and after Hull was City of Culture 2017. My research explores these participants' understandings of culture: their concept of culture as "high culture", culture as lived experience, and culture as "other", and how they saw Hull as "cultureless" because it lacked this "high culture". I explore how the City of Culture project's understanding of culture as the 'brightest and best' in human experience played into these concepts of culture.

My research examines my participants' theologies of culture, both before and after City of Culture 2017. Sitting within Hull's context of pain and shared loss, I argue that my participants had an overwhelmingly positive approach to Hull's culture. They saw God working in and through Hull's culture in 2017, building self-esteem, joy, community and creativity in the city, to allow the people of Hull to flourish.

I explore the literature of theologies of culture, and reject the use of models to explore theologies of culture in favour a more complex mapping of the interrelation of gospel and culture. I argue that my participants show a broadly socialist approach to culture, gently liberative, and unconsciously Trinitarian theologies of culture. My participants' theologies of culture, regardless of their denomination, echo Timothy Gorringe's understanding of culture as 'furthering humanity', enabling people to flourish and live life in all its fullness.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 My relationship to the field

When it was announced that Hull would be the UK's City of Culture 2017, in November 2013, I was working as Communications Officer for the Diocese of York (the Church of England from the Humber to the Tees and the A1 to the coast). The then Bishop of Hull, the Rt Revd Richard Frith, had invited me to help an ecumenical group called Believe in Hull that had formed to plan a fortnight of evangelism in October 2013. My role was to help promote the fortnight's events, help get churches involved, and make as many people as possible aware of the fortnight.

So, when City of Culture 2017 was announced, a few weeks after the fortnight of mission had finished, the Believe in Hull group felt that they should continue working together to do something about City of Culture. There was a sense that City of Culture was such a remarkable opportunity for Hull that the city's churches should be doing something, even if at that stage they did not know what that should be. I continued to work with Believe in Hull, as the group clarified what its aims should be, under the leadership of the current Bishop of Hull, the Rt Revd Alison White. The group wrestled with the primary aim of their response to City of Culture: should 2017 be seen mainly as an opportunity for evangelism and proselytization, or should the churches' involvement have other priorities? One early focus was that of community: among the group there was the sense that Hull City Council could organise a City of Culture, but only the churches could enact communities of culture. The group recognised that there are churches in every community in the city, including the estates where no other organisations are present. Even at this point, theologies of culture were emerging from the group: the importance of community, the role of evangelisation, the sense that culture (whatever that might be) was something that belonged to and should be accessible to everyone in the city, desire that the poorest people in Hull should not be forgotten.

As the work for the City of Culture progressed, I saw that Hull in 2017 could be a rich environment for studying relationships between faith and culture, and what theologies of culture might emerge from the year. My work with Believe in Hull was only a small part of my job, but it started to interest me more than the rest of my work. At the time, I was completing my MA in Theology, Media and Communication alongside my job, and I made

the decision to study full time, researching the theologies of culture in Hull as my PhD. In the rest of this chapter, I shall explore the context of the City of Culture project, and set out the aims and objectives of this research.

1.2 Context of the research: Cities of Culture

It was announced that Hull was to be the UK's City of Culture in 2017 on Wednesday 20th November 2013; Hull would be only the second UK City of Culture. The UK's City of Culture initiative had emerged from the European City of Culture project which was conceived in 1983 by the Greek Minister for Culture. The first UK city to be European City of Culture was Glasgow in 1990: before 1990, the European Cities of Culture were already prestigious European cultures of capital, such as Amsterdam, Paris and Florence. Glasgow 1990 was the start of the European City of Culture as a catalyst for urban regeneration, and when Liverpool became the next UK European City of Culture in 2008, it too followed the model whereby promotion of culture would regenerate a city.

The UK City of Culture initiative flowed from the European City of Culture project and New Labour's policies on urban regeneration. In 1997, Tony Blair created the Creative Industries Unit and Task Force (CITF) as a central activity of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), to focus on intellectual property rights. The CITF mapping document produced in 1998 showed creative industries were a large and growing component of the UK economy, and this document paved the way for government policy to position creative industries as a crucial part in the UK's economy, with culture yoked to urban led-regeneration (DCMS, 1998). Following on from the perceived success of Liverpool as European City of Culture and the CITF evidence into the growth of creative and cultural industries, the DCMS created the UK's City of Culture project, with Derry-Londonderry chosen to be the first UK City of Culture in 2013 (DCMS, 2014). In 2014, the DCMS recapped their understanding of the City of Culture as follows:

2. The programme aims to:

- encourage the use of culture and creativity as a catalyst for change,
- promote the development of new partnerships
- encourage ambition, innovation and inspiration in cultural and creative activity
- align the cultural excellence of national arts organisations to support the year with cultural highlights that will attract media attention, encourage national tourism and change perceptions

3. Winning the title and hosting a year of cultural events helps cities to:

- attract more visitors
- increase media interest in the city
- bring community members together
- increase levels of professional artistic collaboration…

4. The UK City of Culture is expected to deliver a high quality cultural programme that builds and expands on local strengths and reaches a wide variety of audiences, creating a demonstrable economic impact and a catalyst for regeneration as well as contributing to community cohesion and health and wellbeing' (DCMS, 2014, p.4).

The two roots of the UK's City of Culture project are vital for the context of this research. The earliest iterations of the City of Culture initiative were cities such as Athens, Paris and Amsterdam: there is an implicit understanding of culture as civilisation, culture as 'a study of perfection' (Arnold, 1869, p.14). This original idea of Cities of Culture as 'the best that has been thought and said in the world' (Arnold, 1869, p.viii) became commercialised in the 1990s, as culture was seen as something which could bring financial benefit and urban regeneration to a city. I shall explore the political and economic implications of City of Culture further in section 3.4, but even at this stage, the gap between the vision of the UK City of Culture initiative and the vision of the churches in Hull is already visible.

1.3 Aims and objectives of the research

My research arises from the context of Hull, UK City of Culture 2017. It emerged from an interest in the theologies of culture emerging from the Believe in Hull group as it formulated a plan to help the city's churches get involved in 2017, set amidst the commercial background of the UK City of Culture initiative. My research is contextual theology: it is born from the context of Hull, City of Culture 2017, and studies the theology arising from Hull, City of Culture 2017. As such, my research sits within the contextual theology described by Stephen Bevans, who argues that a third *locus theologicus* (theological source) must be added to the two standard sources of scripture and tradition: the *locus* of context (Bevans, 2002, p.4). This bottom-up approach to theology understands knowledge of the nature of God as being generated in different ways by different people in different contexts, and that these people's beliefs, practices and understandings must therefore be researched in order to generate a fuller understanding of God. The aim of my research is to discover the theologies of culture emerging from the *locus* of Hull in 2017, to understand the theologies of culture held by the Christian leaders of the culture, and to understand the revelation of God in Hull 2017. This

research sits within the wider field of practical theology, and can be read as practical theology or missiology.

This research has a number of objectives and outcomes: it will add to the wider Christian understanding of God, by exploring how God reveals God's self in Hull in 2017. It will enable the Christians of Hull to articulate and understand their theologies of culture, and discover how God has worked in their city during the City of Culture year. It will explore what theologies of culture emerge from a context of deprivation, and understand how God works within a context of deprivation in the UK. The beneficiaries of this research include the wider theological academy and the whole Christian church, who will be able to understand more about the nature of God; the Christians of Hull, who will be able to reflect on their own beliefs and see how God is working in their city; and Christians in other marginalised and deprived cities in the UK and across the world, who will be able to learn about the theologies of Hull's Christian leaders, and how God has worked in this particular UK city.

This research is necessary because the contextual *locus theologicus* of marginalised and deprived UK cities has not received enough study. Too often, poor cities in the UK are neglected as sites of theology. Despite the impact of *Faith in the City* in the 1980s, there has been a lack of sustained theological research into cities and the theology arising from these contexts of deprivation. In my early research into the literature on the topic, I found *Faith in the City of Birmingham* from 1988, a few book chapters on Christianity in London estates (O'Brien, 1988; Kirk, 1989; Green, 2015), and a couple of chapters on the gospel in Newcastle and Bootle (Wakefield and Rooms, 2016). However, Hull is entirely absent from this theological literature. Similarly, there is little or no sustained research into theologies of culture in the UK. The theology of culture is written about from a systematic or philosophical standpoint, but not from a contextual one. There seem to be no research into theologies of culture emerging from a UK context. *Northern Gospel, Northern Church* by Rooms and Wakefield begins a conversation on the relationship between the gospel and culture in the North of England, and includes reflections on the gospel in Northern contexts, but does not contain substantive qualitative research in this area. I will explore the existing literature on theologies of culture, contextual and UK urban theologies further in chapter 5, but for now I want to make the point that this lack of contextual research impedes both the theological academy and the wider church in learning more about God. If, in keeping with the tradition of

contextual theology, all our attempts to understand God and the Christian faith start from and sit within a particular context, we must study diverse contexts in order to enrich our theological understanding. If human experience is a site for the continual expression of the ongoing revelation of God, we must comprehend that human experience to understand more of God. Theology must use the methodology of the social sciences to fully understand people's beliefs and practices: only by examining these beliefs and practices can we understand the work of God in the present day, and therefore understand more about the nature of God's self. Throughout the latter twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, liberation, Black, feminist, disabled and queer theologies have taught the academy and church more about God's preference for the poor and oppressed. If these sites of theology had been ignored, the wider church and academy would not have received these revelations of God's nature. If we ignore marginalised and deprived people in the UK, we risk missing the revelations of God which are expressed in these contexts.

1.4 Research questions

In order to give focus to my research on the relationship between God and culture in Hull 2017, I formulated four research questions:

1. What are Hull Christian leaders' understandings of culture, and how and why do these change over the City of Culture year?
2. What are Hull Christian leaders' theological understandings of culture, and how do they change over 2017?
3. How do Hull Christian leaders' theologies of culture relate to their engagement with City of Culture 2017?
4. How do Hull Christian leaders' understandings of culture relate to their theologies of culture?

Although my interest in the research began with the Believe in Hull group, I wanted to widen it to be fully representative of the churches across Hull, not just those who might be involved in the ecumenical steering group. If I focussed on just that group, I would also miss out on the churches and Christian leaders who did not agree with the aims of that group. I will discuss further in the next chapter my decision to focus on Christian leaders and not "ordinary" or lay Christians.

The first question enables me to focus on the wider context of people's theological understandings of culture: what they understand culture to be. Christians' understanding of

the relationship between God and culture cannot be understood without first analysing what they mean by culture. This is especially crucial in the context of the City of Culture project: the City of Culture project is shaped by the DCMS and Hull City Council's ideas of culture, but these may not be the same as Hull Christian leaders' understandings of culture.

The second question enables me to focus on what Hull Christian leaders understand by the nature of God, and how and whether God relates to culture as defined by my participants. The first and second questions recognise that understandings of God and culture can be fluid and open to change. City of Culture 2017 could be an important time for the churches of Hull: if Christians' beliefs and practices around the subject of culture are likely to change at any point, it is likely to be 2017 when much focus, within and without the church, is given to the idea of culture.

The third question recognises that beliefs are often enacted in the form of practice. My participants may say one thing about their understandings of God and culture, and yet in practice, relate in a very different way to the City of Culture initiative. Comparing both my participants' thoughts and actions will give me a fuller understanding of their approach to the relationship between God and culture.

The fourth question allows me to bring my participants' understandings of culture in to dialogue with their theologies of culture. As with question three, this question recognises that people's thoughts and understandings, especially of something as nebulous as the concept of culture, are not always straightforward. Again, comparing my participants' understandings of culture with their theologies of culture may give me a fuller understanding of both aspects of my research.

These questions are also aligned with the principles of contextual theology. They recognise that beliefs about God, and understandings of culture, are not uniform or necessarily in line with or denominational teachings. Instead, they recognise that beliefs and understandings can be influenced by a person's identity, the place in which they live, its history, location and geographical context. Contextual theology requires that these frameworks be comprehended in order to better understand the theologies they may generate. Bevans describes contextual theology, and indeed reality itself, as always subjective, as reliant on the human person and

human society (Bevans, 2002, p.4). It is from these questions that theologies of culture in Hull 2017, and a deeper understanding of the nature of God, will arise.

1.5 Conclusions

In this introductory chapter I have explained the context to my research: how I came to study this field, and the wider context of the UK City of Culture project. I have explained how my research sits within the field of contextual theology, and aims to discover the theologies of culture arising from Hull 2017. This original research will make an impact on both the church leaders of Hull, the wider Christian church and theological academy by revealing more about the nature of God, and the beliefs and practices of Christian leaders in marginalised and deprived cities in the UK.

In the next chapter, I will explore how I will achieve my aims and objectives by using qualitative research, grounded theory method and visual research methods in order to collect and analyse data.

Chapter 2: Methodology & Method

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I introduced the aims of my research: to explore the theology of Hull as City of Culture, both in terms of my participants' theologies of culture, and how God might be working in Hull in 2017. In this chapter I will explain how a pragmatic epistemology, qualitative research methods, grounded theory methodology and visual methods of data elicitation are best suited to uncover this contextual theology.

2.2 Qualitative methods of research: grounded theory and visual research methods

Qualitative research methods are vital in the generation of contextual theology: they allow the researcher to 'get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.12). Indeed, qualitative research has its roots in theology and the practice of hermeneutics: 'originally, with Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768– 1834), hermeneutics was developed as a methodology for interpreting texts, notably biblical texts', and it is this 'art of interpretation' which is fundamental to all qualitative research (Brinkmann et al., 2014, p.20). In the late nineteenth century, Wilhelm Dilthey extended the practice of interpretive hermeneutics to human life itself, as he 'developed a descriptive psychology, an approach to understanding human life that was fundamentally different from how the natural sciences work. We explain nature through scientific activity, Dilthey said, but we have to understand human cultural and historical life' (Brinkmann et al., 2014, p.21). In the early twentieth century Heidegger's *Being and Time* marked a shift from Dilthey's life hermeneutics to ontological hermeneutics:

> Schleiermacher's methodological hermeneutics had been, "How can we correctly understand the meaning of texts?" The epistemologically oriented hermeneutics from Dilthey had asked, "How can we understand our lives and other people?" But ontological hermeneutics - or "fundamental ontology" as Heidegger also called it - prioritizes the question: "What is the mode of being of the entity who understands?" (Brinkmann et al., 2014, p.21).

The study of texts had become the study of knowing.

My research questions ask what Hull Christian leaders' theological understandings of culture are, and how and why their understandings of culture might change over 2017. As this involvement with conceptual thought involves people sharing their thoughts, beliefs and experiences in a variety of ways, qualitative research is necessary to allow me to 'study

things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2012, p.4). The meanings which my participants attach to understandings of faith and culture will be crucial, and qualitative research gives me more space and nuance to understand these meanings. Swinton and Mowatt write that qualitative research

> assumes that human beings are by definition "interpretive creatures"; that the ways in which we make sense of the world and our experiences within it involve a constant process of interpretation and meaning-seeking (Swinton and Mowatt, 2006, p.28).

Qualitative research assumes that the world is not simply 'out there' waiting to be discovered. Rather, it recognizes 'the world' as the locus of complex interpretive processes within which human beings struggle to make sense of their experiences including their experiences of God. Identifying and developing understandings of these meanings is the primary task of qualitative research. This understanding of qualitative research fits into my pragmatic epistemology (explored further in section 2.2.3), and 'unabashedly subjective' nature of contextual theology I am working within (Bevans, 2002, p.4).

2.2.1 Grounded theory methodology

Within this qualitative methodology, I used grounded theory methodology to further understand the theology arising from Hull in 2017. My approach to this research was inductive rather than deductive: I believe the most authentic answers to my questions lie with the Christians of Hull and will develop over 2017. I therefore needed a research method which enabled inductive research, and prioritised the significance, knowledge and wisdom of the research participants. These features are all found in grounded theory methodology. Grounded theory methodology consists of

> systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analysing data to build middle-range theoretical frameworks that explain the collected data… Grounded theorists develop analytic interpretations of their data to focus further data collection, which they use in turn to inform and refine their developing theoretical analyses'(Charmaz, 2006, p.2).

Glaser and Strauss's steps to produce grounded theory are summarised by Charmaz as follows:

- Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis
- Constructing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses
- Using the constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis
- Advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis.

- Memo-writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps
- Sampling aimed towards theory construction, not for population representativeness
- Conducting the literature review after developing an independent analysis. (Charmaz, 2006, p.7)

Grounded theory prioritises the stories and experiences of participants, and allows theory to develop from their responses. This focus on the participant also corresponds with my use of contextual theology, which also prioritises human experience. In grounded theory, Charmaz calls for researchers to study people in their natural settings; in contextual theology Bevans asserts that all attempts to understand God and the Christian faith start from and sit within a particular context, and understanding this context enriches our theological understanding (Charmaz, 2006, Bevans, 2002). Bevans argues that contextual theology adds to the traditional theological focus on scripture and tradition, a third *locus theologicus* of present human experience, which is crucial because 'the human person and society is the source of reality' (Bevans, 2002. p.4). In their shared focus on the experience and thoughts of participants, grounded theory is an appropriate methodology to reveal contextual theology.

Despite the fit between grounded theory and contextual theology, it is not a commonly used methodology in theological research. Articles include H.J.C. Pieterse's 'Grounded theory approach in sermon analysis of sermons on poverty and directed at the poor as listeners' (Pieterse, 2010), Shaun Joynt and Yolanda Dreyer's essay 'Exodus of clergy: A practical theological grounded theory exploration of Hatfield Training Centre trained pastors' (Joynt and Dreyer, 2013), and Richard Lee Starcher's thesis *Africans in pursuit of a theological doctorate: A grounded theory study of theological doctoral program design in a non-Western context* (Starcher, 2003). However, Theo Pleizier's study *Religious Involvement in Hearing Sermons* is the most in-depth use of grounded theory methods within a theological context (Pleizier, 2010). Although Pleizier is working within the wider field of practical rather than contextual theology, his focus is similarly on the wisdom and experience of his research participants. He sees grounded theory's generation of theory from data as generating 'an integrated, explanatory, and parsimonious conceptual rendering of a religious area' (Pleizier, 2010, p.13). Pleizier's practical theology calls for application: 'the theory-praxis relationship is a pivotal yet complex topic in practical theology methodology'. He argues that the theory he generates must be able to influence the pastoral cycle of experience, social analysis, theological reflection, and action (Pleizier, 2010, p.19). This means that his theory must be

comprehensible to the practitioners working in his field of preaching, as well as fellow academics. As I want my research to be of use to a wider public (discussed further in chapter 7), it is similarly vital that my publics recognise and understand the theories generated from their data. In the methodology of grounded theory, the theory emerging from the process should be understandable by not only the researcher and fellow academics, but also by lay people within the research context. Glaser and Strauss describe this as follows:

> the best approach (as) an initial, systematic discovery of the theory from the data for social research. Then one can be sure that the theory will fit and work. And since the categories are discovered by examination of the data, laymen (sic) involved in the area to which the theory applies will usually be able to understand it (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.3).

Bruce Stevens argues that the potential of grounded theory method has not been fully realized in practical theology. He argues that 'qualitative research using grounded theory has been published but it has been exploratory and largely descriptive. Theological reflection is often an afterthought, and not the goal of the research' (Stevens, 2017, p.201). He recognises that the 'goal of developing theology from the experience of believers has been broadly accepted', especially in the fields of liberation theology and ordinary theology (Stevens, 2017, p.203). However, he sees the extant studies he reviews as exploratory, with merely descriptive results: he wants to 'see the full potential of theological creativity, from the ground up, better realized'(Stevens, 2017, p.204). I believe that the theology of culture arising from Hull 2017 is just such a creative theology, that it is 'generative of theology' and 'applied insights', fulfilling the potential of grounded theory method (Stevens, 2017, p.204).

2.2.2 Origin of grounded theory

Grounded theory was developed by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss in the 1960s. Following their participant focussed study of people dying in hospitals, the pair advanced their theory of grounded theory in their 1967 book, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Glaser and Strauss came from different academic backgrounds and brought different influences to the methodology. Strauss's background was the Chicago School of social research with its emphasis on qualitative research methods, and Glaser came from Columbia University, which stressed the importance of empirical research and developing innovative ways in using quantitative methods (Bryant, 2002, p.28). In the construction of grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss attempted to redress what they saw as a loss of focus in the social sciences. They saw a preoccupation with theory verification to the detriment of theory

generation: 'Since verification has primacy on the current sociological scene, the desire to generate theory often becomes secondary, if not totally lost, in specific researches' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.2). They also pushed against the prevailing positivist dominance in the social sciences, which treated theory as

> a statement of relationships between abstract concepts that cover a wide range of empirical observations… Positivist theory aims for parsimony, generality, and universality, and simultaneously reduces empirical objects and events to that which can be subsumed by the concepts. Positivist theory seeks causes, favours deterministic explanations, and emphasizes generality and universality (Charmaz, 2006, p.126).

In its place, Glaser and Strauss favoured interpretive definitions of theory which emphasised 'understanding rather than explanation' (Charmaz, 2006, p.126).

However, grounded theory method did not prevail in the academic climate of the 1960s where quantitative and positivist methodologies held sway: 'Strauss observed that within this climate it took approximately two decades for GT [grounded theory] to rise in the estimation of their contemporary American sociologists and to begin to be appreciated' (Kenny and Fourie, 2014, p.3). However, as more and more books, journals, and papers either employed grounded theory or disseminated its methodology, it began to grow in popularity and moved from the field of health sciences to speech and hearing sciences, nursing, psychology, medicine, cinematography, business, information systems, social work, education, anthropology, and religion (Kenny and Fourie, 2014, p.3). Two separate approaches to grounded theory emerged over the decades. Strauss, together with Juliet Corbin, took grounded theory away from the original concept developed with Glaser. Strauss and Corbin 'revised the original precept of a natural emergence of a theory from data, to be discovered by the researcher. Instead, they devised a highly analytical and prescriptive framework for coding, designed to deduce theory from data systematically… underlined by the philosophy of pragmatism and symbolic interactionism (Kenny and Fourie, 2014, p.4). Glaser was hugely critical of this development, and continued to promote 'classic' grounded theory, developing many of the original tenets, including theoretical sampling, theoretical coding and theoretical memos (Kenny and Fourie, 2014, p.5). In this thesis, I follow the constructivist approach of Kathy Charmaz, which I will explore further in section 2.2.4.

2.2.3 Epistemology of grounded theory

'Every methodology rests on the nature of knowledge and knowing,' and the epistemology of knowledge and knowing that underlies grounded theory methodology is the pragmatist

epistemology of Dewey and Mead (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.1). Both Glaser and Strauss's academic backgrounds stressed a pragmatist approach: 'the epistemological assumptions, logic and systematic approach of grounded theory methods reflect Glaser's rigorous quantitative training at Columbia University, and the influences of positivism,' and Strauss's Chicago school heritage of seeing 'human beings as active agents in their lives and in their worlds rather than as passive recipients of larger social forces' (Charmaz, 2006, p.9). Pragmatism is a constructivist philosophy, understanding knowledge as something which is created by people via their experiences of the world. Knowledge is socially constructed, and is always being reconstructed. Corbin and Strauss give two key assumptions that pragmatists must make:

> one is that truth is equivalent to "for the time being this is what we know – but eventually it may be judged partly or even wholly wrong". Another assumption is that despite that qualification, the accumulation of knowledge is no mirage. The world is not flat nor the Milky Way the centre of the universe; neither is the discovery of electricity and all its theoretical and practical implications to be disregarded (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.4).

Under pragmatism, knowledge is subjective and filtered by the prism of experience. 'The act of knowing embodies perspective. Thus, what is discovered about "reality" cannot be divorced from the operative perspective of the knower, which enters silently into his or her search for, and ultimate conclusions about, some event' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.4). These elements of pragmatism influence the practice of grounded theory. In this methodology, theory is co-constructed by the researcher and by research participants, as their joint understandings of the issue under research come together to create a theory.

Pragmatism is not incompatible with a Christian worldview, although it is perhaps not an immediately associated philosophy. Pragmatism's understanding that truth and knowledge are provisional, continually being added to and recreated, and created by people via their experiences of the world might seem to sit at odds with the orthodox Christian view that God is the source of all truth and understanding. However, one of the founding-fathers of pragmatism, William James, saw no incompatibility:

> I firmly disbelieve, myself, that our human experience is the highest form of consciousness extant in the universe. I believe rather that we stand in much the same relation to the whole of the universe as our canine and feline pets do to the whole of human life. They inhabit our drawing rooms and libraries. They take part in scenes of whose significance they have no inkling. They are merely tangent to curves of history the beginnings and ends and forms of which pass wholly beyond their ken. So we are tangent to the wider life of things. But, just as the dogs and cats have daily living proof of the fact, so we may well believe, on the proofs that religious experience

> affords, that higher powers exists and are at work to save the world on ideal lines similar to our own (James, 2000, p.131).

Corbin and Strauss' second key assumption is also crucial: that 'the accumulation of knowledge is no mirage' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.4). Human accumulation of knowledge about a numinous world, about a Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer God, is no mirage. It may not be complete, but it contains truth. Divine revelation may not be fully understood, but it is real.

James also writes that

> both our personal ideals and our religious and mystical experiences must be interpreted congruously with the type of scenery which our thinking mind inhabits. The philosophic climate of our time inevitably forces its own clothing on us. Moreover, we must exchange our feelings with one another, and in doing so we have to speak, and to use general and abstract verbal formulas. Conceptions and constructions are thus a necessary part of our religion' (James, 1904, p.432).

In other words, our understanding of the divine is always shaped by the context in which we live, and mediated by our own human experience, and the human experiences of others. I follow this pragmatic understanding that our knowledge of reality and of the divine is always partial and contextually shaped. From this pragmatic understanding comes my use of contextual theology which insist on studying people's experiences in order to understand God better, and grounded theory, which allows concepts and theories to emerge from my participants.

2.2.4 Constructivist grounded theory

Despite Glaser and Strauss' emphasis on interpretive definitions as described above, grounded theory methodology has been criticised as containing a subtle positivistic premise and its assumptions of an objective, external reality (Charmaz, 2000, p.510). Bryant writes that

> the problem with GTM (grounded theory method) is that the method is offered in terms of both a qualitative, interpretive one, and a "good, scientific" one. It is important that qualitative research should strive to be rigorous, but unfortunately the latter aspect of GTM has "emerged" rather more strongly than the former, and it has done so in the guise of an idiosyncratic caricature of rigour, expressed in scientistic terms. GTM writings are still predominantly couched in terms of an expert researcher dispassionately investigating a research domain (Bryant, 2002, p.35).

Bryant sees grounded theory methodology as 'founded on phenomenalism, guided by induction. The only possible conclusion that can be made from all this is that GTM developed from an epistemological position that was positivist, and that it has failed to justify or to shake off this inheritance' (Bryant, 2002, p.37).

These criticisms are addressed by Kathy Charmaz in her construction of constructivist grounded theory, which stems from a pragmatic rather than positivist epistemology. Charmaz was taught grounded theory by both Glaser and Strauss, and was among the first group of doctoral students in the newly established doctoral programme in sociology in the University of California, San Francisco, which had been instituted and chaired by Anselm Strauss (Kenny and Fourie, 2014, p.5). She took Glaser and Strauss' invitation in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* to employ grounded theory flexibly in the researcher's own fashion, and developed a constructionist approach (Kenny and Fourie, 2014, p.5). Charmaz defines constructionism as placing 'priority on the phenomena of study' and seeing 'both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data'. She sees constructionism as part of interpretive theory, which calls for the 'imaginative understanding of the studied phenomenon' and which assumes 'emergent, multiple realities; interdeterminacy; facts and values as inextricably linked; truth as provisional; and social life as processual'(Charmaz, 2006, p.231).

Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory counters Bryant's criticism, ensuring that the researcher is aware of their place within the research and construction of theory. This constructivist approach 'not only theorizes the interpretive work that research participants do, but also acknowledges that the resulting theory is an interpretation… The theory depends on the researcher's view; it does not and cannot stand outside of it' (Charmaz, 2006, p.130). Within constructionist grounded theory, both the researcher and the participants construct theory, and both bring their implicit assumptions and understandings of the world. The theory generated is therefore a social construction, 'is contextually situated in time, place, culture and situation' (Charmaz, 2006, p.131). Charmaz notes that grounded theory has within it both positivist and interpretive leanings. Glazer's work stresses the positivist elements, and Strauss and Corbin's work has some positivist leanings, but also emphasizes their respondents' voices (Charmaz, 2000, p.510). Charmaz builds on Strauss and Corbin's approach, but gives a gives a slightly different emphasis to the procedural steps of grounded theory (described above), which I followed. In data collection, Charmaz stresses 'studying people in their natural settings' with a 'relationship with respondents in which they can cast the stories in their terms. It means listening to their stories with openness to feeling and experience' (Charmaz, 2000, p.525). In coding, theory development and memo-writing, Charmaz advises the researcher to keep going back to the respondents' data to ensure the researcher is

prioritizing the participants' understandings, rather than their own assumptions (Charmaz, 2000, p.525). This approach addresses Bryant's criticism of grounded theory as 'scientistic' process where 'an expert researcher dispassionately investigating a research domain' (Bryant, 2002, p.35), by giving priority to the participants' experiences and stories, and acknowledging the preconceptions and starting assumptions of the researcher. It is in these experiences and stories where the contextual theologies of Hull will arise.

2.2.5 Visual research methods

In order to explore my participants' theologies of culture in Hull 2017, I chose to use visual research methods. Visual research methods are frequently used within ethnography and sociology and can consist of different practices, techniques and methods. Knowles and Sweetman give three theoretical approaches to visual images within social research: images as evidence, images as constructing reality, and images as texts. Regarding images as texts comes from the 'realist paradigm exemplified by early anthropological fieldwork' where images are 'representations of reality and an uncomplicated record of already existing phenomena or events' (Knowles and Sweetman, 2004, p.5). A poststructuralist perspective leads to regarding images as helping construct reality, operating 'as part of a regime of truth'. In my research, I will be coming from Knowles and Sweetman's third approach, regarding images as 'texts which can be read to uncover their wider cultural significance' (Knowles and Sweetman, 2004, p.5).

I chose to use visual research methods to explore theologies of culture because images can access more information, and different kinds of information, than can be gained in an interview using words alone. Douglas Harper argues that one reason for this may be due to the evolution of the human brain:

> the parts of the brain that process visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information…. Images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words; exchanges based on words alone utilize less of the brains capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words (Harper, 2002, p.13).

Visual research is particularly useful in the study of religion, allowing deeper and richer understandings of participants' beliefs and practice. Dunlop and Richter argue this is because 'images operate on a subconscious, intuitive level, which means they are often able to transcend religious language and lead to fruitful discourse about spirituality and belief'(Dunlop and Richter, 2010, p.209). In his research among young Buddhist monks in

Sri Lanka, Jeffrey Samuels discovered that his interviews using images were much richer than his word-only interviews, and allowed the monks to speak more deeply about their religion and practices (Samuels, 2007, p.219). Rosalind Pearmain describes the use of images as generating a 'bigger space' for talking about spiritual experience (Pearmain, 2007, p.80). Visual research methods not only tap a deeper level of human understanding, but create a wider arena in which to discuss religion and spirituality. They take into account the subjective and personal nature of faith, allowing the viewer to see a scene through the eyes of the person taking the photograph, bringing the body, self and identity of the researcher and participant into the process. Visual research methods are crucial tools for the generation of contextual theology: it is only by exploring my participants experiences and thoughts that I will understand their theologies of culture, and how they saw God working in Hull in 2017.

2.2.6 Photo elicitation

I use photo elicitation methods in my research. Photo elicitation is 'the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview' (Harper, 2002, p.13). Although apparently simple, this technique can produce deep responses from participants. In my first interviews I used images I took in Hull to generate thoughts and discussion about culture and God, and in my second interviews my participants and I discussed photographs they had taken during 2017. I use the term 'photo elicitation' to describe both interviews where I have taken or provided the images to be discussed, and interviews where the participants have taken the photographs. Photo elicitation with images taken by participants has much in common with the practice of photovoice, but I do not see my interviews with pictures taken by participants as true photovoice. Photovoice does include participants taking pictures, but this happens within a framework of community action and with the aim of provoking change in a community (Harper, 2012, p.191). As such, my use of participants' images is more passive, and designed to understand their worldviews more, rather than to work with them to produce change in a community.

Photo elicitation leads to rich data because it allows participants to speak freely. Whether the researcher or the participants' images are being used, they 'act as a medium of communication between researcher and subject' (Clark-Ibáñez, 2007, p.177). During an interview using photo elicitation, the researcher and participant focus on the image, minimising awkwardness and reducing hostility. The interview becomes less confrontational, and more collaborative, as both researcher and participant are involved in decoding or

understanding an image. The photograph ‘becomes a bridge between people who may not even understand the extent to which they see the world differently’ (Harper, 2012, p.158). This creative collaboration is important because it moves the research participant from being a passive object of study to an active, empowered co-creator of research. This principle of empowerment and co-creation, which is also crucial to grounded theory methodology, means that more can be discovered in the research than in word-only interviews. Firstly, the participants have more of an investment in the research: empowerment and collaboration mean they are more likely to take a real interest in the research and engage more thoroughly. Ammermand and Williams describe this process as participants becoming ‘fieldworkers who reveal answers to questions researchers might never have asked… They can guide us down new conceptual paths helping us see the social world in new ways’(Ammerman and Williams, 2012, p.7). Creative collaboration in photo elicitation leads to the empowerment of the participant, yielding deeper, richer, and more surprising data.

Another feature of photo elicitation which can lead to that richer data is its ability to ‘break the frame’ of reference of both researcher and participant (Harper, 2002, p.21). The photographs used can ‘exercise agency, causing people to do or think things they had forgotten, or to see things they had always known in a new way’ (Banks, 2008, p.70). This can apply to both researcher and participant, and Banks cautions the researcher engaged in visual research methods to be prepared for the unexpected: the major strengths of visual research methods ‘lies in uncovering the previously unknown or unconsidered dimensions of social life’ (Banks, 2008, p.121). This is due to that ‘breaking of frames’. Harper describes his experience of interviewing farmers about their work, when the photographs he used were not eliciting deep reflections from his participants. He reflected that the images he used might be too familiar to the farmers, looking like illustrations in farm magazines. It was only when he began using aerial and historical images that ‘suddenly taciturn farmers had a great deal to say,’ as these familiar and yet unfamiliar images worked to ‘jolt subjects into a new awareness of social existence’ (Harper, 2002, p.21). The familiar framing of their world had been broken, and a new framing lead to deeper reflections. It is the use of images provided by researcher that can provide this fresh perspective and push conceptual boundaries, as used in my first interview with participants. However, images provided by participants can also ‘break the frame’ of the researcher’s concepts of their topic, providing the surprises Banks warns about. This is what Samuels encountered in his interviews with young Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka: their photographs of an ‘ideal monk’ transformed his understanding of their

religious beliefs and practices. In his word-only interviews he asked the young monks what their understanding of an 'ideal monk' was, and their responses were formulaic and fully in line with their religious doctrine. However, when he gave them a camera and asked them to take photographs of an 'ideal monk.' the monks they chose to photograph, and the comments the young monks gave about these 'ideal monks' were much more nuanced and personal, and transformed Samuels' understanding their religious beliefs and practices (Samuels, 2007, p.213).

This mutual 'breaking of frames' illustrates why I have chosen to use both my and participants' photographs in my two interviews. I wanted to give them an unfamiliar perspective on ideas of religion and culture to provoke rich responses, and I also wanted to be presented with images unfamiliar to me, so I could gain deeper understanding of the participants' beliefs and practices. Using a standard set of images across the first interview also allowed me to use a 'measure of consistency and ability to compare reactions to a given image across the sample' (Dunlop and Richter, 2010, p.212).

2.2.7 Visual research and grounded theory method

Although the two are not commonly used together, visual research methods are a good fit with constructivist ground theory method. The empowerment of participants and co-creation of research that photo elicitation enables can be an example of Charmaz's 'relationship with respondents in which they can cast the stories in their terms' (Charmaz, 2000, p.525). Examples of research using grounded theory methodology and visual research methods include Liebenberg, Didkowsky and Ungar's work with the Negotiating Resilience Project, helping young people confront adversity, and Konecki's study of hatha yoga practitioners (Liebenberg et al., 2012; Konecki, 2011) Liebenberg, Didkowsky and Ungar found that the combined use of visual research methods and grounded theory 'encouraged youth to work with the researchers to create an interpretation of their data that were meaningful to them and which could also speak to a larger audience'. They found that the grounded theory and visual data allowed them to explore 'the taken-for-granted in the lives of youth' (Liebenberg et al., 2012, p.59). Again, this research with vulnerable and marginalised young people shows the use of visual research methods to empower participants and gain data that would not otherwise be reached. This was of particular importance to me for my research in Hull. Although my participants were all adults, and most of them were church leaders, their experiences of life and education were hugely varied. My participants included people who

had left school at 16 and had experiences of deprivation and poverty. Hull is one of poorest cities in the UK: according to the 2015 Indexes of Multiple Deprivation, Hull is ranked as the 3rd most deprived local authority in England (out of 326 local authorities); 52% of Hull's Local Super Output Areas are amongst the most deprived fifth of in England. Seven of Hull's wards are amongst the 1% most deprived wards in England, with a further seven Hull wards among England's most deprived 10% of wards (Hull City Council, n.d.). I chose visual research methods to allow my participants to feel as empowered in the research process as possible, and share their beliefs and understandings with me, so I could discover the theologies arising from Hull in 2017.

2.3 Research procedures

In the following section, I will explain my selection of participants, the choice of photographs for my first photo elicitation session, and the process of both photo elicitation interviews.

2.3.1 Selection of participants

I decided to fix my study within the boundaries of Hull as defined by the City Council. This would mean leaving out towns on the edge of Hull such as Cottingham and Hessle, where Christians and churches would probably be engaging in City of Culture activities. I felt this was worthwhile, however, as I did not want to add in extra variables of how the City of Culture related to the context of towns and villages. My focus is on the urban context of Hull, and in chapters 5 and 6 I will explore my results in the context of urban theology in the UK.

In order to explore the understandings of culture and theologies of culture arising from City of Culture 2017, I needed to select a group of participants to interview. I chose to interview church leaders; both those who have a formal leadership role such as priest or minister, and those who have a more informal leadership role in the church. Most of my participants were priests or ministers, but two held more informal roles. One of these people was a city councillor, and the other was a prominent activist in his denomination. I chose to interview leaders because of their influence in the church community. These priests and minsters are often the theological and practical "gatekeepers" for their congregations, and their beliefs and attitudes will influence their congregations' beliefs and attitudes. Their decisions on how to engage with City of Culture would heavily influence their churches' engagement in 2017. There was also a practical reason for this choice: church leaders are more visible than lay

people or congregation members, and therefore easier to make contact with. Their role as church leaders means they have time set aside for "religious" matters and discussions, and therefore might have more time to talk to a researcher than someone who is working outside a church context, or who is a full-time parent or carer. However, it would be interesting to conduct further research into which compares church leaders' theologies and lay people's ordinary theologies of culture.

I wanted to ensure that my participants represented the different churches in Hull, and different areas of relative affluence and deprivation in Hull. I ensured that my participants came from different churches, rather than just different denominations, recognising that churches within one denomination may have hugely different theologies and beliefs. There are some Anglican churches in Hull whose theologies and practices are closer to those of independent Evangelical churches, and some which are closer to Roman Catholic churches. Independent Evangelical churches can have hugely differing beliefs and attitudes, despite similarities on oversight and governance.

As of 2017, there were 78 churches in the city of Hull1. Of these 78, 30 were Anglican, 15 independent Evangelical, 13 were Methodist, 9 were Roman Catholic, 3 were United Reform, 2 were Baptist, 2 were Pentecostal, 2 were Salvation Army, and there was 1 Lutheran church and 1 Quaker Meeting House. I did not have the resources to speak to a participant from each church, so I selected 20 churches to draw participants from: roughly a quarter of Hull's churches. This number does not allow me to generalise to the church population of Hull, or indeed the wider country. I cannot say, "because these representatives of five Anglican churches believe X, the other Anglican churches in Hull, or the rest of the UK, also believe X". However, this does allow me to generalise to theory. My research with these 20 church leaders allows me to generate knowledge to develop theories, which can be taken by other researchers and tested against a wider population. In practice, I found that 20 participants were a good number to interview. Towards the end of my interviews, I found that participants responses started to echo those of participants I had interviewed earlier: I had reached a point of data saturation. This happened with different topics, such as the role of "good" and "bad"

1 This was my best estimate from searching online and speaking to church leaders in Hull, but I recognise that there may be small or house churches which do not have a public profile, which I may have missed.

culture (discussed further below) and the role of creativity in culture. Towards the end of a set of interviews my participants' responses on these topics started to sound very similar, and I realised I had reached a point of saturation. Of course, if I had interviewed more people, I may have gained other perspectives on these issues, but I was struck by the similarity of my participants' responses on many topics. This suggests to me that the choice of 20 participants was valid, and allowed strong theories to develop from the data.

Working from the perspective of contextual theology, I wanted to be attentive to the context in which my participants lived and ministered. As well as recognising the potential for denominational differences in my participants' theologies of culture, I wanted to take into account the relative deprivation of the area in which the church was located. In order to make my research understandable, repeatable and comparable, I needed to use a standard form of measuring deprivation. I used the UK Government's Indexes of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) which is used by councils, local authorities as well as major charities such as the Church Urban Fund, to select my churches. The IMD comprises data on income, employment, health deprivation and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, crime, and living environment. The Public Health department of Hull City Council has done a great deal of work analysing IMD data and mapping it against Hull's wards and subwards. Using their Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) Deprivation Atlas (Hull City Council, n.d.) I was able to plot how many churches there are in the different areas of Hull.

The JSNA divides the subwards that make up Hull into five quintiles of deprivation. In Quintile 1 (the least deprived areas) are the Beverley, Boothferry, Bricknell, Holderness, and Kings Park subwards. Quintile 2 is made up of Avenue, Derringham, Ings, Newland, and Sutton, and quintile 3 of Drypool, Pickering, Southcoates West, and University. Quintile 4 consists of Bransholme East, Bransholme West, Longhill, Marfleet, and Newington, and quintile 5 (the most deprived) is made up of the Myton, Orchard Park, Southcoates East, and St Andrews wards. The following table shows the number of churches in each quintile and denomination.

	Anglican	Methodist	Independent Evangelical	Roman Catholic	United Reform	Pentecostal	Baptist	Salvation Army	Lutheran	Quaker	Total
Quintile 1	6	4	2	2	1		1				16
Quintile 2	5	3	4	3	1						16
Quintile 3	4	2		2	1						9
Quintile 4	6	2	2	1							11
Quintile 5	9	2	7	1		2	1	2	1	1	26
Total	30	13	15	9	3	2	2	2	1	1	78

Table i: All Hull churches by denomination and quintile of deprivation

In order to research approximately a quarter of the churches, I needed to select approximately a quarter of the churches in each denomination, and a quarter of the churches in each quintile. I chose to ensure the denominations with fewer churches were still represented in my study, so I selected the Quaker and Lutheran church, and one each of the United Reform, Pentecostal, and Baptist churches. I had hoped to be able to interview a representative of each denomination in Hull, but I was unable to organise an interview with someone from the Salvation Army: they simply did not return my emails or telephone messages. The following chart shows the number of churches I selected for my research in each quintile and denomination.

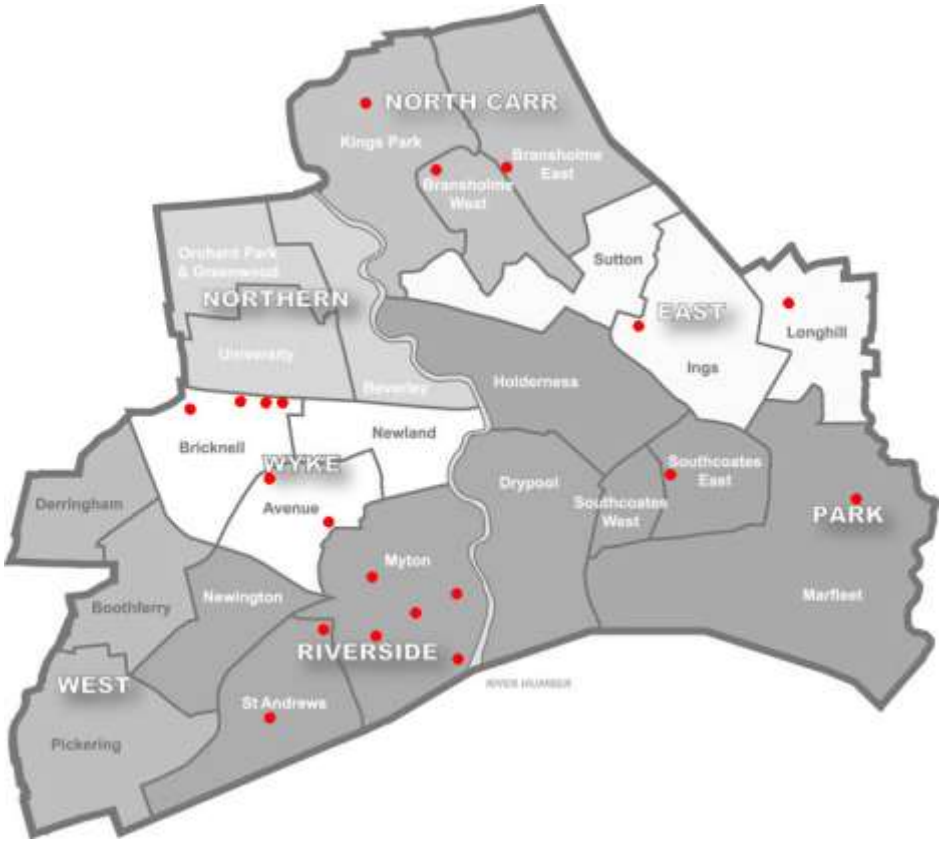
	Anglican	**Methodist**	**Independent Evangelical**	**Roman Catholic**	**United Reform**	**Pentecostal**	**Baptist**	**Salvation Army**	**Lutheran**	**Quaker**	**Total**
Quintile 1	1	1	1	1			1				**5**
Quintile 2	1			1	1	1					**4**
Quintile 3											**0**
Quintile 4	3		1								**4**
Quintile 5	2		1	1		1		0	1	1	**7**
Total	**7**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**20**

Table ii: Participants' churches by denomination and quintile of deprivation

I had hoped to interview a representative of each quintile in Hull, but in ensuring a denominational spread, and a general spread between quintiles 1 and 5 meant that I did not select a church from quintile 3. My participants came from the following churches:

Quintile	Name	Denomination	Subward
1	Cottingham Road Baptist Church	Baptist	Bricknell
1	Bricknell Avenue Methodist Church	Methodist	Bricknell
1	Kingswood CofE	Anglican	Kings Park
1	Hull Community Church	Independent Evangelical	Bricknell
1	Our Lady of Lourdes and St Peter Chanel	Roman Catholic	Bricknell
2	St Ninian's and St Andrew's, Chanterlands Avenue	URC	Avenue
2	St John the Baptist Newington	Anglican	Avenue
2	Church on the Way	Pentecostal	Avenue
2	St Francis of Assisi, Ings; St Mary, Queen of Martyrs, Bransholme	Roman Catholic	Ings; Sutton
4	St Margaret's Welcome Centre, Longhill	Anglican	Longhill
4	St John's Bransholme	Anglican	Bransholme East
4	St Hilda's Marfleet	Anglican	Marfleet
4	Bodmin Road	Independent Evangelical	Bransholme West
5	Holy Trinity Hull	Anglican	Myton
5	Quaker Meeting House	Quaker	St Andrews
5	Jubilee	Independent Evangelical	Myton
5	Danish Church of St Nikolaj/ Danish Seamen's Church	Lutheran	Myton
5	Amazing Grace	Pentecostal	Myton
5	St Aidan's Southcoates	Anglican	Southcoates East
5	St Charles Borromeo	Roman Catholic	Myton

Table iii: Names of participants' churches, denomination, ward and quintile of deprivation



Map i: Location of wards, sub-wards and participants' churches in the city of Hull (Hull Labour Group, n.d., amended by the author with dots to indicate the location of participants' churches).

As discussed above, I had planned to interview church leaders. However, 2 of my participants were not church leaders in the traditional sense: they were not "in charge" of their particular congregations, but instead were prominent figures within their denomination and in the ecumenical life of the city, and attached to particular churches.

My priorities in selecting participants were to speak to people from a range of denominations, whose churches were located in a range of areas of relative affluence or deprivation in Hull. This meant, however, that I was not able to take into account other variables, and my participants were not particularly varied in terms of age range, gender, or race. Only three of my participants were women, and only one participant was black. I did not ask my participants their ages, but I estimate that one was in his twenties, two were in their thirties, four were in their forties, six were in their fifties, five or six were in their sixties, and one or two were in their seventies. My average participant was a white man in his fifties or sixties, and I suspect that this is representative of church leadership in general in Hull. I estimate that

at least five of my participants were born in Hull, and over half had ministered in the city for over ten years. Only a few participants had come to Hull more recently, but all lived and ministered within the city. Only two had been born outside the UK. I will explore in chapter 6 how my participants were concerned about social inequalities, and the roles that race and class play in culture. My participants expressed a desire for people to flourish together, embracing differences in race and living in unity. However, they did not speak in a similar way about gender imbalances. In the light of this, I would ensure that further research included more female participants.

2.3.2 Photography for photo elicitation interview 1

As discussed above, I chose to use photo elicitation techniques to help my participants and I construct theories about the relationship between God and culture, to articulate theologies that might arise from Hull in 2017. In my first interviews I used images I took in Hull to generate thoughts and discussion about culture and God, and in my second interviews I used photographs which my participants took during 2017.

I am not a professional photographer. My experience with a camera comes from my previous jobs as a communications and press officer, photographing events and taking pictures for websites, social media and newsletters. Many of my photographs have been printed in local newspapers over the years, but I have had no formal training: everything I learned was from watching press photographers at work, and helping them set up photo opportunities. I took the majority of the pictures for photo elicitation session 1 in Hull on Thursday 18th August and Friday 16th September 2016, using a Canon EOS 350 DSLR. My plan was to take photographs which would enable my participants to reflect on the concepts of religion and culture, and the relationships between religion and culture, and God and culture. In order to do this, I needed the photographs to be familiar enough to my participants to be relevant to them, and yet unfamiliar enough to provoke a response, as in Douglas Harper's research with farmers (Harper, 2002, p.21). I therefore took photographs in Hull, but tried to find unusual angles or interpretations. I included iconic Hull landmarks, but tried to photograph them in ways that were not standard: the Humber Bridge with a telescope in the foreground (1), and the statue of Philip Larkin at the railway station, where a passer-by had serendipitously tucked some flowers in Larkin's glasses (15). In some of my photographs I tried to reference some of Hull's historical fishing industry, with pictures of the Arctic Corsair (a side-winder

trawler that is now open to visitors, picture 23) and the Spurn Lightship (8). I tried to include different sides to Hull as a city: as well as the fine buildings in the city centre, I photographed the high-rise Padstow House (19) and the Orchard Park shops and sports centre (18). I included what might represent traditional, or 'high' forms of culture, such as the Ferens Art Gallery (picture 13), Hull Truck Theatre (16) and the Albermarle Music Centre (17)2. I included pictures which might provoke thoughts on 'low' or less formal forms of culture: street art on a telephone exchange box (5), The Duke of Edinburgh pub (14), and the KCOM Stadium (21).

There were five photographs included which I did not take myself. When I returned home from my photography trips, I saw the lack of a photograph of a sports stadium and of the Hull Mosque (26), which I thought could provoke interesting questions on Hull's culture. I therefore added a copyright-free image of KCOM Stadium and of the Hull Mosque. I had struggled to take pictures of crowds, so I also sourced images of crowds (27 and 28) and a band playing at the Freedom Festival (29) from Hull City Council's Flickr stream (with a Creative Commons license).

In her research into the religion of British 15 to 25 year olds, Sara Savage found that ambiguous images, rather than traditional or even alternative religious images have the most potential for eliciting talk about religion (Savage et al., 2006, p.125). I therefore tried to capture some ambiguous images that could elicit talk about God or culture: flowering plants behind a fence (6), crowds of people (27 and 28), and a sculpture of a fish (24). I did also take more conventional images of Hull's churches, but with an added aspect or dimension: a person waiting at traffic lights in front of Trinity Methodist church (4), a 20 mile an hour sign in front of Hull Community Church (5), and Holy Trinity church with a digger in front of it (11).

Inevitably, these pictures carry my own subconscious assumptions and understandings of culture and of God. I am the person behind the lens, shaping and creating the image, carrying a life-time's worth of experiences along with the camera. Giving my participants my images to comment on runs the risk that I have primed them with my own implicit understandings of

2 For a full list of pictures used, their reference numbers, and dates and locations taken, see Appendix 3.

culture and of God. In his paper on *The Rhetoric of the Image*, Roland Barthes recognises that an image cannot be bare or naive of all signifiers, even if it lacks textual markers:

> In the photograph - at least at the level of the literal message - the relationship of signifieds to signifiers is not one of 'transformation' but of 'recording.' and the absence of a code clearly reinforces the myth of photographic 'naturalness': the scene is there, captured mechanically, not humanly (the mechanical is here a guarantee of objectivity). Man's interventions in the photograph (framing, distance, lighting, focus, speed) all effectively belong to the plane of connotation (Barthes and Heath, 1987, p44).

However, Barthes argues that 'images are always polysemous; they imply, underlying their signifiers, a 'floating chain' of signifieds, the reader able to choose some and ignore others (Barthes and Heath, 1987, p39). Nevertheless, in order to ameliorate any possible priming of ideas of culture or God, I made sure my participants had a good selection of images to choose from: 29 images in all. This made some of my research a little unwieldy: my participants took a long time to look through all the images, and some of the less visually impactful images may have got lost in such a large number. However, I felt this was worthwhile in order to give them a wide selection to choose from. Grounded theory method also takes into account the impact of the researcher in the process. Knowledge is understood to be subjective and filtered by the prism of experience, and theory is co-constructed by the researcher and by research participants as their joint understandings of the issue under research come together to create a theory. It would be impossible to take photographs free of any "taint" from the researcher's concepts of the subject: all that can be done is to be aware of this, provide a wide variety of images to choose from, and give the participants all possible agency to provide their own meanings for images. I also made sure that my participants had their own opportunities to provide their own photographs. In the first interview, I asked them to take photographs in 2017 which might remind them of culture, of God, or of the relationship between the two. This process meant that the images used to discuss God and culture would not come from me alone: they would provide their own images, which might counter mine entirely.

2.3.3 Photo elicitation interview 1

My first photo elicitation interviews were conducted in October, November and December 2016. The interviews took place in my participants' churches, church offices or in their homes, in locations and at times which were most convenient to my participants. Wherever possible, I sat next to or at 90 degrees to my participants, so we could look at the photographs together. I tried to avoid sitting directly opposite my participants so as to reduce any

"confrontational" elements of the research: as described above, I wanted my participants to be active, empowered co-creators of research rather than passive objects of study. I recapped my research and its aims, asked my participants to sign the consent forms, asked permission to record the interview on a dictaphone, and gave them my photographs to look through. I then asked them the following questions:

1) Please pick a photograph which is most like what you think of, when you think about culture. Why didn't you pick these other ones?
2) Is that culture in general, or Hull's culture?
3) Is there a difference for you?
4) Is there a picture here that reminds you of your church's teachings?
5) What picture best fits in with what culture looks like in your church?
6) Is there a relationship between God and culture? What is that relationship?
7) What is your view of culture, in spiritual terms?
8) In your view, which photo fits in with what God might think about culture?
9) If this (picture/s they have selected earlier) is culture, where is God in relation to that?
10) How long have you lived in Hull?
11) How long have you been involved with your church? Is this the only church you've been involved with?
12) Since you've been at your church, what sort of cultural activities has it been involved in?
13) What will your church be doing to get involved in the City of Culture in 2017?
14) Do you think you'll be the main person engaged in activities in 2017? If not, who do you think will be?

These questions were designed to help me answer my research questions, as described in section 1.4. Photo elicitation interview questions 1, 2, 3, 5 and 12 were designed to help me answer the research question "What are Hull Christian leaders' understandings of culture, and how and why do these change over the City of Culture year?". Questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12 were designed to help me answer the research question "What are Hull Christian leaders' theological understandings of culture, and how do they change over 2017?". Questions 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 were designed to help me answer the research question "How do Hull Christian leaders' theologies of culture relate to their engagement with City of Culture 2017?"

As my interviews progressed, I found myself sometimes needing to put in additional questions. When we were talking about God and culture, some participants introduced the concepts of "good" and "bad" culture, and I asked them to spell out what they meant by "good" and "bad" culture. In subsequent interviews, I thought introducing concepts of "good" and "bad" culture might help participants explain what their theologies of culture, so I asked them if they thought there were such concepts as "good" and "bad" culture. In other interviews, I felt the topic of the City of Culture had not been talked about much, or could be explored more, so I asked those participants what City of Culture meant to them, or how they felt when the heard Hull had won the City of Culture bid.

As the interviews went on, I also tried to allow participants to "talk" to one another, by introducing one participant's ideas to another in a subsequent interview. For example, the participant in interview 5 used the phrase 'dislocation', like the dislocation of a limb, to talk about the pain and disconnection of Hull's fishing community being moved to outer estates in post-war slum clearances. I found the word resonant, and asked the participant in interview 9 what he thought of that idea.

2.3.4 Photo elicitation interview 2

At the end of the first interview, I asked my participants if they would be willing to take photographs during 2017 that said something to them about God and culture. I reminded them about this at several points during 2017. Towards the end of 2017, I arranged the second photo elicitation interview with my participants. I interviewed 16 of the original 20 participants in January and February 2018. Of the four participants who were not interviewed the second time, participant 1 (United Reform Church) did not reply to my requests for an interview, participant 6 (Roman Catholic) had retired, participant 7 (Anglican) had health difficulties which precluded an interview, and participant 14 (Anglican) had moved away from the area.

Unfortunately, I was also experiencing health difficulties in early 2018, which meant I could not drive. This meant it was much harder for me to travel to the churches or homes of my participants, particularly those who did not live or work in the city centre, but were on the outer estates. One participant was visiting my home town of York for a meeting, and kindly offered to meet me in a café near her meeting venue. I was able to travel to the homes or

churches of 4 of my participants in Hull, but there were 11 who I would struggle to travel to. Instead, I invited these 11 participants to meet me in a city centre location, and they all kindly agreed. I interviewed most of these people in the Admiral of the Humber (Wetherspoons) pub on Anlaby Road. I chose this location partly because I could walk to it from the station, and it was close to train and bus routes and car parking for my participants. This Wetherspoons also has booths along the sides of the rooms which provided more private areas to talk and discuss the photographs. There were two participants who preferred not to meet in the Wetherspoons, and we met instead at cafés near the station: sadly, these were much noisier than the Wetherspoons, which made the interview a little harder to conduct. Meeting in a pub or a café rather than a church also had the serendipitous effect of bringing our conversations out of a church context, and into the wider life of the city. A good example of this was in the 2018 interview with participant 15 (Pentecostal). Talking about God, he said:

> He is in this here, God is here, if somebody can picture God, even if people are busy drinking, they're busy smoking and everything but you can still, you're sitting down here all by yourself as you're reading, I sense in my spirit that God is here.

Having the interview in the pub meant that participant 15 was able to share with me his understanding that God is present everywhere and with all people, not just in a church or Christian context.

Of the 16 people I interviewed in 2018, 8 had taken photographs. The ones who had not taken photographs were very apologetic about it, and explained that it had been due to a lack of time, and pressures of work as a church leader. I asked those 8 participants who had taken photographs the following questions:

1. What does this picture show?
2. Why did you take this picture?
3. How do these pictures speak to you about culture and God?
4. What sort of things did your church do for City of Culture in 2017?
5. Why was it you did those activities?
6. What will you remember most about City of Culture 2017?
7. Do you think your understanding of culture has changed over 2017?
8. Do you think this view has been influenced by anything you've read or heard? Do you know where these views might have come from?
9. Do you think your understanding of God and culture has changed over 2017?

With those participants who had not taken photographs 2017, I asked questions 4 – 9. I also made the pictures from interview 1 available to all participants, in case they wanted to refer to them again.

As with photo elicitation interview 1, the questions for photo elicitation interview 2 were designed to help me answer my research questions, as described in section 1.4. Photo elicitation interview questions 1, 2, 3 and 9 were designed to help me answer the research question "What are Hull Christian leaders' theological understandings of culture, and how do they change over 2017?". Questions 4, 5 and 6 were designed to help me answer the research question "How do Hull Christian leaders' theologies of culture relate to their engagement with City of Culture 2017?". Questions 7, 8 and 9 were designed to help me answer the research question "What are Hull Christian leaders' understandings of culture, and how and why do these change over the City of Culture year?".

2.4 Ethical considerations

In order to ensure my research followed ethical guidelines, I obtained freely given consent via a participant information sheet (appendix 1) and a consent form (appendix 2). My participants had at least 48 hours to read the participant information sheet and consent form before the commencement of the interview, to ensure they had time to decide whether they want to take part. Participants were assured that they were able to withdraw from taking part right up to the point of publication, without having to give any reason and without judgment, and if so, the data gained would be deleted. They were informed of their right to withdraw in a consent form presented to them before the first interview, and which needed to be signed before the interview took place. To further ensure ethical research I have ensured that all participants are anonymous, and I maintain the confidentiality of their data. However, I explained to my participants that if they were a public figure and their identity could be worked out from a context, even if their name was not included, I could not ensure anonymity. I only proceeded to interview if the participant was happy with this situation.

The only ethical risk I could identify in my research, albeit a relatively minor one, was due to my previous role as Communications Officer for the Diocese of York. For the previous 7 years I had worked alongside some of my participants: clergy and lay people in the Anglican churches in Hull, and the churches' ecumenical steering group on the City of Culture project.

I therefore identified a risk that some participants might forget the change in role, and share things with me, feeling I was still a colleague and not a researcher. I addressed this by reminding them of my change in role at the beginning of the interviews, and checking they still consented to be involved at the end of the interviews.

There was also a risk associated with the Anglican participants, that some of them may still see me as a Church of England "official". It is possible that emotions associated with the Diocese of York, whether positive or negative, could be carried over into relationships with me, even though I no longer worked for the Diocese. This could lead to "contamination" in data from interviews with me, as emotions separate from the topics of theology or culture are present in their answers. I managed these risks by reminding all participants with whom I had had a previous relationship about the change in my role, and the nature and purpose of my research. In practice, I did not find any difficulties: the 11 participants who I had known before my research were friendly and welcoming, but understood my change in role and the change that made to our relationship. They occasionally referred to events that we had both taken part in in previous years, or people we both knew, but all within the context of the research, and always in a way that was relevant to the questions I was asking.

2.5 Conclusions

My methodology stems from a pragmatic understanding of epistemology. I believe all knowledge is provisional and created by people via their experiences of the world. Such an epistemology is entirely compatible with a Christian faith; all knowledge of God is provisional and fluid, but such knowledge is no illusion, and is part of the revelation of God. Indeed, I believe that a pragmatic epistemology underpins much of contextual theology, which sees knowledge of God as dependent on context. Pears sees the development of contextual theology as being in line with such post-enlightenment and postmodern thinking, which rejects the idea of universal claims to truth, and post-structuralist thinking which sees knowledge as fluid and shifting (Pears, 2009, p6-8). This pragmatist epistemology and desire to understand people's experiences of the world leads me to use qualitative methodology, and in particular, constructivist grounded theory method. Grounded theory prioritises the experiences and stories of participants, and also ensures that the researcher is aware of their place within the research and construction of theory. In order to further prioritise the experiences and stories of participants I used visual research methods, which allowed

participants to speak freely, become creative collaborators in the research process, and challenge the researcher's familiar frames of reference.

In practice, I found the use of visual research methods straightforward and highly productive. In my first interviews, giving my pack of photographs to my participants as the first feature of the interview seemed to calm any nerves they might have. Giving them familiar images instantly shifted their position in the interview and made them the experts. A good example of this was participant 17 (Pentecostal): she was someone who I later discovered was born and bred in Hull, and had left school at 16. She seemed very nervous when we sat down to talk, and when I asked her to pick a photograph that spoke to her of culture, she said she was not very good at making decisions. However, once she was looking through the photographs, she became much more confident, saying:

> I've got, that's quite interesting, I've got some of the historical ones, I was born in, I lived in Hull all my life, so it's quite important to me. So, there's those, and those, 'cos they quite remind me of culture.

Giving her familiar images allowed her to regain some confidence, some "expertise" in the area of study, and speak to me about the concept of culture. At the other end of the spectrum was participant 20 (independent Evangelical), who chose not to use the images and spoke about the concept of culture without prompting. I later discovered he was one of the few participants who had read and thought about the relationship between God and culture, and was clearly confident in his ideas. However, most participants were closer to participant 17 than participant 20: they needed the photographs to prompt conversation about an abstract concept such as the nature of culture. These visual research methods and the grounded theory used in my research are an excellent match with contextual theology, and allow for the generation of theology and the discovery of how God was at work in Hull in 2017. I will explore the impact of my methodology further in chapter 7.

In the next two chapters I will explore the rich and deep data emerging from the methods described in this chapter. Chapter 3 will explore Hull Christian leaders' understandings of culture, and how and why these changed change over the City of Culture year, and chapter 4 will explore my participants' theological understandings of culture, and their engagement with City of Culture 2017.

Chapter 3: Culture

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explained why qualitative research methods, grounded theory method, visual methods of data elicitation, and a pragmatic epistemology are vital in the creation of contextual theology. In this chapter, I will present the data which is a fundamental building block to this theology, and start to answer my first research question:

1. What are Hull Christian leaders' understandings of culture, and how and why do they change over 2017?

I will examine their responses in conjunction with critical understandings of culture and explore why they hold these understandings of culture. (I will examine my participants' theologies and understandings of God in relation to culture, and research questions 2, 3 and 4 in forthcoming chapters.) As discussed in the previous chapter, the results explored below arise from the two rounds of interviews conducted with my participants.

In line with grounded theory method, I analysed my interviews line-by-line, allocating initial codes to my participants' replies. I created the codes by summarising my participants' ideas rather than using their exact wording, as I found they often expressed themselves in tangential ways. After conducting the line-by-line coding, I grouped the initial codes into focussed codes. This involved constant comparison, comparing the initial codes with each other, and allowing wider, focussed codes to develop. For example, in the first interviews, the following initial codes emerged:

Holding the Hull Fishing Heritage Art Exhibition in 2017, chosen as a partner for City of Culture
Seeing that the City of Culture team liked that the exhibition celebrated local culture at the heart of that community
Drawing together the fishing families with the exhibition
Drawing together young artists, STAND, the Hull Bullnose Heritage Group, the Fishermen's Mission, ex-fishermen and primary schools for the exhibition
Meeting with the museum to look at Icelandic links
Meeting with Alan Johnson and the Icelandic ambassador
Commemorating joint losses with Iceland
Seeing the link to Iceland as part of Hull's culture
Understanding there is no anger towards Iceland, but anger towards the government of the time for not protecting the fishing industry
Seeing Hull as a hard seat for MPs, having to fight for their constituents
Understanding the pressures of working in the fishing industry meant fishermen didn't have the time on shore to push for change
Seeing that political change came from fishermen's wives

Holding cultural events in the past including the Amy Johnson Festival, with street performers and art groups
Including the young people from the centre in the Amy Johnson Festival
Using the festival to help these young people learn new skills, build friendships, and build confidence
Understanding God at work in such activities helping people to grow
Understanding God wants people to flourish
Seeing the opportunity of opening the church up for exhibitions and bringing people in to the church
Seeing people wanting to tell their stories
Seeing that sharing these stories allows people to touch on God's story
Sitting with people to hear their story
Hoping to tell the story not just of the fishermen, but the people who worked on shore as well
Allowing people to share their memories in the exhibition
Gathering memories
Understanding shared memories as making people what they are
Hoping people will see this as part of a bigger story including God

Table iv: Example of initial codes from interview 1

I compared these initial codes with each other, and the developed the following focussed codes:

Holding the Hull Fishing Heritage Art Exhibition in 2017, chosen as a partner for City of Culture	Church link with fishing industry
Seeing that the City of Culture team liked that the exhibition celebrated local culture at the heart of that community	Church serving community
Drawing together the fishing families with the exhibition	Church link with fishing industry
Drawing together young artists, STAND, the Hull Bullnose Heritage Group, the Fishermen's Mission, ex-fishermen and primary schools for the exhibition	Church link with fishing industry
Meeting with the museum to look at Icelandic links	Icelandic links
Meeting with Alan Johnson and the Icelandic ambassador	Icelandic links
Commemorating joint losses with Iceland	Shared losses and grief
Seeing the link to Iceland as part of Hull's culture	Icelandic links
Understanding there is no anger towards Iceland, but anger towards the government of the time for not protecting the fishing industry	Icelandic links
Seeing Hull as a hard seat for MPs, having to fight for their constituents	Politics

Understanding the pressures of working in the fishing industry meant fishermen didn't have the time on shore to push for change	Politics
Seeing that political change came from fishermen's wives	Role of women
Holding cultural events in the past including the Amy Johnson Festival, with street performers and art groups	Amy Johnson
Including the young people from the centre in the Amy Johnson Festival	Encouraging young people to learn new skills
Using the festival to help these young people learn new skills, build friendships, and build confidence	Encouraging young people to learn new skills
Understanding God at work in such activities helping people to grow	God wants people to flourish
Understanding God wants people to flourish	God wants people to flourish
Seeing the opportunity of opening the church up for exhibitions and bringing people in to the church	Church serving community
Seeing people wanting to tell their stories	Sharing stories
Seeing that sharing these stories allows people to touch on God's story	Sharing stories
Sitting with people to hear their story	Sharing stories
Hoping to tell the story not just of the fishermen, but the people who worked on shore as well	Fishing industry links
Allowing people to share their memories in the exhibition	Sharing memories
Gathering memories	Sharing memories
Understanding shared memories as making people what they are	Sharing memories

Table v: Example of initial and focussed codes from interview 1

Charmaz describes coding as the process of stopping and asking analytic questions of the gathered data (Charmaz, 2006, p.109). My initial codes allowed me to start defining what my data contained, whilst maintaining a close focus on my participants' responses: I found this process echoed Charmaz's description of coding as an 'interactive analytic space'. My initial analysis felt like a dialogue with my participants' responses and meanings (Charmaz, 2006, p.109). As I compared my initial codes, I was able to find similar themes, which became my focussed codes. These focussed codes showed early directions for the theories generated by the data. Charmaz reminds us of the researcher's role in generating theory in tandem with their participants' data: as I chose the initial codes which seemed most relevant, to develop

them into focussed codes, I was playing a role in shaping these emerging theories (Charmaz, 2006, p.138). Again, this is coding as an 'interactive analytic space'.

I then took these focussed codes and used them to write memos. I wrote 9 memos from the codes in the first interviews, and 6 memos from the codes in the second interviews. In grounded theory method, memo-writing forms the 'pivotal intermediate step between data collection and writing drafts of papers. When you write memos, you stop and analyse your ideas about the codes in any - and every - way that occurs to you during the moment' (Charmaz, 2006, p.162). This memo-writing progresses the analytic journey, moving from writing about codes and data, to writing about theoretical categories. For example, I compared the following focussed codes emerging from interview 1, and wrote a memo around the emerging theme of fishing, grief and memory:

Fishing industry
Loss
Shared grief
Dispersal of the fishing community to new estates
Continuity of community in the face of dispersal
Culture of the estates
Self-contained, and isolated
Estates parochial
Drawing in of horizons
Indifference
Blitz
Dislocation
Undermined
Story that had not been heard
Memory
Churches as custodians of memory
The role the church could have in allow people to share their stories
Folk memory of going to church among a younger generation
Continuity of community has led to a stronger link to the church

Table vi: Example of focussed codes from interview 1

I found that, per Charmaz, certain codes did 'stand out and take form as theoretical categories', and the process of memo-writing created another 'interactive space' where I could engage with the data (Charmaz, 2006, p.162). The focussed codes emerging from interviews 1 and 2, and the memos themes they generated, can be found at appendices 4 to 8. It is from these memos, and the theories emerging therein, that section 3.2 in this chapter, and

the sections in chapter 4 are generated. Appendix 8 shows the different pictures which each participant chose to describe culture in interview 1. I hope this clear trail of evidence and process fulfils Stevens' call for grounded theory to be more transparent in theological research, giving a structured means of evidencing the findings (Stevens, 2017, p.204).

As well as looking at the coding and analysis of my participants' replies, this chapter will also look at my participants' responses to the photographs that I used in my initial interviews, and the photographs which my participants took in 2017 and were discussed as part of the second interviews. I do not separate out the analysis of the photographs and the coded analysis of the interviews, as this would be an artificial distinction: in the interviews, discussion started with the photographs, but flowed to more abstract concepts, and back to the photographs again.

3.2 Participants' understandings of culture

Culture is a concept in everyday usage, and yet enormously complex: Raymond Williams called it 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (Williams, 2014, p.87). My first research question asks what Hull Christian leaders understand by the concept of culture, and how that changed over 2017.

3.2.1 Interview 1 – what is culture?

High culture

In interview 1, I asked my participants to choose a photograph that reminded them of culture, and we discussed why they chose that picture and not any others, whether their picture reminded them of culture in general or Hull's culture in particular, and if there was any difference between these two concepts3. I hoped that by asking about the general and specific, we might be able to tease out different elements of their understandings of culture. In these discussions, 18 of the 20 participants mentioned perceived facets of "high culture" such as theatre, poetry, modern art, and orchestral music. Participant 17 (Pentecostal) chose the Humber Bridge and telescope, the street art on telephone exchange box, the Spurn Lightship, the street art on building, and the Arctic Corsair sign (pictures 1, 5, 8, 10, 23),

3 Some participants could not select just one photograph: I tried to encourage these people to select three, but a couple of people chose five.

saying ‘I might have picked, I might have chosen some more, like that would have gone with the art thing. I don't know, I think, I think of art as culture’.

Image i: Photo elicitation image 1 – the Humber Bridge and telescope

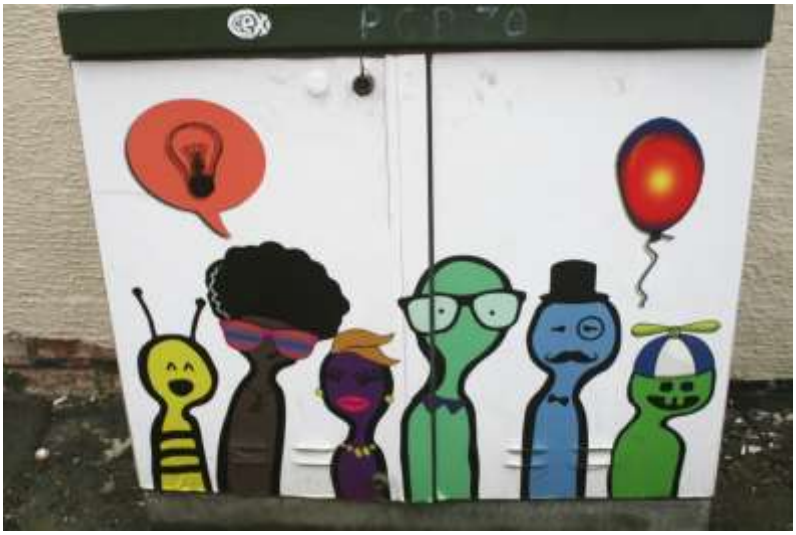


Image ii: Photo elicitation image 5 - street art on telephone exchange box

Image iii: Photo elicitation image 8 - the Spurn Lightship

Image iv: Photo elicitation image 10 - street art on building

Image v: Photo elicitation image 23 – the Arctic Corsair sign

Participant 6 chose Hull Truck Theatre (picture 16), saying, 'I looked at the art gallery, I looked at the graffiti. I saw the concert, and they're all culture like, but you asked me to pick one and I've been a couple of times to that… Well, it covers one of the many art forms that people usually associate with culture as a part of human life really'.

Image vi: Photo elicitation image 16 – Hull Truck Theatre

Participant 14 chose the statue of Philip Larkin, Hull Truck Theatre, and the crowd at Hull Freedom Festival (pictures 15, 16, 27), talking about poetry, art and theatre. Participant 3 (Anglican) chose the picture of the Ferens Art Gallery (picture 13), and the street art on building, saying 'I think it's talking about what's coming out of the local people, how we live,

what our priorities are, what our values are, and sorts of things like that. And I guess art and culture are sort of pretty close as far as we're concerned today'.

Image vii: Photo elicitation image 15 - Philip Larkin

Image viii: Photo elicitation image 27 - crowd at Hull Freedom Festival

Image ix: Photo elicitation image 13 - Ferens Art Gallery

The concepts of art and culture were often mentioned together, and "high" art and the visible or audible products of culture were clearly at the forefront of my participants' minds when explaining what culture meant to them. This was generally discussed as a positive thing, but of the 18 participants who mentioned elements of high culture, 4 explicitly rejected high culture as either not to their taste or as not the best way of describing culture. Participant 13 (Danish Lutheran) rejected high culture due to personal taste, saying 'You may put it that way, that culture in Hull is more people's culture. It's not very nice to say, but could you call it low culture? It's that, in fact I like it, because this high-quality culture is not really my kind of stuff. I like better to be among people'. Participant 2 (Baptist) felt high culture was not the best way to understand culture, saying 'So, whether you start getting snooty and start saying culture is only the high-brow stuff, then you could say that to what degree is an Arctic, the back of an Arctic fishing boat, the old fishing trawler'.

As shown by these above quotes, some participants felt that Hull did not have high culture. Participant 1 said 'My experience of Hull has not been that it is a place that is particularly culturally vibrant,' participant 7 talked about 'the life that most people lead, and their experience of a rather denuded culture,' and participant 20 (independent Evangelical) said 'My view, having lived here for 20 years, is that Hull is one of the least artistic cultured places in the UK'. These participants were often clear that this 'denuded' culture was a result of economic deprivation: participant 7 explained this saying

> In people's everyday lives their opportunities for experiencing arts and culture are extremely limited… It's not that people don't have, or might not have cultural sensibilities, it's not that they don't enjoy colour or music or something, but they're experience of that will be extremely limited by the circumstances in which they live. Which is why we're looking at a pretty crappy shopping street, because that's where a pretty large proportion of Hull people live, the people I'm bothered about to be honest. The opportunities for arts and culture to impinge on those lives are pretty limited.

This was a common understanding: my participants felt culture meant the arts, and that social and economic circumstances meant the people of Hull did not have access to this sense of culture.

Lived experience

The secondary way that my participants described culture was as a lived experience. Participant 11 (independent Evangelical) chose the crowd at Hull Freedom Festival (picture 27), saying 'they all say something to me about culture, but, each is like a facet of culture, a side to it, so art is part of culture, church is part of culture, theatre, music, but I picked that because it's really about people... it's who we are, more than what we do. Our culture is a part of us, it's a part of our character, our, the way we think, the way we view the world that we live in'. When I asked participant 2 why he chose the picture of the street art on the telephone exchange box (picture 5), he replied that 'a lot of the others were specific type of culture, so sporting, theatre, environmental, even architectural culture. But that one to me spoke of more cultural expression, being more human'. Participant 10 (Quaker) chose the picture of the Orchard Park shops and the crowd at Hull Freedom Festival (pictures 18 and 27). Talking about the latter he said, 'I just felt that picture represented human beings being together and that's, in essence, what it's about for me – being human'. Participant 4 (Methodist) chose pictures of the street art on the building, the Arctic Corsair sign, and the fish sculpture (pictures 5, 23, 24), saying 'if you come into City of Culture, this is what you're going to get, this is what you're going to immerse yourself in. So it's trying to give you the whole package, the whole cluster of values, beliefs, memories, history, creativity, which goes to make culture in that sense'.

Image x: Photo elicitation image 18 – Orchard Park shops

Image xi: Photo elicitation image 24 – fish sculpture

Overall, 14 of my 20 participants talked about culture as 'what's coming out of the local people, how we live, what our priorities are, what our values are' (participant 3), 'a network of stories, a place, value, meaning, fishing industry' (participant 4), 'Everything. It's who we are – it's what has made us who we are' (participant 9, Anglican), and 'part of us, it's a part of our character, our, the way we think, the way we view the world that we live in' (participant 11). Although this understanding of culture did not come across as strongly as the sense of "high" culture, the idea that culture meant people's way of life was also strongly present.

Popular culture

A third understanding of culture which merged from the interviews was culture as popular culture. When it came to describing what popular culture was, my participants tended to talk about it as a "lesser" version of high culture, or as a way of describing the visible and audible facets of culture in a way which was more relevant to a place like Hull. So, some participants talked about sport as being part of Hull's popular culture, or popular festivals such as the Freedom Festival. Participant 9 saw high culture as a generic concept which could be applicable to any location, whereas popular culture was specific to Hull. Participant 12 (independent Evangelical) described sport as 'kind of culture… but less so.' and participant 13 chose the pictures of the street art on the telephone exchange box, the Albermarle Music Centre, and the KCOM Stadium (pictures 5, 17, 21) to describe what culture meant to him. He said:

> Well, I think this is about, this says something about people and their lives. And this is football, I'm very keen on football. And this is, what I don't know is about, is it the rugby? They may collect more people than football... This must be a general concept. Maybe this football and rugby may be typical Hull. Yes, I think so. The art is not so typical Hull.

Image xii: Photo elicitation image 17 - Albermarle Music Centre

Image xiii: Photo elicitation image 21 – KCOM Stadium

When talking about popular culture, participants still spoke about culture in the context of arts. Participant 7 chose the pictures of the Roebank Shopping Arcade, and the fibre-glass Larkin toad sculpture (pictures 20 and 22), saying

> For me, I think there's two ways of answering that [question about the nature of culture]. One is the standard definition of arts and culture type culture, and one is the culture of this city. So, if I'm talking about the culture of this city, that's probably the one I'd pick [Roebank]. You know, the life that most people lead, and their experience of a rather denuded culture is probably that arcade which is on Endyke Lane I think. And, oh. I mean, there's lots of examples of historic culture, so culture. Let's pick that one, the frog, the toad... Cos I suppose for me it represents an attempt to popularise the arts, and engage people in places like the first picture. Yeah. In the arts, in culture, in some way.

He felt that City of Culture was trying to democratise the arts for the people of Hull, and turn "high" culture into popular culture.

Image xiv: Photo elicitation image 20 – Roebank Shopping arcade

Image xv: Photo elicitation image 23 - fibre-glass Larkin toad sculpture

Transformation

Another way my participants looked at culture was as a transformative experience, or something which could improve human society or individual experience. This improving understanding of culture was expressed by 7 of my 20 participants. Participant 1 exemplified this when he chose the picture of the fish sculpture (picture 24), saying

> Culture at its best is transformational. So therefore, the whole point of having a cultural experience should be that it takes you from one place to the next… And the fish one is going from one space to another, in many ways this is about constantly evolving space, so in many ways the fish would be diving into this sort of area where

> there is sort of a lot of work, and also mystery, because we don't really know what's there yet.

Participant 14 looked at the benefits of culture to the individual: 'generally there needs to be a sense of inclusion, and of, kind of, sort of, I don't know, enlightening. Adding to people's lives, because I think culture contributes to people's resilience and strengths and things', and this was echoed by participant 18 (Roman Catholic): 'I think culture is something you try and kind of imbibe it, really, and I think going to an event, the idea you try and take some of it in'. Participant 20 explicitly tied this concept of culture as improving to Christianity, saying 'You know, so much of the arts is about, you think about music, art, theatre, reflecting on the meaning of life. And there's a real connection with faith there'.

Creativity

A few participants mentioned creativity as being part of culture. Participant 11 talked about culture being 'it's creative as well, I nearly picked one that was creative, the drawing on the wall. How much is culture about people and how much is it about our creativity, I'm not sure,' and participant 12 saw a rise in creativity in Hull, saying 'I think Hull's culture's been quite hidden, so the creativeness of what's happened in Hull has been underground almost'. When it came to talking about God and culture (which I explore further in chapter 4), creativity was a concept that came up much more frequently, but it was not to the forefront of most participants' minds when they started to think about the concept of culture.

Summary

A few participants recognised that there were different ways of looking at culture: for example, participant 20 described how:

> In my mind culture is a word that can be used for two very distinct means... So, the word culture to me means, it's an envelope word, a collective wrapper word that means all things of an artistic nature - music, poetry, theatre, dance, drama - that genre of stuff. Art… So, the culture of any country, or town, or county, is all to do with "what's it like in that place? How do we do things here? What is the local culture?" And that's nothing to do with art, or music, or drama, it's simply to do with what are the customs and the traditions and the expectations of this place.

This participant explicitly maps out the divide my participants had in their understandings of culture: the 'envelope' of high art, or the way 'we do things here' in the popular culture, traditions and customs of a place. Most of my participants used the concept of high culture to describe what culture meant to them, but many thought that Hull did not 'possess' this element of high culture. Some participants described Hull's culture as popular or 'low' culture, and others described it in ways that echo the culturalism of Williams (Williams,

1981, pp 10 - 13) and Barker (Barker, 2011, p.15), describing the everyday lived experience of people. The following table plots the most common responses given in my first interview described above: that culture meant 'high' culture, a rejection of 'high' culture, that culture meant popular culture, that culture was a lived experience, and that culture was transformative or improving.

Participant number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
High culture	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■
Rejection of high culture		■			■								■							
Popular culture		■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■			■		■		■
Lived experience		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■		■			■		■
Transformative	■				■		■					■		■				■		■

Table vii: Participants' understandings of culture, interview 1. A dark square indicates the participant used this understanding of culture in the interview.

There is a dichotomy here, or at least a tension in the idea of culture in Hull. If most of my participants defined culture via the concept of high culture, and yet they thought that Hull did not possess high culture, there is perhaps an underlying assumption that Hull is culture-less. This perhaps explains part of my participants' general enthusiasm for the City of Culture idea, which some felt was helping high culture to emerge, or to be democratised in Hull. Participant 13 said it 'seems like it [art] is coming up. I've seen there's been some happenings about art,' participant 15 (Pentecostal) talked about 'this City of Culture programme, events coming on in this city next year,' and participant 7 spelled out the perceived hopes for 2017, saying 'If we are to believe the people telling us, that is a huge part of what the whole City of Culture things is attempting to do, to engage a relatively unengaged wider public in Hull [in art]'.

3.2.2 Interview 2 – changing understandings of culture

In my second interview, I did not repeat my questions asking what culture meant, as I did not want my participants to simply repeat the answers they had given me a year ago, perhaps with memories of their answers prompted by the original set of pictures. Instead, I asked them if they felt their understanding of culture had changed over 2017, and allowed that question to lead into their understandings of culture, whether they felt they had changed or not. This allowed their answers to be more spontaneous, and not simply a repeat of their thoughts on culture in the first interview. 11 of my participants felt their understanding had not changed, 4 felt it had changed, and 1 answered ambiguously. The following chart plots my participants descriptions of whether their understanding of culture had changed in 2017, and what they thought culture was (participants 1, 6, 7 and 14 did not take part in these interviews as discussed in chapter 2).

Participant number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Views changed			■		■							■						■		
High culture		■		■					■							■	■		■	■
Lived experience		■		■						■						■				■
Culture as community		■		■											■	■				
Culture as other		■										■			■	■	■		■	

Table viii: Participants' understandings of culture, interview 2. A dark square indicates the participant used this understanding of culture in the interview. A grey square shows the participants not spoken to for interview 2.

Participant 18 was one of those who felt his understanding of culture had not changed. He said,

> I don't think my understanding of the word has changed, what I think and I hope has changed is perhaps what it means to the city of Hull because I think the people of Hull I think before 2017, had a dare I say negative culture and I think that was something that largely was put onto them because of events that have happened over the past decades really.

Participant 8 (Anglican), like many of those who felt their understandings of culture had not changed, indicated that City of Culture had confirmed their beliefs:

> I think, for me, culture is synonymous with creativity. You know, for me… Some people say, "Well, culture is the opera, or it is the ballet or…" – for me it's looking at The Deep4 and thinking, we could do something with that and projecting something on the side of it. That's creativity, that's culture.

Participant 4 felt his understanding of culture did not change, but he did learn more in 2017:

> I don't think my understanding of culture changed. I think my understanding of the place of culture and art and expression in the thinking and the world's view of where people are from, did! I think to me it was scales falling from the eyes. Simply, because of the scale of the engagement of the… people were flocking to see whatever it was, whether it was street art; whether it was projected; whether it was the turbine; wherever it was or whatever it was, if it was the turbine Blade, people were flocking to that in a way that I'd really encourage it and be illuminating.

There was one person who answered this question ambiguously. When I asked if his understanding of culture had changed, participant 9 replied 'Yes, culture is everything. We're just focussing on one particular aspect of the story and it's the fishing community's story, but we find that when we actually look at that story, it touches people in lots of different ways. So, culture is everything'. However, when I compare this with his previous interview, he also said that culture is 'everything'.

Of the 4 people who said their understanding of culture had changed, 2 saw culture as synonymous with the arts, and felt that their understanding of what the arts was had widened. When I asked if her understanding of culture had changed over 2017, participant 3 said, 'Oh yes, as soon as I realised all sorts of things are art that I probably would never have classed as art. You know, some of these things… I mean, even the Blade… You know? I wouldn't have thought that was art, but it is in a way and it… that's also a culture because it's a Hull thing!'. This comment also reveals much about the strong relationship between industry and identity in Hull. I will explore in chapter 4 how Hull's fishing industry still dominates the city's identity. This strong link between local industry and the city's identity is starting to be seen with the Siemen's wind farm construction: the blade is already seen as "a Hull thing", part of the city's culture and identity.

4 Aquarium and visitor attraction at the mouth of the Humber.

Participant 12 also felt his understanding of culture had been widened because he had been exposed to more art:

> I think it's been widened. When I did the volunteer training, one of the things they said, "You're going to be broadened". So, it's funny, even going to the Hull Truck, I'm not really into theatre but I went to theatre and I didn't mind it… I think things like… I went to the Humber Street Gallery when they had exhibitions on and looking at stuff and thinking, "I'm not really quite sure whether I like that or not". I don't really understand it but trying to understand it and appreciating watching people who were talking about and thinking, "They're really enjoying looking at this, I'm finding it fairly boring".

He felt that seeing other people enjoy arts had widened his understanding of what culture was:

> Seeing their enjoyment, that was probably the difference. When we had the Made in Hull, I was mainly involved in the main projections in the city centre but there were other things and I did spend one day going around the other things. There was a rave thing underneath the bridge which I really hated, and most people hated actually, they didn't like it. But again, there were some people and they were like, "This is what I did in the eighties". So, I think it was seeing other peoples' enjoyment of the culture.

Participant 18, a Roman Catholic priest, also felt that his sense of culture had been widened. When I asked him if his understanding of culture had changed, he replied, "Yes, I suppose it has. I suppose I always like to think of myself as being open to new ideas and I think this year I have been aware of new things that I hadn't been aware of before and I think, I would like to think my awareness has broadened".

Participant 5 (Anglican) felt that his understanding of culture had widened from just referring to the arts to also involving community:

> Yes, I think so, because we tend to think culture is kind of opera and high art and all this sort of thing. Actually, to me, culture is surely about community. Actually, it's two-dimensional, isn't it? Because, as a Christian, you know, my relationship is, "Love the Lord your God with all heart and mind and strength and soul and your neighbour as yourself" so, culture is part of the reflection of the fact that we are made in God's image.

The 'Other'

Another strand which six participants brought up in the second interviews was the concept of culture as "other"; as primarily understood in relation to other races and countries. Participant 2 showed me a photograph he had taken (image xvi) of a meal at his church, saying 'you've got the ones where we're just gathering around food so, every culture has its food and… I mean, that was kind of… I can't remember what we were doing then. Oh, that was the Indian!'.

Image xvi: photograph of Indian meal at participant 2's church

His church also held an international service as part of their City of Culture events, as did participant 12, showing me a photograph he had taken (image xvii): 'So, this is from my church, International Sunday. So, we've done it before but again, it expresses a picture of different nations. I'm dressed in my African shirt, the diversity in our church. This guy here, Martin… I don't know what he's dressed as, he looks like an African Chief with his trainers on'. These churches felt they were exploring aspects of what culture is by focussing on the different races and countries represented at their church.

Image xvii: International Sunday at participant 12's church

Similarly, participant 15, the black pastor of a Pentecostal church, was keen to show the city that people from other countries were part of Hull's culture: 'I mean I think it was still culture, but we did an open air service, we did an open air service but we managed it just to create awareness that BME we are part of the city you know and, in our church, we have about eighteen different nationalities'. He identifies this activity as part of what he considers culture to be.

As described above, 11 of my participants felt their understanding had not changed, and 4 felt it had changed, and 1 answered ambiguously. However, comparing the two sets of tables show that there were more changes in understanding of culture than my participants acknowledged or realised. In chapter 6 I will explore, in conjunction with the literature discussed in chapter 5, why my participants might have changed their views on culture, why they were open to change, and why they may not have been aware that their views changed. I will argue that this process of change is in line with theories of inculturation, where both "sides" are changed when faith and culture truly meet.

3.2.3 Learning about culture

In order to comprehend more about their understandings of culture, in my second interviews I asked my participants where their ideas of culture had come from. A few of them had thought about the concept of culture and what it meant, but only two were able to point to sources that had aided their thinking. Participant 20 was influenced by his reading in the early 1990s, especially by Donald Kraybill's *The Upside Down Kingdom*, and by Jim Wallis and Tony Campolo. He said,

> I read, I wanted to read, I realised that not all Christians think like this and that it's not just liberal people who disagree with that but there are some really good solid, still bible believing people who aren't creationists and aren't Calvinists and aren't whatever and so I think just my own intellect and curiosity drove me into a grey area theologically.

He also read the Bible in conjunction with these authors:

> The social side of things, the sort of gone are the poor and this whole thing about God not being a control freak and the whole gentleness and neatness and unassumingness in the culture of God and God's character I think comes out of that period of training, '92 to '95 where I was reading the gospels very closely and looking at what the kingdom of God meant and looking very closely at the person of Jesus, how Jesus handles people and the fact that he's a leader but he's not oppressive even.

Participant 10 was the other person who had read about culture, and felt his 'thinking [about culture] over the last ten years has essentially been an immersion in critiques of capitalism from both secular and theological spaces. So, I think all of that has essentially brought me to a place where I'm like this is what we're talking… A sort of cynicism about anything which claims to be cultural or whatever that is essentially part of the dominant culture'. In the run up to City of Culture he read Timothy Gorringe's *Furthering Humanity* and felt 'it was just a nice summary that's the summary of probably where I would say yes, as Christians, that's what we should be saying. We just actually need to be doing it rather than writing books about it'.

However, these two were exceptions. More typical was participant 2, who could not identify where his understandings of culture had come from: 'You know, unless you're brought up outside of a culture, on your own, you're in it! I expect you find it in… I suppose there's one reason why you go somewhere else and when it's so obvious the culture's different and the structures are different, because it's what you know, it's who you are! There's sort of an osmosis process, I suppose, as you come out of people'. There was the sense from many of my participants that their understanding of culture had come by 'osmosis' rather than by training, reading, or their own practical experience.

As my interviews progressed, I started asking some of my participants explicitly if they had been taught about culture as part of their training or education to be a church leader. Of the six people I asked, none had been. Participant 17 understood culture to be mainly synonymous with the arts, and she felt her knowledge of culture had been shaped by training as a worship/music leader in church. Participant 2 explained that he had been taught to understand the culture in which the Bible had been written, but not about contemporary culture:

> If anything, you're taught… I can remember, you know, doing hermeneutics, which is the sense of trying to get your head into the culture of the time of places that were originally written, so you can understand… better understand, you know, what's going on, let's say, the parable of say, ten bridegrooms, you know, what's going on there and the fact that how all weddings and the wedding ceremonies happened and occurred and were constructed, so that you can actually speak more powerfully and... rather than trying to compare it to a wedding today, which fails. You've got to go enter back into the culture.

He clarified that his training assumed that everyone knew what culture was, and that all people share the same culture in the west:

> We assume because we're sort of born in the west, it's the western… I think western churches created problems for itself because it has assumed the biblical narrative is a western twenty-first century culture, well, twentieth century culture! And it isn't! And so, you know, the scientific mindset that's only been around for two hundred years is applied to texts that the authors would have gone, "What are you talking about?!".

Some participants had not gone to theological college or Bible college, but either learned by correspondence course or on the job. Participant 17 had learned while in the role, and participant 20 had taken a correspondence course where culture was not part of the teaching. When I asked if he'd received teaching on the concept of culture, he replied:

> I didn't but then I didn't go to college I studied independently, I studied independently on a very limited number of modules by correspondence so, but equally I think you're right, it's probably not a big issue in you know, but it matters… I don't think I've invested in it enough, I don't think I've invested enough in it in college, I mean I think culture is a massive thing.

Participant 19 (Roman Catholic) was the only person who explicitly talked about the theory of inculturation. He felt missionaries travelling abroad were taught about the idea of inculturation, but when I asked if this was true for people ministering in the UK, he replied 'Ah well ….' with an air or regret. I asked if the Catholic church in Britain thought about inculturation in the context of the UK as well as foreign countries, and he replied

> Probably less so than it does when missionaries go across yes, yes because, well not because, I imagine part of it is that the clergy who're in this country haven't been

> through that rigorous analysis of the inherited ways to serve and minister to people of different cultures. So, for us it's a learning curve and I've, I have some experience now of the African culture especially in cases like weddings, it's very different from our own culture.

It is perhaps not surprising that this idea, which emerged from the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, should be known only by a Roman Catholic, but of the three Roman Catholic participants I spoke to, only one mentioned it.

In the previous section, I examined my participants' understandings of culture in relation to the "other", holding services and events to mark the involvement of people from other countries and races in their churches. This sense of culture as 'other' also came into how they learned about culture. As above, participant 19 explored the idea of learning about culture in his ministry to people from Africa. I asked participant 17 if she had received teaching about culture in her training to be a minister, and she replied that 'in the sense of culture as in other cultures then there has been a bit, because I have been to different seminars and things on, you know I had to help people, interview that were coming in from other... So, I suppose in the sense of other cultures coming along that's been …'. This had been in the context of mission:

> They talked about how now the mission is on our doorstep because we've got some of our churches have got so many other countries coming to us [unclear-0:27:38.9] the same sort of, need the same sort of training as in putting different cultures, in fact it's worse because we're not just doing one culture we've got about three or four cultures coming together.

I asked the same question to participant 16 (Anglican), who had received training on culture in relation to rural ministry, which he felt was 'other' to his urban background and calling:

> I did a module it was not by design… I had to go and do something to do with rural communities and actually, I was like, "really Lord?!", but actually it was really good and within that we probably did think about the culture of rural communities and just thinking about it and it was actually fascinating. We went and visited a rural community you know, whereas I'd been right, but actually it really, because a lot of what I learnt was probably transferrable anyway but yes, thinking about it we probably did dissect rural.

3.2.4 Summary

When asked about culture, my participants' first thoughts turned to aspects of "high" art and "high" culture. Their secondary thoughts were of culture as a lived experience, of popular culture, culture as transformative or improving, and culture as creativity. Overall, they felt Hull did not have high culture, and there was a sense that if Hull did not have high culture, it did not have any culture at all. After City of Culture had taken place, my participants tended

to indicate that 2017 had not changed their understandings of culture. Those who felt their thoughts had changed, said that they had widened to seeing culture as including different types of art. However, their responses suggested that their understandings of culture had indeed changed. There had been a shift to incorporating 'lower' or more popular forms of art in their concept of culture, and they felt the City of Culture experience democratised culture and allowed it to be enjoyed by people throughout the city of Hull.

Overall, my participants had not received any teaching about culture, either as part of their ministerial training or in secular education. A couple had read around the subject and done some thinking on the topic, and a couple had received some training that helped them think about the topic of culture. Exposure to people from different countries and with different behaviours and expectations of church had made a few participants think about ideas of culture, albeit as something which was characteristic of the "other", and not the participant's own self.

3.3 Relationship to the literature on culture

As explored above, my participants tended not to have received any formal teaching on the concept of culture. Their understandings have been shaped by wider popular understandings of what culture is: as participant 2 put it, they have received their understandings of culture by 'osmosis'. Nevertheless, these popular understandings have their roots in critical writings on culture, which I shall explore in the following sections.

3.3.1 High culture and civilisation

As explored above, when my participants where asked about culture, their first thoughts tended to be of "high" culture, of theatre, architecture, poetry, modern art, orchestral music, art house cinemas, and restaurants. This understanding of culture was the one given by the majority of my participants, even though they may have later explored other ways of understanding culture. This equation of culture and "high" art and culture emerged in British thought in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the writings of Matthew Arnold, F.R. Leavis, and T.S. Elliot. Arnold described culture as the 'the best that has been thought and said in the world' (Arnold, 1869, p.viii) and as a 'study of perfection' (Arnold, 1869, p.14). John Storey analyses four parts to Arnold's thoughts on culture: firstly, that culture is a body of knowledge, secondly, that it is the endeavour to know the best of this body of

knowledge and apply it for the good of humankind (Storey, 2018). Thirdly, it is the means to know the best of this body of knowledge and the ability to apply it inwardly, and fourthly, that this best should help the troubled conditions of the time Arnold was writing. Storey identifies these troubles as the suffrage agitation of 1866-67, the anarchy in the title of Arnold's 1869 book (Storey, 2018). Storey sees Arnold as advising that the middle class should be taught about culture to ennoble them; the working class should be taught about culture to restore them to their proper place in society, to subordinate them and remove the temptations of 'trade unionism, political agitation and cheap entertainment' (Storey, 2018, p.21). F.R. Leavis built on Arnold's thought, and wrote that 'culture has always been in minority keeping' (Leavis, 1930, p.6.): that is, the minority of the wealthy and well-educated.

This Arnoldian understanding of culture is still prevalent in British society in general, and undoubtedly has echoes in my participants' responses. This is not because they have read Arnold (in a "transmission" model of communication and understanding, with information shared by a sender to a recipient), but via a much more complex model of dissemination of information. This view of culture is at large in British society. It is evident in Lord Reith's creation of the BBC, with its remit to inform, educate, and entertain. The arts magazine for the Sunday Times is called 'Culture'. Arnold's understanding of culture as 'the best' can be traced in my participants' understandings of culture as being the products of "high" culture, as theatre, architecture, poetry, modern art, orchestral music, art house cinemas, and restaurants. They do not see working class, marginalised and deprived Hull as the natural home of culture; instead, 'Hull is one of the least artistic cultured places in the UK' (participant 20). My participants did not always accept this understanding of culture, and some, like participant 13, preferred the popular culture of Hull to more 'high-quality culture'. However, this view is still shaped by an Arnoldian sense of culture: it is a rejection of his ideas, but it still moulded by his writings and their permanence in popular thought in the twenty-first century.

Arnold's ideas that culture could improve people, and help both the individual (middle-class) person and the whole of society is also found in my participants' responses. A few participants saw culture as a transformative experience or something which could improve human society or individual experience, such as participant 1 who saw culture as 'transformational', and participant 14 who saw it as 'enlightening'. This permanence of Arnold's concepts of culture mean that my participants tend to see culture as something

which is ‘other’ to Hull. If culture is the ‘the best that has been thought and said in the world’ (Arnold, 1869, p.viii), and this best does not originate from Hull, and cannot be found in Hull, then my participants are left with the pervading thought that Hull is culture-less.

3.3.2 Cultural capital

The idea of linking class and culture was explored by Pierre Bourdieu in his writings on cultural capital. Bourdieu describes capital as presenting itself in three fundamental ways:

> as *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations (“connections”), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility (Bourdieu, 1986, p.243).

Bourdieu argues that cultural capital itself can exist in three forms:

> in the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the *institutionalized* state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee (Bourdieu, 1986, p.243).

My participants did not see themselves as possessing cultural capital. They identified more strongly with popular forms of culture rather than high culture. They saw Hull as not possessing cultural capital in the objectified state, and therefore as lacking culture in an institutionalised state. And yet, they are leaders in their communities, people who influence congregations and often have higher education qualifications. They seem to overlook the cultural capital they possess, and instead identify more strongly with the more disempowered in their communities. I will explore the impact of this perceived lack of cultural capital further in chapters 6 and 7, and argue that my participants sense of lacking cultural capital leads them to feeling powerless to enact change on a wider scale.

3.3.3 Culturalism

The secondary way that my participants understood culture was as a lived experience, a way of life. Participant 20 summed up this sense of culture as ‘What's it like in that place? How do we do things here? What is the local culture? And that's nothing to do with art, or music, or drama, it's simply to do with what are the customs and the traditions and the expectations of

this place'. Chris Barker describes this as culturalism: a focus on lived experience and empirical work, and the adoption of a broadly anthropological approach to culture (Barker, 2011, p.15). Culturalism is influenced by Marxism, and exemplified in the work of Raymond Williams, who described culture as a way of life, as an ordinary lived experience constituted by ordinary men and women (Williams, 1981, pp.10 -13). He saw culture as the lived experience of the participants and the texts and practices engaged in all its people as they conduct their lives, a tapestry of texts, practices and meanings. Culture is a realised signifying system: that is, practices of culture within a material context (Williams, 1981, p.207).

Williams' argument that culture is a lived experience was formulated in direct opposition to the Arnoldian's idea of culture as 'the best that has been thought and said in the world' (Arnold, 1869, p.viii), and my participants wrestled with these differences. Many of my participants mentioned both senses of culture as high culture and lived experience in their responses (see table 2 above). Participant 20, who seems to have done most reading and thinking about culture was able to put this into words when he described how 'culture is a word that can be used for two very distinct means', 'all things of an artistic nature', and also 'the customs and the traditions and the expectations of this place'. Williams' sense of culture as a lived experience has undoubtedly come into popular thought, where it is in conflict with pervading Arnoldian notions of culture. My participants reflect this tension, and the fact that only one participant was able to articulate this difference suggests is indicative of their lack of teaching on culture.

3.3.4 Popular culture and ordinary culture

Many of my participants mentioned the idea of popular culture; often talking about it as a "lesser" version of high culture, or as a way of describing the visible and audible facets of culture in a way which would be more relevant to Hull. This understanding of popular culture is somewhat at odds with the Marxist-influenced academic literature on popular culture since the 1960s in Britain, which saw popular culture as worthy of study in its own right.

Stuart Hall, who had been head of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham (CCCS), took two definitions of popular culture: the things that are popular 'because masses of people listen to them, buy them, read them, consume them, and seem to enjoy them to the full', and as 'all those things "the people" do or have done

(Hall, 2018, p.567-9). Like Williams' writing, the work of the CCCS is set against the attitudes of Arnold and Leavis. With regards to popular culture as a site of consumption, Hall understood people as being active in their consumption of mass-produced culture, able to subvert it and use it for their own means, and yet also be changed by this process of consumption of mass-produced culture. Hall described this as a 'continuous and necessarily uneven and unequal struggle, by the dominant culture, constantly to disorganise and reorganise popular culture; to enclose its definition and forms within a more inclusive range of dominant forms' (Hall, 2018, p.569). Hall saw the description of popular culture as 'all those things "the people" do or have done as far too broad, and instead settled on a third definition: popular culture as 'the forms and activities which have their roots in the social and material conditions of particular classes; which have been embodied in popular traditions and practices' (Hall, 2018, p.569-70). He saw popular culture as a site of continuing tension, and recognised that the question of authenticity is contradictory:

> this year's radical symbol or slogan will be neutralised into next year's fashion; the year after it will be the object of a profound cultural nostalgia. Today's rebel folksinger ends up, tomorrow, on the cover of the Observer colour magazine (Hall, 2018, p.570).

Hall recognises that folk culture is not necessarily "purer" or more authentic than popular culture, and is just as capable of being appropriated by mass consumer culture.

In contrast to the popular culture of Hall, political economists of culture such as McGuigan argue that it is the production side of popular and mass culture that matters. McGuigan argues that the role of consumption in cultural studies has been overstated, meaning that 'the economic aspects of media institutions and the broader economic dynamics were bracketed off, thereby undermining the explanatory and, in effect, critical capabilities of cultural studies' (McGuigan, 1992, p.40-1). McGuigan argues that cultural studies must seek the power dynamics inherent in mass culture production, and avoid a sentimental and populist attachment to forms of popular and folk culture. McGuigan's point is an important one: the City of Culture project in Hull is shaped by the economic assumptions behind its inception, and the prioritisation of creative industries and the regeneration of the city. Culture in Hull is a ground where power relations are being exercised, and wealth generation is being prioritised. I will discuss this further in section 3.4.

3.3.5 The other

I explored above how Arnold's understandings of culture as 'the best that has been thought and said in the world' (Arnold, 1869, p.viii) had parallels with my participants' sense that Hull was culture-less, and culture was "other" to Hull. There is a further understanding, however, of culture as a product of "the other" and only recognised when practiced by people who are "other" to the participant. This is seen in the international services held as part of City of Culture, and the exploration of the idea of culture in relation to people from other races and countries coming to the participants' churches. This understanding of culture as the property of foreign and unfamiliar people is undoubtedly influenced by globalism and the multiculturalist approach of British governments from the 1990s onwards. As will be discussed more fully in chapter 4, Hull is geographically isolated, on the peripheries of British life, and despite its port status, perhaps encountered a wider multiculturalism later than cities such as Manchester, Liverpool or Leeds. Its location on the East coast of Britain meant it was not as exposed to the slave trade in the way cities such as Liverpool were, and therefore less racially diverse. Its international exposure through the fishing trade was traditionally with Iceland, Denmark and Scandinavia: predominantly white countries whose societies perhaps felt more similar to the people of Hull than those of people arriving in recent decades from Africa, Asia or Eastern Europe.

My participants certainly felt Hull had only become more multicultural in recent decades. When participant 15, a black Pentecostal pastor arrived in Hull in the 1990s, he told me he would wave to any other black person he saw in Hull, so rare was their presence. But now, he felt 'it's changed, it's changed, so many professionals are black, they are coming in they are going, they are coming in they are going, doctors, pharmacists you know, all sorts, all sorts, all sorts. So that's culture for me'. Participants 17 and 19 indicated that they had to think about the idea of culture when people from other countries had started coming to their churches, bringing their unfamiliar culture with them. In other words, culture is something which is formed at the boundary between one group of people and another.

This idea, that culture can be marked by boundaries, is not one which is favoured by anthropologists, but nevertheless persists in popular ideas of culture. Simon Harrison argues that 'anthropologists may have now abandoned assumptions of objectively bounded societies and cultures... but the communities and actors we study often seem strongly inclined - even

increasingly so - to represent the world as if it were composed, or ought to be composed, of delimited groups of very much this sort, each possessing its own discrete "culture"' (Harrison, 1999, p.10). Harrison seeks to examine the 'nature of the boundedness of the cultural repertoires by which ethnic groups define themselves', and suggests there are two main ways these boundaries are seen: via identity pollution and identity piracy:

> In both situations, a group thereby implicitly defines its social world as divided into two radically distinct kinds of people: insiders and outsiders. What differs is the grounds on which this distinction is drawn. One kind of rhetoric [that of identity pollution] defines insiders as those who faithfully uphold the group's traditions, customs, doctrines and so forth, while outsiders are those who follow other ways, deemed inferior and defiling. Another rhetoric [that of identity piracy] represents insiders as those who are entitled to reproduce the group's traditions, customs and beliefs; outsiders are those excluded from these rights. In one case, the demarcation between in-group and out- group is drawn in the idiom of cultural purity, and in the other it is drawn in the idiom of cultural ownership (Harrison, 1999, p11-12).

As explored above, my participants often talked about "other" cultures when trying to explain what they understood by the concept of culture. I do not believe they were doing so in an attempt to ensure the 'purity' of their own cultural identity, or that they saw the 'outsider' as polluting or defiling their culture. In contrast, there is the understanding that the culture of the 'outsider' is good, and part of the wideness of God's creation across the world. Nevertheless, there is a degree of 'identity piracy' or cultural appropriation, such as white church leaders wearing African shirts. I see this being done with the best of intentions, to show that people of different cultures are all part of the same church, but it is illustrative of the concept that culture is understood in relation to the other or the 'outsider, and formed at the cultural boundary.

3.3.6 Summary

As summarised in section 3.2.4, my participants' primary understandings of culture were as synonymous with "high" art and "high" culture. This understanding of culture, which my participants have developed by 'osmosis' (participant 2) rather than by formal teaching, mirrors the influence of Arnold and similar 19th century thinkers. Davison Hunter identifies this 'osmosis' as the product of idealism:

> This tradition reaches back to Plato, though it finds its most modern and powerful articulation in the German Enlightenment - the philosophical thinking of Immanuel Kant, Gotthold Lessing, Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, and, most importantly, Georg W. F. Hegel. In a word, "idealism." Without going into an elaborate discussion, idealism is a principle and tradition in metaphysics

> that maintains that something "ideal" or nonphysical is the primary reality. It isn't as though nature or the material world doesn't exist or isn't important, but what has greater ontological significance and is certainly prior to nature and the physical, are ideas - in short, the "mind." We know this, say advocates, in part because material reality cannot be known independent of the conscious and knowing self. In the basic (and, if you will, Platonic) formulation, physical objects are just pale imitations of the ideas and ideals that represent them (Davison Hunter, 2010, p.24-25).

The ideal of culture as the brightest and best of human endeavour, in the tradition of Arnold and Leavis, is embedded in the knowing mind, and the physical expressions of elements other than this ideal do not hold the traction of the original ideal. I argue that it is this idealism and the legacy of Arnold and Leavis which leads to the sense that Hull is culture-less: if culture is the 'the best that has been thought and said in the world' (Arnold, 1869, p.viii), and this best does not originate from Hull, and cannot be found in Hull, then my participants are left with the pervading thought that Hull is culture-less.

This sense of culture is held in parallel, or in tension with, the sense of culture as a lived experience, expressed in the work of Raymond Williams. I argue that my participants are also influenced by globalism and multiculturalism in seeing culture as something which is the property of people from other countries, rather than being something my participants felt they had. It is important to note that my participants have not identified any of these critical understandings of culture: they did not talk about any of the writers mentioned above, but developed their thoughts of culture by 'osmosis' from society at large.

3.4 City of Culture

As described above, my participants primarily understand culture through the lens of high culture. Some of them preferred to champion the popular culture of Hull, but the idea of culture as high culture tended to be the first thought to come to my participants' minds. I have explored above how this concept of culture comes from the writings of Arnold, and still pervades popular understandings of culture. My participants' secondary idea of culture was as a lived experience, echoed in the culturalism exemplified by Williams. I asked whether cultural anthropology and the effects of globalism contributed to some of my participants' views of culture as belonging to people from other races and cultures, and argue that this is another way in which culture feels 'other' to Hull. However, there is another factor which may have influenced my participants' understandings of culture: the City of Culture project itself. I explored the history of the Cities of Culture in chapter 1, and in the following section,

I will explore the understandings of culture which inform City of Culture, and examine how they influence my participants.

3.4.1 Understanding of culture – the culture industry

The post 1990 European City of Culture projects, the DCMS UK City of Culture initiative and Hull City Council's bid document reveal an understanding of culture as an industry, a generator of wealth. The concept of culture as an industry first appears in critical literature in the work of Adorno and Horkheimer. Part of the Frankfurt School of thought between the World Wars, they brought a Marxist viewpoint to the study of culture, critiquing contemporary culture as a product of capitalism. Their underlying understanding of culture was as a creative product of human activity; they analyse film, radio, music, literature, and town planning (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2011, pp.94-107). This understanding of culture shows the heritage of European thought of the 19th century, but unlike Arnold, they saw culture as corrupted by capitalism rather than by the political agitation of the working class.

Adorno and Horkheimer saw the consumerisation of culture as a product of industrial enlightenment, which made culture into a system: 'Film, radio and magazines form a system. Each branch of culture is unanimous within itself and all are unanimous together' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2011, p.94). The purpose of this sameness is to trap the consumer of this culture within the system of capitalism so that these consumers can never escape the 'total power of capitalism' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2011, p.94). In a culture industry, culture is a tool of capitalism, designed to trap the worker and consumer in the capitalist system. Under this system, the producers are the experts (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2011, p.102), and the worker is hemmed 'in so tightly, in body and soul, that they unresistingly succumb to whatever is proffered to them' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2011, p.106).

A different understanding of culture as an industry is present in the work of Desmond Hesmondhalgh and Sharon Zukin (Zukin, 1996; Hesmondhalgh, 2007). They argue that the concept of Cities of Culture came out of the context of economic changes since the 1980s, as manufacturing ceased to be the economic driving force of many countries, to be replaced by consumer services. The long economic downturn and shift from manufacturing to service industries also provided a context for the rise in creative or cultural industries, aided by new communication technologies and new applications of existing technologies. This turn to

culture as industry was influenced by Richard Florida, who argued that economic and cultural life would dominate in the next century, and creativity would be a driver of social and economic change. Workplaces would move from blue and white-collar workers to no collar workers (Florida, 2002, p.21). In the UK context, Charles Landry was a crucial influence on the New Labour government as founder of cultural think-tank Comedia. He argued that cultural industries and cultural activities are important because they create meaning around the values and identity of a city; city marketing strategies associate images of culture with a high quality of life: culture is seen as a means of attracting international companies and mobile workforces; culture's role in tourism is key; and because of the social inclusion agenda: they engender the development of social and human capital (Landry, 2008, p.101).

Terry Flew identifies that in the English-speaking world, left of centre governments tend to adopt a more activist stance towards cultural policy than right-leaning ones, but their focus is more on wealth creation and creative entrepreneurs, rather than publicly funded culture. Culture in political discourse has moved from the promotion of cultural artefacts to an industry. Flew follows the criticism of Adorno and Horkheimer, and sums up the economic impetus of Blairite policies, quoting Andrew Ross' memorable take on policy discourse in the UK as '"old wine in new bottles" – a glib production of spin-happy New Labourites, hot for naked marketization but mindful of the need for socially acceptable dress' (Flew, 2011, p.18).

Despite the hopes of the DCMS and Hull City Council, not all writers are confident about cultural and creative industries and the positive impact of Cities of Culture. Kate Oakley saw culture-led urban regeneration as exacerbating economic divisions in cities, and contributing to a widening gap of inequality. Oakley argued that the desire to use creative industries as a single weapon to turn around economically depressed regions risks creating polarised and unsustainable economic development, writing that creative industries developments, if they are to succeed, cannot be disconnected from the cultural policies that nurtured them and the cultural policy that help to sustain them (Oakley, 2004, p. 67). Zukin (1996) argues that culture-led urban regeneration is often the refuge of a desperate city, writing that 'when the last factories have closed their gates and neither business nor government offers a different scenario, ordinary men and women can be persuaded that their city is ready to enter the symbolic economy' (Zukin, 1996, p.79). Her description of the concept of symbolic economy consists of two parallel production systems that are crucial to a city's material life: the production of space and the production of symbols. There is always a general strategy of

mythologizing the city to sell it as a site, and investment is sought by marketing the cultural values of place. Zukin argues that with culture-led regeneration, there are narratives of gentrification at the cost of displacing urban populations involved in artistic and cultural production. People become tourists in their own cities. She asks how can culture be 'democratic' when the city itself, as a cultural object, a representation, is being upgraded to appeal to more affluent people (Zukin, 1996, p. 273). Even Landry, the New Labour champion of culture-led urban regeneration, argues there is sometimes a lack of purpose to his regeneration: 'the new thinking needs a system for making choices, discriminating and judging, but what is its underlying basis? Surely it is the recognition of our shared humanity – one earth that predominantly lives in cities' (Landry, 2008, p.67). Any hope that culture-led urban regeneration will help whole cities is based on theories of trickle-down economics, which are increasingly shown not to work: wealth generated remains with a select few, and does not benefit a wider society.

Creative industries have also been criticised as bringing about an unprecedented commercialisation of everyday lives in the last 20 years. Jim McGuigan sees the emergence of a pervasive managerialist and market reasoning in the cultural public sector, which he sees as profound and highly questionable from the point of view of public need and responsibility. McGuigan also raises the question of value in culture: not only is there the old debate about aesthetic value and high culture, but now there is also, with the attachment of culture to industry, the idea that culture has a financial value. He argues that in a context where the free market is at the centre of political life, it is this value which is prioritised (McGuigan, 1996, p.75). Hesmondhalgh builds on this, arguing that creative industries are so important because, more than any other type of production, cultural industries create texts that influence our understanding of the world. And yet, most of the texts we consume come from powerful corporations, whose aim is to create profit (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, p.5).

The wider European City of Culture project, from which the UK initiative was born, also faces criticism. Bringing European City of Culture to Glasgow in 1990 was meant to bring urban regeneration, but Gerry Mooney argues that the 'Glasgow model' for culture-led regeneration sustains a myth rather than celebrating a reality. He argues that the image of a new, sanitised Glasgow for 1990 was at odds with the reality of life in many of Glasgow's large council estates, and in actuality, the 'Glasgow model' of culture-led regeneration

contributed to the worsening levels of poverty and deprivation and to the deepening inequalities that characterise the city today (Mooney, 2004, p.338).

The next UK European City of Culture was Liverpool in 2008. Peter Campbell argues that Liverpool's European City of Culture bid focussed most on the economic development of the city, with tourism in second place (Campbell, 2011, p.511). Cox and O'Brian argue that the research commissioned after 2008, *Impacts 08*, shows that there was no impact in the relative levels of employment in the creative industries in the city (Cox and O'Brien, 2012, p.95). They argue that Liverpool has become a myth of a success story, of a failing city turned around by culture. They see New Labour as overlooking the specificity of Liverpool's success: a combination of political leadership, cultural leadership and public and private investment, rather than exportable replicable policy. They argue that the 'Liverpool Model' of culture-led regeneration is not likely be sustainable in the foreseeable future (Cox and O'Brien, 2012, p.99). Flew also argues that we are now in a period 'after the creative industries' post 2009, raising the question: has the title of City of Culture come too late for Hull (Flew, 2011, p.30)?

3.4.2 Understanding of culture – high culture

Following Derry-Londonderry in 2013, Hull City Council bid for City of Culture in 2017. Their initial bid document gives their vision as:

> the story of a city finding its place in the UK, a city coming out of the shadows and re-establishing its reputation as a gateway that welcomes the world. The story is of Hull - a city that is proud of its people and wants to share its sense of freedom and space with the rest of the UK.
> UK City of Culture will enable Hull to deliver a transformation of opportunity for the next generation of young people. It will act as a milestone in the completion of a £190 million cultural capital programme and will strengthen Hull's partnerships nationally and internationally. The title would put culture at the heart of regenerating people and place in one of the top 10 cities in the UK (Hull City Council, 2013a, p.3).

The document lists Hull's challenges as follows:

> Hull is a city that faces challenges in terms of employment, educational attainment, health and external perceptions. Bidding for UK City of Culture will enable us to tackle these challenges and see major step changes in:
> - Cultural regeneration
> - Growing the size and strength of the cultural economy
> - Transforming attitudes and aspiration for Hull as a place to live, work and visit
> - Increasing public participation and learning

> City of Culture will create jobs, increase tourism and develop the skills of our people. It will also be a celebration of Hull's contribution to the UK. Our ambition is to make Hull a world class visitor destination known for its culture, heritage and festivals (Hull City Council, 2013a, p.4).

These aims are reiterated in Hull City Council's final bid document, which also goes into further detail about the aspirations for City of Culture:

> Our step changes
> 1. Raising aspiration and skills through increased participation and learning
> 2. Growing the size and strength of the cultural and visitor economy
> 3. Placing cultural regeneration at the heart of the city's future
> 4. Transforming attitudes and perceptions of Hull locally, nationally and internationally (Hull City Council, 2013b, p.4).

The final bid illustrates the Council's understandings of culture as rooted in the arts:

> From the opening 'Four Rivers' ceremony, with over 3,000 performers, to the commissioning of musicians to play the Humber Bridge as an instrument and our 52-week architectural journey 'Looking Up.' we will use the city as the venue. Our streets, buildings, rivers, parks, bridges and sky will play host to the imagination of artists. Our venues will show work of a quality and scale that the UK can be proud of. We will celebrate Hull's past contributions to culture from Rank to Larkin, Housemartins to the Spiders from Mars, but will focus on a new generation of writers, artists, filmmakers and musicians to reposition Hull as a cultural centre. We will draw on our cultural alumni engaging artists and cultural producers. Our commitment to new work through over £3 million of new commissions will produce site-specific events and touring work to benefit the whole of the UK. We will engage with national artists at the peak of their careers such as Mark Murphy, Liv Lorent and Tim Etchells (Hull City Council, 2013b, p.5).

The final bid document from Hull City Council reveals an Arnoldian understanding of culture as the 'the best that has been thought and said in the world' (Arnold, 1869, p.viii), which is transformed into a commercial opportunity in the work of the creative industries. The final bid document refers to a 'High quality cultural programme' which will 'deliver high quality work through incoming productions, co-commissions and the involvement of experienced artists' (Hull City Council, 2013b, p.8). It focusses on 'writers, artists, filmmakers and musicians,' and hopes that they will 'reposition Hull as a cultural centre' (Hull City Council, 2013b, p.5). Culture is positioned as something which excellent artists can use to improve Hull, in what Storey sees as Arnold's understanding of culture as 'the endeavour to know the best of this body of knowledge and apply it for the good of humankind' (Storey, 2008, p.19). There is also an implicit division of the people who create culture and those who consume it. The final bid document has a section on 'Our audience':

> Our audience development plan is based on a detailed segmentation model and analysis of a wide range of audience data. Our programme has the simple ambition to

> touch the lives of every citizen in Hull but we will target particular audiences by age, geography and social disadvantage (Hull City Council, 2013b, p.9).

This speaks of the people of Hull as audience rather than authors of the culture to be produced in 2017. The producers of the culture are the 'writers, artists, filmmakers and musicians' and the audience is 'every citizen in Hull' (Hull City Council, 2013b, p.9).

Overall, Hull City of Culture implicitly treats culture as a product, created by professional artists and to be consumed by the people of Hull. The people of Hull are an audience, not the owners of the culture. I argue that one of the hopes for City of Culture, albeit not explicitly stated, is the democratisation of an Arnoldian understanding of culture. Hull City of Culture hope that people of every 'age, geography and social disadvantage' (Hull City Council, 2013b, p.9) will be able to engage in culture, not just those people who are already engaged with culture, but it is primarily as an audience, not as creators of culture. However, this sits within a commercial framework, where this culture is to be "sold" by those in the creative industries in order to create cultural regeneration, in line with the wider Cities of Culture initiative.

3.4.3 Summary

In this section, I have explored the history of the European City of Culture projects, from an idea that 'celebrated' the finest of European culture, to an initiative that used culture as a catalyst for economic regeneration in the UK. I argue that the Cities of Culture projects stem from an Arnoldian understanding of culture of the 'the best that has been thought and said in the world' (Arnold, 1869, p.viii). In the 1990s, this understanding of culture is was influenced by the concept of culture as an industry: an idea critiqued by Adorno and Horkheimer in the 1920s, but championed by Florida and Landry in the 1990s and beyond.

This modern understanding of the culture industry has been critiqued by Oakley as exacerbating economic divisions in cities and contributing to a widening gap of inequality, and as adding to the commercialisation of everyday lives in the last 20 years (Oakley, 2004, p.67). Zukin also critiques the gentrification of cities at the cost of displacing urban populations (Zukin, 1996, p.273). Hesmondhalgh restates the warnings of Adorno and Horkheimer, writing that that more than any other type of production, cultural industries create texts that influence our understanding of the world, and yet these texts we consume come from powerful corporations, whose aim is to create profit (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, p.5).

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined my participants' understandings of culture, how these understandings changed over 2017, and where these understandings may have come from. When asked about culture, my participants' first thoughts turned to aspects of "high" art and "high" culture. Their secondary thoughts were of culture as a lived experience, of popular culture of culture as 'other' and culture as transformative or improving. They felt Hull did not have high culture, and there was a sense that if Hull did not have high culture, it did not have any culture at all. My participants did not see their understandings of culture changing after 2017, but their responses suggest that they did: there had been a shift to incorporating "lower" or more popular forms of art in their concept of culture, and they felt the City of Culture experience democratised culture and allowed it to be enjoyed by people throughout the city of Hull. In my examination of the literature on culture I have traced this view of "high culture" back to the writings of Matthew Arnold in the 19th century, and I see this as the prevailing attitude to culture in Britain today. My participants hold this view of culture alongside an understanding of culture as a lived experience, as described by Williams. My participants are also influenced by the globalism and multiculturalist policy of the last thirty to forty years in the UK, and as a result see culture as something which belongs to people from other counties, rather than something they themselves have.

My participants had not received any teaching about culture, either as part of their ministerial training, or in secular education. A couple had read around the subject and done some thinking on the topic, and a couple had received some training that helped them think about the topic of culture. Overall, my participants' understandings of culture seem to have come about through a process of 'osmosis'. It feels as though their understandings of culture are representative of wider thoughts about culture in popular society in the UK, but more research is needed to ascertain whether this is the case. There is currently little literature about popular understandings of culture in the UK, and I hope my research can provide useful data in such research.

I argue that the Arnoldian understanding of culture also pervades the whole Cities of Culture projects, from its inception in Europe in the early 1980s to its manifestation in Hull in 2017. The other major influence in the Cities of Culture project is the understanding of culture as an

industry, championed by Florida and Landry in the 1990s, and adopted by the New Labour government in the UK. The idea of culture as an industry was criticised by Adorno and Horkheimer in Germany in the 1920s, and later by Oakley, Hesmondhalgh, Zukin and others.

The literature on the UK Cities of Culture suggests that Cities of Culture, born out of the turn to creative industries and the concept of culture-led regeneration, do not regenerate cities or develop creative industries. Hull City Council's bid illustrates an understanding of culture as an industry and a source of economic regeneration, but there is a risk that Hull will not see this economic regeneration. The funding of projects may chiefly benefit the rich and educated, and any regeneration of the city risks isolating and excluding those people who live in the most marginalised and deprived areas. If culture does not actually achieve the aims of industry in job creation and wealth generation, there is a risk that the whole concept of culture could be further devalued in Hull after 2017. Within this context, there is perhaps space for the churches of Hull to establish a different understanding of culture after 2017.

Crucial to the discussion on culture, both within the literature and my participants' responses, is the concept of power: whether culture is a form of power, or a site in which power relations are exercised. Those who would see culture as a form of power would include Arnold, Adorno and Horkheimer, Bourdieu and Landry, albeit in different ways. Arnold's description of culture as a 'study of perfection' points to an understanding of culture as a form of power: it can ennoble the middle class and resist the anarchy of the working class's claims for suffrage (Arnold, 1869, p.14). Adorno and Horkheimer see contemporary culture as a product of capitalism, a way of deceiving the masses and maintaining power with the ruling classes, and Bourdieu understands culture as capable of being converted into economic, social and institutional capital (Bourdieu, 1986, p.243). Those who describe culture as a site in which power relations are exercised and relationships between social classes are realised include Hall, Williams, Hoggart and Flew. Hall described popular culture as a 'continuous and necessarily uneven and unequal struggle, by the dominant culture, constantly to disorganise and reorganise popular culture; to enclose its definition and forms within a more inclusive range of dominant forms' (Hall, 2018, p.569). Culture here is a site of continuous struggle and domination.

Most of participants did not raise the idea of power in relation to the concept of culture. However, their understanding of culture as high culture shows an underlying sense that

culture is a form of power. They felt that because Hull did not possess high culture, it lacked culture itself: the city was marginalised, deprived and therefore powerless. I see this approach also reflected in the approach of the City of Culture bid: culture needs to be brought to Hull, to increase the city's social standing and cultural capital. Participants 10 and 20 differed from my other participants: they had thought about the relationship between power and culture, and their responses expressed a sense that culture was the site of power struggles, rather than a source of power in itself. In chapter 6 I will explore further the theological implications of these stances.

The understandings of culture explored in this culture are important building blocks in constructing a contextual theology of Hull. In order to understand my participants' theologies of culture, I must understand what they mean when they talk about culture, and how God might relate to culture. However, it is also necessary to understand what culture means to people in order to understand more about God. The pragmatic epistemology I discussed in the previous chapter tells us that knowledge is provisional and socially constructed. If knowledge of God can be generated by context, that knowledge is necessarily provisional and socially constructed. The social construction of the concept of culture is therefore part of the way in which we understand God, part of the context in which divine revelation is given. We must learn about all aspects of human life and context in order to know more about God, and the concept of culture is part of that context through which theology can be generated.

In the next chapter, I will turn from analysing my participants' understandings of culture to their theologies and understandings of God. With this focus on theology, I will turn to my second and third research questions, and examine what Hull Christian leaders' theological understandings of culture are, and how do they change over 2017, and how Hull Christian leaders' theologies of culture relate to their engagement with City of Culture 2017.

Chapter 4: Results - theologies of culture

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined my participants' understandings of culture, and how and why they changed over the City of Culture year. I discussed their responses in conjunction with critical understandings of culture and explored why they held these understandings of culture. In this chapter, I will turn from analysing my participants' understandings of culture, to exploring their theologies and understandings of God. With this focus on theology, I will turn to my second and third research questions, and examine:

2. What are Hull Christian leaders' theological understandings of culture, and how do they change over 2017?
3. How do Hull Christian leaders' theologies of culture relate to their engagement with City of Culture 2017?

I will analyse these results in dialogue with the literature in chapter 6, allowing my participants' beliefs and experiences to speak in conversation with academic theologians. By allowing the weft of my participants' responses and theories weave into the warp of academic theology, a fuller picture of theologies of culture in Hull 2017 will emerge.

4.2 Interview 1: Hull's context

My second research question asks what Hull Christian leaders' theological understandings of culture are, and how they changed over 2017. In line with contextual theology, I will first examine the particular context of Hull in 2017, as described by my participants.

4.2.1 Pain, grief, and shared loss

When they talked about Hull in their first interview, my twenty participants overwhelmingly described a context of pain, grief, and shared loss. They were clear that Hull's pain and grief had not been heard by the rest of the country, and this added to the city's hurt. This pain and grief dated from 1941 to the present day: it was the story of the Blitz, the loss of the fishing industry, the post-war slum clearances, and the economic and social devastation of these events.

My participants described the scale of the fishing industry. Participant 9 had been involved in the fishing industry before becoming a priest, and spoke about its size: 'Hull was the largest

fishing port in the world and it had such diverse vessels, from the small snibbies that fished locally on the coast, to the big freezer vessels that went to the south Atlantic and even to Australia – they fished the west coast of Australia'. He spoke about how the loss of lives and the loss of the fishing industry had shaped Hull and brought people together in shared grief:

> When I started in the industry I worked for the largest trawling company of all, British United Trawlers, and when I left I was one of six – that was in 1984. To see an industry in gradual decline – it started happening in the 1970s with the Cod Wars – and to see men lose their jobs and they just didn't have the skills to move into new vessels, it was very sad to see that happen. But that shaped my community; loss has shaped my community. I remember being a young lad in the school and youngsters would be called out the class and they'd go to see the Head and they wouldn't come back in.

This shared loss gave Hull a shared identity, most families would have known someone who had died in the fishing fleet. It can be argued that fishing was the UK's most dangerous industrial activity: there were 9,000 mining fatalities from 1800 onwards across the whole of Yorkshire; compared with 6,000 fishing fatalities from a similar period from the city of Hull alone (Beales, accessed 30/07/2018). The industry dominated Hull's life; the loss of the fishing industry was the loss of the city's identity.

After World War II, and as the fishing industry started to decline, the old fishing communities such as Hessle Road were demolished as slums, and the fishing community were moved to new outer estates like Bransholme. Participant 7 noted that just after this rehousing happened, the fishing industry began to decline:

> So, Hull has been on its knees, really, for, well, the whole time I've been here. Longer than I've been here, over 40 years, so longer than most cities, because Thatcher smashed up most of the economies in most northern places but she didn't smash this place up, the fishing disappeared before she arrived. And as the very very extensive bombing and the flinging of people to loads of new estates around the edge, uh, thereby breaking up the natural communities, impoverished and as badly housed as they were, and then the loss of the fishing industry almost as soon as that flinging out to the edges happened, and then long term unemployment which Thatcher generated after that, which just added to the misery of the loss of the fishing industry, basically in two years, 1972, 1973, everybody out of work, Hull has never recovered from that.

Participant 4 (Methodist) compared the effects of the Blitz to the dispersal of the fishing community to estates, seeing them both as dislocation: 'there is this sense of this is who we are, this is what we lived through. Which I think you get under the surface in Hull culture, because it was blitzed to bits, and there was all this sort of dislocation going on under the surface'. I was really struck by his use of this word: it encompassed the enforced movement of the Blitz and the slum clearances, but also the pain involved. I was similarly struck by a word participant 19 (Roman Catholic) used talking about the loss of the fishing industry: 'it

undermined things a lot, really, in the city'. There was the sense of strong foundations being shaken, and the previously reliable now seeming shaky.

My participants did mention Hull's economic deprivation: participant 12 (independent Evangelical) described Hull's 'generations of poverty', participant 16 (Anglican) talked about a 'culture of poverty and unemployment' in East Hull, and participant 7 spoke of more recent poverty: 'Hull has been, well ever since Tony Blair invented league tables, and Hull found itself at the bottom of every single one of them'. At this point, it is worth remembering the extent of Hull's poverty: according to the 2015 Indexes of Multiple Deprivation, Hull is ranked as the 3rd most deprived local authority in England (out of 326 local authorities); 52% of Hull's Local Super Output Areas are amongst the most deprived fifth of in England. Seven of Hull's wards are amongst the 1% most deprived wards in England, with a further seven Hull wards among England's most deprived 10% of wards (Hull City Council, n.d.).

4.2.2 Isolation and flatness

Hull's physical geography is also important in understanding its context and the theology that comes out of that context. Hull's geographical isolation contributed to the sense that the city's pain and grief has not been heard by the rest of the country. Participant 16 echoed a common description of Hull: 'we're kind of the end of the line in terms of geographically'. Participants saw that geographical isolation as leading to a lack of cultural influences from outside Hull, and a degree of suspicion and cynicism. Participant 18 (Roman Catholic) summed up the two-way nature of this isolation: people don't visit Hull, and Hull doesn't want outside influences:

> I think Hull has kind of got isolated from the rest of the country. I think partly that, it's one of those things where I think people have been, are quite quick to dismiss Hull, and that's led to the residents of Hull, because they're proud of their city, that's led them to think, "oh, well, we don't care". And I think there has been a bit of isolation, its isolated because of its location, it's the kind of place, you're not really passing through, and if you are passing through you're probably going to the ferry port, in which case you're not visiting the city anyway. And I think the isolation of Hull has been two-way. It's been people from outside the city, probably based in London, you know, who have had no reason to come to Hull so they've just dismissed it. And I think people of Hull, you know, are quite happy with that. Which in some ways, is probably a shame, they are happy with that, because I think they've been happy to be left as they are, "you leave us alone and we'll carry on living and that's ok".

As well as isolation, participants also mentioned its flatness. They often linked a geographical flatness with an emotional or spiritual flatness, or a narrowing of horizons. Participant 20

(independent Evangelical) linked this flatness with a lack of inspiration, saying 'another thing is geography. First of all, Hull is flat. There's nothing inspiring on the horizon because you can't see the horizon, you just see the houses around you. You can't see the, you know, it's flat'. Participant 12 also thought that people in Hull tended to look down, because there were no horizons in Hull: 'I say to people, look up. I went to, I did a City of Culture sort of walk and there were people on that that came from Hull, worked in Hull and they said, just look up there and see that and they'd say, oh, I'd never seen that before. People kind of look down, almost. Look up and see the architecture, the history, the heritage. And people hadn't seen it, and I think City of Culture will help our people as well, of our city'. Participant 7 linked flatness with a lack of change or possibility:

> if there is no possibility of change, if my life is just like this and its going go on being like this, and I'm making an arm movement that expresses flatness, cos Hull is flat, it doesn't have any horizons. You can't see anywhere from anywhere in Hull except the roundabout at the top of Bransholme, I'll have you know. But it's extremely flat. So, you can't even see the fact that somebody lives the other side of a hill you know? You've got to actually go to the Humber Bridge to look back on the place and say that "that's where I come from".

What my participants are describing here is a form of emotional geography, in the sense of the relationship between people and their environment, a 'socio-spatial mediation and articulation' (Davidson et al., 2005, p.3). The flatness they are describing is not merely geographical, it is a flatness of spirit and a lack of hope. The lack of hills bounding the city make it hard for its residents to define Hull.

It is noticeable that my participants do not mention the sea when talking about Hull's geography, which is the ultimate boundary between Hull and the world, and which once defined Hull's identity as a fishing port. The sea was the locale that connected Hull with the world, and there is a feeling that that connection with the world ended when the fishing industry ended. This connection to the rest of Britain has also ended: Hull is no longer supplying the country with fish. With the loss of the fishing industry Hull has lost its definition: it is cut off from Britain, from the rest of the world, from its history, its prosperity, and its identity. It is left stranded; flat and hopeless.

4.3 Interview 1: Hull's contextual theology pre-2017

In interview 1, I asked my participants to choose a photograph that they believed summed up what God thinks about culture (if God does indeed think about culture), and we discussed why they chose that picture and not any others.

4.3.1 Positivity and flourishing

Overall, my participants believed God was positive about human culture. Participant 8 chose picture 5 (street art on telephone exchange box), saying ‘I think when it comes to God and culture, God is wild and God is colourful and diverse and I think that’s how He made us and I think culture for God is about life, enjoying, peace and love and culture is good. I think that sort of, it’s a bit random. It doesn’t really make much sense, but it doesn’t have to. It’s colourful’. Participant 20 was unable to find a picture that summed up his feelings, but he said ‘You know, God has a very positive view towards culture in that sense of the word’.

Image xviii: Photo elicitation image 5 - street art on telephone exchange box

Many participants believed that God wants people to flourish, and that culture is a way that people can do so. Participant 10 (Quaker) chose picture 6 (flowering plants behind fence), saying ‘The flowers in that picture are representing the flourishing and that sense of being who we are – and a healthy culture is a culture where things are flourishing and being what they are’. Participant 7 chose picture 9 (The Mission Pub) and said ‘God might say, in one of his lighter moments, I'd just like you to have some fun, please!’.

Image xix: Photo elicitation image 6 - flowering plants behind fence

Image xx: Photo elicitation image 9 – the Mission Pub - flowering plants behind fence

The theme of flourishing also came up in conversations not directly linked to the photographs, with participants expressing 'I see God celebrating culture simply because it's my profound belief that God wants us all to flourish, and to know the truth that will set us free, and that fulfilment of life' (participant 4), 'I think it's God's desire that we should live life to the full. Jesus came to show us what abundant life was about' (participant 9), and 'I think that my understanding of what God or the mystery of the world or whatever you want to call it is, him calling us to his ways of being together which enable people to live life to the full. It's about flourishing, it's about love, it's about justice, it's about peace, and all that sort of stuff' (participant 10).

4.3.2 Unity and community

My participants also believed that God wants people to live in unity and community, and that culture is a way of achieving this. Participant 12 chose picture 27 (crowd at Hull Freedom Festival), saying it showed 'A group, a community. And for me that's God's creativity. God says it's not good for man to live alone and so there's something about a community, a church, a people together… it's about being together, that really shows culture, I think, not just an individual'. Participant 15 (Pentecostal) chose the same picture, and felt that 'the bible says there is neither Jew nor Greek, nor Hebrew, we are one in Christ Jesus. Everybody here, you can see different people, you know, celebrating. You can see people walking side by side here. This is God in action. As far as I'm concerned, this is God'.

Image xxi: Photo elicitation image 27 - crowd at Hull Freedom Festival

In discussions not directly linked to the photographs, participant 2 (Baptist) said,

> I don't know how you define culture, but God didn't make individuals, he made society, people. It's not good for man to live alone, that just isn't just a case of the marriage contract, that's, we are made in, community, and culture is an expression of community, of creativity. So in a sense it's an expression, I think, of personality of the community. So you cannot take God out of the equation, because its more than an expression back.

Participants saw culture as community, and God wanting community, and culture becoming one of God's ways of creating community. My participants saw that that community included difference and unity. Participant 12 mentioned the Tower of Babel as a good thing, saying,

> I think God loves different cultures. In the Old Testament, what's the tower they built. Tower of Babel and there was division and people wanting to be higher and make themselves, build up to God and God said, right, I'm going to scatter you throughout the Earth, and that was different cultures suddenly being created, and then you see in the Book of Acts, the coming together in a sense, when the Holy Spirit came and they spoke in different tongues, and everybody heard them praising God in their own language. And I think that was about okay, I'm bringing you together. So you still have different languages, but everybody can understand what you're saying and so I have the gift of tongues and you can interpret it. I think for Hull, God loves different cultures of different regions.

4.3.3 Creativity and self-worth

One of the strongest themes emerging from my participants' responses on God and culture was that of creativity. Participant 19 picked picture 11 (Holy Trinity church), saying 'The only image that comes to mind is the story of creation, the pinnacle on the sixth day, God created man and woman, humankind. And gave them permission to continue, or take part in his creation'. Participant 20 could not choose a picture that summed up his thoughts, but said 'I think God loves culture in terms of the arts because he is the ultimate creative being, so I think God is delighted that these beings he's created are using their God given gifts to create music and art and all sorts'. In our wider discussions, half of my participants mentioned culture as coming from God, saying that God is the creator of all things. Participant 9 summed this up as 'culture is everything that there is and our God is the creator of all things'.

Image xxii: Photo elicitation image 11 – Holy Trinity church

About half of my participants talked about God being creator of all things, and they often saw creativity as a gift from God. Five participants linked this to people being created in God's image, and participant 7 summed this up saying, 'Well, is there a relationship between God and culture? Yes, and you know, there is all sorts of ways of expressing that. And the first thing we read about in the bible is God's creative urge… So, all of the arts, all of the expressions of creativity that arts and culture generally speaking embody, all rise out of our God given nature, I think. Even if they've been done by people who don't even know it's God'. Those participants sometimes mentioned that people were creative whether they knew that gift was from God or not. Participant 7 said 'what people do creatively is an expression of God, or sometimes railing against God, or an absence of God, in what they're doing'. Talking about picture 6 (flowering plants behind fence), participant 17 said that creativity was a gift from God so that people would come to know God: 'I would just hope that people might think, if God's that creative, then he could put that sort, he's maybe made us creative. If God could make that flower so perfect, then, you know, what's he, he's a creator and we're made in his image, how, then we could be creative'.

A couple of participants saw creativity as something that particularly built up people's confidence and self-worth. Participant 11 (independent Evangelical) said, 'there is something about people's creativities let loose that does bond people in an amazing way, and build relationships, and give people a sense of confidence and worth,' and participant 12 described

> an art group that we run which is now part of our college that we run and what we wanted to do, people who had never displayed anything before or never done anything and so, by doing it together… the pride of when that work was displayed was absolutely incredible because they'd never seen anything displayed. I mean, even as kids, the lot of people that we have had come from very difficult backgrounds, so they probably never even had the picture they had done at school put on the fridge. So now to then come into a room and say, that's what I've created, that's what I've done.

He described this God's work of lifting the needy and seating them with princes:

> It's about confidence, it's about self-esteem. It's about honouring who they are and saying actually, you have got something you can bring. It's not internal, you can display something. Even the Bible says, He lifted the needy from the ashes and seats them with the princes, and there's something about the people that we're working with, the most vulnerable, outcast. It's not just helping them but it's lifting them, saying actually you can be an artist, you can be an engineer. You can move on in life. You don't have to stay the same. You don't have to stay in the ashes, you can be seated with the princes. It's about honour, it's about dignity and I think that's what we want to create.

Most of my participants saw God as creating culture, with three describing culture as a gift from God. The only person who differed from this view was participant 6, who saw culture as a purely human invention: 'Well, culture is a human invention and it's an aspect of human community as well as individuals, and God is always involved in that, but I wouldn't blame God for any sort of culture or give God too much credit actually, sorry'.

4.3.4 Communication

A few participants felt God uses culture to communicate with people, and ultimately to bring people towards God's self. Participant 14 picked pictures 27 and 28 (crowd at Hull Freedom Festival and crowd at Olympic Homecoming welcome) and said 'But, yes, I think from my point of view God would want to, try not to be to anthropomorphic, but culture can be used, I think. Sometimes deliberately, sometimes accidently, to affect God's way in the world'. Participant 5 (Anglican) picked picture 1 (Humber Bridge and telescope), saying 'I think that to some extent culture is a bridge, I think I've met quite a number of people who would say actually, it's through culture that they've come to faith or grown in faith'. Participant 20 could not choose a picture to sum up his thoughts, but said 'I also think God is very happy to work

within and through, God always works incarnationally, and he is always more than, not just willing, but he wants to work in and through human culture'.

Image xxiii: Photo elicitation image 28 - crowd at Olympic Homecoming welcome

Image xxiv: Photo elicitation image 1 – Humber Bridge and telescope

4.3.5 Transformation

Another theme arising in conversations about God's thoughts about culture was that of transformation. Participant 4 chose picture (crowd at Hull Freedom Festival), saying 'Your life matters, it matters to God, it should matter to one another, we're there for each other, we're together we are greater than the sum of the parts. And so that is what my view of

culture is, is a celebration of humanity. And what God is doing at the heart of humanity to set us free, to liberate us, to transform us'.

Participant 1 felt culture is constantly evolving, and God is in that transformation. He chose picture 12 (roadworks and people on Whitefriargate)

> because it is a work in progress. That culture isn't something that just happens and then we respond to it, it is a contact evolving, changing, just like this street scape is constantly evolving and changing as little bits are added and taken away. And also, sometimes that we put up those barriers, to the messy bits of culture, rather than, that's probably the bit that the church really needs to be in. Because these people are ok, but if anyone's here, this is where we could be prophetic. So for me, it's also God in the messiness of human experience.

A few participants thought culture needed transforming. Participant 12 spoke about this most, saying 'God is redeeming culture, that's what we believe' and 'it's about the heritage and culture of Hull where ultimately God wants people to be free, free from their shackles. The people, we all need to be free. We need to be redeemed'. Participant 20 thought the church played a part in God's redemption of culture by being embedded in that culture: 'And to, yes, there are places where culture needs to be redeemed and changed, but you can't do that through being six foot above it. You've got to be incarnational'.

4.3.6 God is excluded from culture

A few participants instead saw God as being excluded from culture. Participant 16 put this as 'most culture would rather just ignore God and pursue man's ideals and standards and ways. But I know that God is interested in that culture'. He chose picture 12 (roadworks and people on Whitefriargate) to describe what God thinks about culture, saying 'Just struck me the building work going on, the repair work, and I think God would be invited in to bring transformation and repair the excesses or the sin within the culture'.

Image xxv: Photo elicitation image 12 – roadworks and people on Whitefriargate

4.3.7 Joy and sadness

Participant 10 felt that God would feel both joy and sadness about culture. He chose picture 12 (flowering plants behind fence), saying,

> I think there's something about the relationship between the bars and the flowers. The flowers in that picture are representing the flourishing and that sense of being who we are – and a healthy culture is a culture where things are flourishing and being what they are. Then there's this suppressive culture which actually imprisons that and prevents the flourishing. I think God is wanting these flourishing things to break out of those bars and – in the end – tear them down. I think with that there's probably simultaneous joy, and actually there is still beauty, and then there's also the sadness of the bars – and it's both found at the same time.

4.3.8 Good and bad culture

After my first four interviews, I added a question to my photo-elicitation interviews to further our discussion on the nature of culture. Participants 1, 2, and 4, without prompting, had raised the issue of culture being good or bad. As participants 1, 2, and 4 raised this idea, I thought it would be useful to bounce their concept of good or bad culture off my other participants. I

was not collecting data via a focus group or other forum where my participants could address each other, so I carried their thoughts to other participants to see if they generated further ideas. Participant 1 initially described bad culture as ‘just stuff that panders’ to people, and good culture as that which ‘should actually change how you view the world’, as transformational. Participant 2 saw good and bad culture as slightly different: he saw bad culture as ‘self-obsessive’, or used to ‘bang or bash someone over the head or to diminish or demean or belittle someone’. It was this view of good and bad culture which I found predominant amongst my participants.

Of the thirteen participants who spoke about good and bad culture, eight described good culture as that which helped people flourish, particularly in community with others. Participant 4 described good culture as ‘culture in which there is parity of esteem and everybody has a place which is valued’, participant 10 as ‘flourishing together’, and participant 13 (Danish Lutheran) as creating ‘good thoughts and good ways of living, and good ways of being a good fellow human being’. These participants saw bad culture as ‘divisive, which will separate, which will have value judgements about people's worth’ (participant 4), not allowing ‘people to flourish, that represses and just deadens the soul’ (participant 10), and producing ‘hate and evil’ (participant 13). Participants 19 and 20 were more specific about the results of bad culture. Participant 19 saw it producing gangs and sexual assault, and participant 20 listed racism, female genital mutilation, and political dictatorship as the examples of bad culture. These judgements of good and bad culture seem to be based on a communal and broadly left-wing understanding of culture: good culture is that which allows a person to flourish in a community of others, and bad culture which belittles people and creates division in community.

Participants 11, 12, and 17 also saw good culture as that which ‘bring people together and create bonds and love’ (participant 11), they saw bad culture as being characterised by offensive behaviour, drugs, alcohol, swearing and sex. Participant 11 saw bad culture as bringing in ‘standards to young people that perhaps aren't healthy, drugs and sex and things that aren't, well sex in and of itself isn't, there's nothing wrong with it, but it's the idea that the world's a free-for-all and that we should do what we like’. Participants 12 and 17 saw bad culture as including that which is offensive in art, music or comedy. Participant 12 said

> Or, I don’t know, like for City of Culture Year, I was looking at some of the things they’re doing and there’s some band coming. Not some band, some group, I can’t

> remember what the name of it is, but it's some sort of extreme art, where they use bodily fluids and things and I'm just like, I'm just not comfortable with that. I just don't feel that's… people would argue its culture, but I just think actually do we need to go to those extremes…

Participant 17 felt similarly: 'some art work could be quite offensive, and that wouldn't be very good. Some music, some lyrics, could be quite offensive. That's not going to be good, is it' (participant 17). Participant 12 said that his objections to these aspects of bad culture stemmed from the Bible, but were also partly due to working with people who had suffered from addiction:

> So great, food, drink, I don't see anything wrong with drinking, but then the Bible is clear, I think, about the excess of drinking. And so it's those excesses that I just feel need… and we're working with people who are alcoholics and people who get into trouble and have been into prison because of drink, and I think that's culture which has just gone too far.

Participants 11 and 12 lead independent evangelical churches and participant 17 leads a Pentecostal church; offensive behaviour, drugs, alcohol, swearing and sex are perhaps the traditional worries of the conservative evangelical church. Those who took a more liberal view of what bad culture might be were Anglicans, Methodist, Lutheran and a Quaker. However, they also included a Baptist, a Roman Catholic and another independent evangelical church leader: the understandings of what good and bad culture consisted of were not simply drawn on denominational lines. Overall, I felt all the understandings of bad culture had an element of the communal to them: bad culture is that which hurts vulnerable people, offends others and causes disruption in common life.

4.3.9 We cannot know what God thinks about culture

Only two participants, both Roman Catholics, thought that people cannot know what God thinks about culture. The first was participant 6. The second Roman Catholics participant (18) thought that God wanted people 'to be supporting of each other, loving of each other, and I think where people are, you know, coming together, if culture is lifting people's spirits and bringing out the good nature in people, then I think God is happy with that'. However, when the third Roman Catholic (participant 19) also expressed that people cannot know what God thinks about culture, I asked whether this might be a particularly Roman Catholic understanding. Participant 19 disagreed with that, saying, 'I think that you would find Catholics wouldn't hesitate with that' [knowing what God thinks]. Participants 6 and 19 were the oldest people I interviewed, so this hesitancy to say what God might think could have a

generational aspect, either within the church at large, or the Roman Catholic church in particular.

4.3.10 The Trinity and the Holy Spirit

During my interviews, I found my participants did not examine the Trinitarian nature of God in relation to culture. Most participants spoke about God as creator, or about God in a general sense. I found it was rarer for participants to talk about either Jesus, or the Holy Spirit. Participants 1, 13 and 16 were the exceptions who did talk about the Holy Spirit in relation to culture. Participant 1 said, 'Of course, basically, I mean, I'm a contextual theologian, and I believe for me that the Spirit speaks through society and it is the churches' job to respond', and participant 16 said 'the Spirit is always at work within that culture, drawing people to him, encouraging believers to engage in that culture, and reach out to that culture'. However, these were rare mentions.

Similarly, the Incarnation was only mentioned twice, both in the context of the Gospel being rooted in culture. Talking of the gospel, participant 4 said,

> The whole Bible is about culture, isn't it? The central values and meanings that people have, shared story, the totemic experiences, whether its Exodus or exile, or Good Friday, Easter day, whatever. It's in a particular culture, then its universal, applied to any culture. So I'd say there's a very strong relationship and that that has to be, because it's an incarnational faith. And that God doesn't sit apart from culture, God is within it, transforming culture.

Participant 20 thought similarly, saying, 'I also think God is very happy to work within and through, God always works incarnationally, and he is always more than, not just willing, but he wants to work in and through human culture'. Participant 18 alluded to Jesus always being present in culture, saying 'I think about the words of Christ when he says, 'where two or three are gathered in my name'. Now I think God is there, I think the question for people is, some people don't realise that he's there, or some people push God out of their lives, so I think God is everywhere'.

4.3.11 Summary

Overall, I felt the following theology of culture emerged from the first round of interviews: God has given people culture and creativity and speaks to people through culture and creativity. Culture binds people together, creates community. God has also created people to be creative, and creativity is central to the idea of culture. Culture and creativity build up

people's self-esteem so they might be able to hope for something else in life. God wants people to be together: not all the same, God likes these differences between people, but in unity, loving each other, respecting each other, and helping each other flourish. God wants people to flourish and to live life to the full.

However, I found something abstract about these statements. On the whole, I felt they were positional statements of belief, rather than theories born of lived experience. Participant 12 was a rare exception when he described the way creativity could transform people's self-esteem: he had seen this happen through his church's art group. During my interviews, I often felt this was the first time many participants had thought about the relationship between God and culture, and their responses were therefore somewhat abstract and tentative as they explored their theologies of culture with me.

I argue that this is due to my participants' lack of teaching or training in the concept of culture, and their received understandings of culture as "high culture". As explored in chapter 3, when asked about culture my participants' first thoughts turned to aspects of "high" art and "high" culture. They felt Hull did not have high culture, and there was a sense that if Hull did not have high culture, it did not have any culture at all. It can therefore be no surprise that they had not previously examined how God might relate to Hull's culture, if Hull does not have culture. My participants had, overall, received no teaching or training about culture as part of their ministerial training: if this area of theology is not taught, then it is likely that most of my participants would not have explored it themselves.

However, my participants' deep understanding of Hull's history, geography and economic context led to a great deal of hope for 2017. One of the main themes which emerged when I asked about City of Culture was its potential for transformation. Participant 1 hoped it would give people 'permission in order to do, sort of, to start things, and then from there, to keep them going because hopefully this is a pump priming exercise rather than just a one-off event'. Participant 11 expressed a common theme of excitement about 2017, saying,

> I think it's exciting. It is, I can't remember the exact quote, but when we got City of Culture it was about a city coming out of the shadows, and I really loved that image. And it's this image of people growing in confidence, and in creativity, discovering themselves, looking outside of the themselves, beyond their own circumstances to other things. And that's exciting, and it's great for a city to have that achievement, and to feel special in that way. I think when we heard the news, everybody was so excited.

Participant 15 was very clear that this potential for transformation was a gift from God, and that winning the City of Culture bid had also given Hull a sense of unity:

> God allowed that to happen so that change would occur in this city. Others who are not believers may not believe what I am saying, but I believe strongly God was part of the bidding… Whether Muslim, or Hindu or whatever Christian we are, we came together to celebrate, with the team who went to Londonderry for the meeting. I don't know, after the City of Culture year, everybody might go back to their shell, but between now and end of next year, we are together. We are in it together. We are in it together, honestly.

My participants' understandings of culture were abstract and tentative, coming from an intellectual position rather than lived experience, but they indicated hope. They believed that God is positive about culture and wants people to flourish. They saw Hull as having lost its identity and definition, as being a flat and hopeless place, but trusted that God wanted more for the city.

4.4 Interview 2: Changes in theologies of culture from 2017

Above, I examined the theologies of culture that arose from Hull's historical context, as shared by my participants in interview 1. I will now turn to examining the theology that emerged from our discussions about the City of Culture year, as discussed in interview 2. This theology is of course also grounded the years prior to 2017, but as the City of Culture year was such a profound one for Hull, it had the potential to change Hull's culture, context, and theologies.

4.4.1 Shared loss, pain and grief

As with my first interviews, the theme of shared loss also emerged in my second interviews. This time, however, my participants felt that that loss had been acknowledged. Some of the pain arising from the perception that Hull's losses in the fishing industry had not been acknowledged seemed to have been resolved. Participant 9 spoke about a photo exhibition that his church had hosted:

> It's that shared loss again. I can remember Alec Gill's partner, Paul Berriff. Paul Berriff was recognised in the Queen's Honours List in 2017, the beginning of 2017. Paul has had exhibitions of photographs in New York, after 9/11. So, Paul has been around. He said, at one of our meetings that this exhibition of photographs that captures a community, could be any community in the north of England, the Manchesters the Leeds, the Sheffields, the inner cities. I said, "No, I don't think it could because Hull has something that those cities don't have, it's that shared loss through the fishing industry".

He felt that God had journeyed with the people of Hull in their pain:

> Whenever I tell people that the memorial contains over six thousand names, they find that staggering, six thousand men, all those families. What we do is we bring people together, that hurt, and that pain is still there now. That will be evident at the fiftieth anniversary. We have to be so careful with what we do and it's an acknowledgement of that. When you actually think back, the Israelites, remembered their losses, their pain, their shared pain. The Psalms is full of that and that binds them together. But, we remember a God who is there, who journeyed with us through those times and that's what we're actually encouraging them to be able to see.

There was one event which seemed to particularly help people acknowledge the pain that Hull had suffered, to mourn it together, and perhaps to put some of that pain to rest. This was Made in Hull, a thirteen-minute sound and light installation of Hull's history by Hungarian animator Zsolt Balogh in Victoria Square, from 1st to 8th January 2017. Participant 2 felt that Made In Hull acknowledged the loss that Hull had experienced in the 20th century:

> It acknowledged the Blitz that left a huge amount of damage and suffering and… It acknowledged the loss of its fishing fleet and the sad… you know, what that meant. But it's saying, despite… and despite this, we are! And so right from the very beginning, it's saying, not… Yes, partly… we are and that's… and with that there's hope, enthusiasm and I think it's that, that drove it through the year! It was a very good way to start it, because it… from the very beginning, it was saying, have pride in yourself and we have a right to have pride in ourselves!

Participant 5 noted the impact that expressing this loss had on the crowds:

> It happened with 'Made in Hull', suddenly, you know, we were there together, and you saw the impact on people watching their city kind of being projected, including the really tragic moments, you know, the bombing and then all these dead fishermen falling down… I was standing, watching the presentation on the city hall and so, the bit with the bombing, which was quite… I mean, it's amazing what you can do with this digital mapping… and I heard a little lad talk with his… well, it was obviously his grandad, I think, and say… it kind of… the kid was kind of quite moved because it was just beautiful! He said, "Was it really like that?" And he just said, "It was, it was terrifying and seeing the city being destroyed around you…" And as I was just saying, this moment where the trawler sinks, and you see these drowned fishermen and there was this… Gosh, I could see people in absolute tears. The other.. Oh dear, oh dear!

At this point in the interview, participant 5 started welling up in tears at the memory of the installation, and the effect it had had on the crowds. Participant 12 acted as a City of Culture volunteer, and so saw Made in Hull many times. He was also very moved by its effect:

> When the final thing came up in Made in Hull I had tears in my eyes almost every time. You saw people literally crying and then you had people, who I spoke to, older people who were crying because of memories, for them because the war, they remembered their house being bombed, people in their eighties and nineties…. That which has been hidden comes out and there were lots of conversations. I spoke to one family and they said, "My dad never really talked about the war." Suddenly, it's given expression to the feeling, pain and joy. Telling somebody's story or the story of the city, because people identify themselves as, "I'm from Hull"… It instils something in

> people to see that pride and confidence in themselves, you know actually we can do it in this city, maybe there is hope for Hull.

In his 1917 essay *Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud explores the relationships between these two related concepts. He defines mourning as 'commonly the reaction to the loss of a beloved person or abstraction taking the place of the person, such as fatherland, freedom, an ideal, and so on' (Freud, 2005, p.203). Melancholia is similar, 'mentally characterized by a profoundly painful depression, a loss of interest in the outside world, the loss of the ability to love, the inhibition of any kind of performance and a reduction in the sense of self, expressed in self-recrimination and self-directed insults… mourning displays the same traits, apart from one: the disorder of self-esteem is absent' (Freud, 2005, p.204). In their descriptions of Hull's shared loss of men who died in the fishing industry, the loss of the fishing industry itself, and those who died in the bombing of WWII, my participants were mourning their losses. However, it is noticeable that there is also a lack of self-esteem for the city, described above as flatness, isolation, a loss of hope. Likewise, there the descriptions in chapter 3 of Hull having no culture show a similar lack of self-esteem. Hull is not just experiencing mourning; it is experiencing melancholia.

Freud goes on to argue that melancholia is characterised by the unconscious nature of loss. He writes:

> In a large number of cases it is clear that it may too be a reaction to the loss of a beloved object; when other causes are present it may be possible to recognize that the loss of is more notional in nature. The object may not have really died, for example, but may instead have been lost as a love-object (as, for example, in the case of an abandoned bride). Yet in other cases we think that we should cling to our assumption of such a loss, but it is difficult to see what has been lost, so we rather assume that the patient cannot consciously grasp what has been lost. Indeed, this might also be the case when the loss is the cause of the melancholia is known to the subject, when he knows *who* it is, but not *what* it is about that person he has lost. So the obvious thing is for us somehow to relate melancholia to the loss of an object which is withdrawn from consciousness, unlike mourning, in which no aspect of the loss is unconscious (Freud, 2005, p.205).

Although my participants were able to describe Hull's losses, there is a sense in which Made in Hull allowed the city's losses to be made more conscious: they were made visible, audible, and experienced by huge numbers of people together. Made in Hull clearly made a great impact on my participants and on the wider city. Nine of the sixteen participants who took part in the second round of interviews talked about Made in Hull. The artwork seems to have been important as the starting point for 2017: a time to express and vocalise the shared loss of

the city that some have never been able to express, and which the city felt had not been heard by the rest of the country. Expressing this pain at the beginning of the year seems to have allowed people to then feel joy and pride in their city, rather than focussing on the shared loss and unheard pain. Made in Hull was a cathartic experience; allowing people to consciously express their pain, and move from a state of melancholia to a state of mourning, and the beginning of healing from those losses.

4.4.2 Rediscovery and renewal

One of the most significant themes that arose from my participants' discussions of City of Culture was the spiritual transformation they felt had taken place. They felt that God had been working in and through the City of Culture. Participant 4 (Methodist) described how the Blade, the 75-metre turbine blade installed in Queen Victoria Square (picture 5 below), had represented how he saw God in Hull in 2017:

> It's [the Blade] so out-of-place that it's beyond belief! And to me, you know, that's exactly how God is, you know, sort of, here's God in the middle of the city and it's like that does… it just… just does not fit! It does not compute! And what sense can we make…? So, I wanted to convey something that made sense… This seemed way too sort of the world of prophet evangelists… you know, what on earth can you say about something so extraordinary? How do you bring it back down to earth for ordinary people again so, this is where we are in the church, you know, trying to do that for people? Yes, then this one [image xxvi below] – it was the juxtaposition of the extraordinary, the outlandish, the out of the ordinary against the traditional and framing the traditional through the… extraordinary! And again, this is what we do, whether its apologetics or if it's mission, whatever we're doing.

Image xxvi: Participant 4's photograph of the Blade

My participants described the work that God had been doing in Hull as renewal, reconciliation, redemption, resurrection taking place in 2017; they felt through City of Culture, God had brought joy and an increase in people's self-confidence to the city. Participant 4 summed up Hull's sense of rediscovery and renewal: 'My own sense is the city rediscovered itself right from that first week in January, right the way through. There was a sense of resurgence; a sense of standing taller; a sense of pride. With all the new cultural expressions that were popping up all over the city and I think it is all that newness and amazement and scale of worldwide significance that enabled the city to see itself differently'. Participant 8 felt similarly:

> It started amazing! It was like the city was waking up! I've always seen it! I've always thought we could but there was just not the right time and the right opportunity. And I think, yes, it's…. it's just… it's woken the city up to be who it is! It's allowed us to find our voice again and to… To do away with the crap! Because, when someone tells you, you are something for so long, you end up believing it! And I think that's what people did here…. I think I'd say, don't be surprised by… being surprised by this city anymore!

Participant 15 thought 2017 'raised people from the city it raised their, I don't know, sense of values, sense of worth, it gave them an opportunity to celebrate all that was good about the city, put pride back into peoples' hearts about the city, it put it on the map you know, lots of people who I know from elsewhere knew that we were City of Culture and commented on it and saw things on the TV'. Participant 18 felt 2017

> meant people being proud of being a resident of Hull and I think it's being proud that you know, instead of Hull being mentioned perhaps because a crime having been committed or some kind of national statistics that Hull doesn't come out very well on you know, I think it's been nice for people of Hull to feel proud that actually you know, whether it's been the Turner prize or the big weekend that Radio 1 did or you know, whatever it might be that actually Hull gets mentioned for something that's positive and a good thing. I think it's given the residents of Hull something to be really proud of and something to actually be pleased about or pleased for themselves you know and I think it has been a greater confidence of the people of Hull that actually they've got that sense of you know, Hull is getting mentioned now of things it can be proud of rather than things to be embarrassed about you know.

4.4.3 Reconciliation

Participant 9 felt that 2017 had brought reconciliation to two previously antagonist groups:

> The group that organised that is called the Hull Bullnose Heritage Group. That's a group of people that never ever got on with STAND, the fisherman's group. They're the established one, STAND. It's a bit like the People's Front of Judea and the Judean People's Front. But, because of my role, I'm a local lad who worked in the fishing industry, it's a great opportunity for me to work with both groups and to bring them together. In a sense, that's what has happened with the fiftieth anniversary our

> Committee which is made up of three groups from the community and so, we're doing a lot more than just remembering, we're actually reconciling.

He felt his church, in its role as the 'Fishermen's church', allowed these groups to come together, and God to bring some reconciliation:

> Such were the divisions between these opposing groups, the Spirit had to be at work with what's going on there. But you can actually begin to see something is happening. It's at a much deeper level than you could have ever hoped and then you can begin to actually fan the flames of that to make it happen. Then to see the possibilities, the opportunities that lie in the future. Like I said, the fiftieth anniversary one that we're working with at the moment. That was one of the things, just a slow realisation that there is something much deeper that is going on here.

There was also a sense that Hull had become reconciled to the rest of the UK, and felt the UK has become reconciled to Hull. In the first interviews, my participants shared a sense that Hull's pain from the Blitz and the losses of the fishing industry had never been acknowledged nationally, and this unheard pain had caused a sense of isolation in the city. Participant 18 felt that Hull had, before 2017, a

> negative culture and I think that was something that largely was put onto them because of events that have happened over the past decades really. I think stretching back to World War II and getting bombed so much in World War II and I think, and then you follow on with like the so-called Cod Wars of the 1970s where Hull seemed to lose out and did lose out you know very much and I think, I think Hull has had a history of losing out on things that were, had national policies or international policies. So, I think there was a lack of care if that's the right word, of the national government whichever part it was, the national government actually caring enough about Hull to do something about it or at least alleviate some of the hardship that Hull endured over the decades. I think that has meant a culture that I think Hull people have got a negativity of well its Hull we don't expect any more you know, and I think, I think they've got a bit more of an understanding of self-appreciation that's more positive now and I think they're a little more confident than I think prior to 2017 and I really hope that lasts I really do because Hull deserve it. You know why shouldn't they have more self-confidence because there's a lot to be proud of you know in Hull.

He felt 2017 was a

> year of attention that you know perhaps dare I say the government bestowed onto Hull that hasn't happened before and I think that sense of independence is very strong because I think that's borne out of, well we know others don't care about us so you know, we don't care about them we're Hull you know. So I think there's been a psychological barrier put up by Hull saying we're Hull, you know we'll get on just fine without them you know and I think there has been that sense of a bit of a, you know almost a psychological barrier been put up really and mentality of Hull you know, we've got our own thoughts here and we'll protect our thoughts and we are proud of ourselves even though nobody else is you know.

4.4.4 Redemption and resurrection

Participant 16 felt that this acknowledgement of pain had given Hull some redemption, and that God had revived Hull through 2017:

> Looking at these again now these photos, because they do, when you start thinking you know, even this I'm like God takes the best and he loves to revive you know, he's a God of redemption… I think as you said the story of Hull probably began to you know, some of, maybe that pain that hello we're over here which maybe caused Hull to go into itself you know the whole, I don't know that sort of siege mentality, maybe it redeemed some of that a bit just began to open it up you know, aspirations. You know undoubtedly, like all the volunteers, the people that I think have significantly impacted and whether or not they recognise it on a spiritual level but they were inspired, they were freshly invigorated, I don't know if that lasts but you know there was definitely a sense of new inspiration, new momentum I think you know people were touched and I think there were things that were redeemed whether people would see that from a God perspective I don't know. I think most definitely, that was definitely the case yes.

Participant 8 felt that God has resurrected Hull in 2017: 'I mean, I've seen God in the 'City of Culture' in the renewal and that resurrection, that hope… in that inspiration, definitely, definitely! It was a whole spiritual thing going on. But not in the conventional churches of Hull now. It's not always about that, is it?'.

4.4.5 Self-belief and self-confidence

One of the biggest transformations people felt had come from 2017 was a renewed sense of self-belief and confidence in the people of Hull. Participant 5 felt that the transformation of Hull in 2017 was from God:

> I think God wants people to have self-esteem and self-belief. And I mean, there are massive issues in our society about identity and I think we have a really positive message to proclaim about our identity… Well it's at the heart of the Christian gospel, isn't it? Sort of, we don't write people off! You know, people have a fresh start. You know, pray for the prosperity of the city. That's what… Is it Jeremiah 28 isn't it, something like that?5 I'll look up… God says to the exiles, you know, go into Babylon - work and pray for prosperity and peace that Jehovah holds for the city in which you will find yourselves.

He felt that the prosperity of the city was a 'very Godly thing to pray or work for'. Participant 16 also felt that God wanted Hull to prosper: 'People have designs to see Hull change, to see Hull be vibrant and prosperous and the economy to grow, all of that is what the Lord wants to do you know the Lord wants us to be a prosperous, thriving city'.

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5 *'Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper' Jeremiah 29:7, Holy Bible: New International Version.*

4.4.6 Joy

Participant 12 discovered a sense of joy in the City of Culture events which he felt God wanted for the city. He kept calling City of Culture 'crazy' and 'bizarre', so I asked him to expand on this. Talking about image xxvii, he said:

> Fun… I want people of Hull to be fun and I want the church to be fun. So, that's why in the front window, I put a big poster for Yellow Day. I bought a banana, anything I could buy yellow in the pound shop. People would come past, "Oh, what's this about?" The people from the church said, "What is it?" I said, "It's just fun". There's no rhyme or reason, it's not evangelistic, it's not a Christian thing, it's just Yellow Day, that a comedian, comical guy has come up with.

I got the sense it was unusual for him to endorse something that was not Christian or evangelistic, but he clearly felt God wanted the people of Hull to have fun and be joyful, for the sake of having fun and being joyful.

Image xxvii: Selfie of participant 12 and Yellow Day poster (permission to use image given by subject)

4.4.7 Community

As well as these theologies arising from City of Culture, my participants also shared thoughts which reinforced the theologies of culture they had given me in their first interviews: namely, the importance of community and creativity. Speaking of community, participant 4 felt 'when you see people come together, when you see people co-operate, when you see people are kind, if you see people enjoying being together with this common ground – that's God working'. Participant 5 echoed this, saying,

> Culture is part of the reflection of the fact that we are made in God's image and we are by nature, creative people but that is not just… that's not self-indulgence – it's not just for me and my God but it's surely horizontal. It's about community, communion… and actually, a good culture surely must build community and for me as a Christian, good culture actually contributes to my relationship with God.

He noted that the City of Culture events generated community:

> And there was sort of a group of us sort of just standing, looking at this thing and they just started chatting to each other so, there was this kind of… it happened with other installations – it happened with the poppy thing… but the blade, in particular, I think, really got people talking. So… and that's gone on right through the year and it happened with Noah. You know, you would stand there watching it and people would get chatting and... and a sense of community.

Participant 18 also saw that this creation of community was from God:

> I would agree with that because Christianity is about relationships and that's in relation to people and God and that's a relationship collectively with God but also individually with God you know, and I think those events, interactions happened on the day and what I hope is that those interactions haven't just ended but have continued. I hope new friendships happened you know and if not new friendships at least new connections of people just recognising each other, oh yes I saw you at feed the five thousand or I saw you at the live nativity or whatever it might be you know which they can be picked up at another event you know when someone goes to another event oh yes, I remember you from such and such and I really hope that will happen.

4.4.8 Creativity

Creativity was also a strong theme in interview 2, and came out particularly in the pictures that my participants took in 2017. I had asked my participants to take photographs that spoke to them of the relationship between God and culture, and of the 16 participants I interviewed in 2018, 8 took photographs during the City of Culture year. I also reminded my participants about my request for photographs during 2017. The participants who did not take photographs were very apologetic when we met, and explained that they had simply been too busy to focus on my request. Talking about image xxviii, participant 2 described the relationship between God and culture as 'we created it and He created us! Where is it – somewhere in my notes here! Or was it one in my head? Well, I… people are queueing up. I would just say, being together'.

Image xxviii: photograph at participant 2's church of people queuing for food

Participant 12 showed me image xxix, describing:

> Saffron Waghorn, she designed the Moths for Amy Johnson. She did a little exhibition in our building and it was interesting because we had a conversation about faith and creativity. She's not a Christian and she was surprised at the church actually and just to appreciate her work and although she wouldn't describe herself as having Christian inspiration, you see creativity in other people and I believe we're all created in God's image and so, there is creativity. To see what people make, she had made this little plane and it was very odd, but you just saw the detail and thought, "Wow, that is from a human being." How did she imagine that, how did she perceive that?" Yet, she'd drawn imagery from creation and natural things.

Image xxix: Saffron Waghorn and a Moth for Amy Johnson at participant 12's church

Participant 19 showed me image xxx, saying it ‘was just one morning, in Autumn, obviously and the leaves had fallen and again, just the thoughts of God’s presence and creation and the beauty of it in the morning and you may not see it very well but that’s the Humber bridge, so that was, the thinking there was being a Hull harvest’.

Image xxx: participant 19’s photograph of the harvest and Humber Bridge

Participant 13 expressed that ‘the God I believe in is a creating God, a God that wants creating, that’s what I believe. I don’t believe in an old man sitting over the skies, in that way, I’m an atheist… God made people in his own image and that means that people are creators’. Participant 13 saw God and culture as almost indistinguishable. In our second interview, he stated firmly that ‘God is culture’, and later, that ‘God is culture inspiring’. He was one of the few people to explicitly mention the relationship between the Holy Spirit, culture and creativity. We were talking about God making people to be creative, when he mentioned God breathing his Spirit into Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden: ‘He inspired his spirit into their lives, into their nose… That’s inspiring’.

4.4.9 City-centric, by outsiders

However, my participants did not feel that City of Culture was without its flaws. Ten of the sixteen participants interviewed in 2018 felt that it was city-centric, and did not include Hull’s poorest outer estates. Participant 5 summed up the problems with this approach: ‘You know, if you want to get into the folk who are distant from the arts and culture and marginalised, often from their own city because of, you know getting in and out because of transport costs and all’.

A few participants felt that City of Culture was created by 'outsiders', not by Hull people, which is perhaps borne out by the creation of Made In Hull by a Hungarian artist. Participant 17 felt that Hull people were not given a chance to show off their creativity:

> Lots of people have something to offer and they don't always get the opportunity come up… Say like this somebody sat and knitted all those [some knitted fish for a shop window] and so all around them there's lots of other things going on and things, poetry things, baking, I don't know, whatever they did all these little things that showed that people were creative that maybe over the years they've not really had the opportunity to show that really in whatever form that would be.

She also felt that God would not have cared about the City of Culture events because they were 'arty' and not representative of Hull, rather than projects born of Hull:

> When it first came out and they said City of Culture and for the first part you're wondering, you are wondering what they mean by saying City of Culture what does it mean and then it turns out that what it means is that they're going to put on a lot of arty things, but it's wrong to say that because they did do some things revolving round the fishing industry and things like that so you know it wasn't totally all art. When you realised that that was what they were mainly going to focus on then it just seemed, it does seem a bit strange.

4.4.10 Not transformative enough

Participant 10, a Quaker and anti-capitalist activist also felt God would not have approved of City of Culture. He also felt that Hull's people had not been given a chance to showcase their talents, and did not enable to change he would have hoped to see in Hull:

> I'm not sure I stumbled across lots of stuff which was directly egalitarian and deeply participatory in that sense. I'm sure there was some of that stuff out there… There's that Roman saying, that a Caesar said, "Give them bread and games". Then we're sorted, they won't revolt. I think that the culture of spectacle is linked to me with that, it's just distract and entertain and nullify and teach people to be passive in how they live. It's just another dimension. You hoped that art and creativity would be a space where actually, everybody was beginning to break from that passive mould. I think actually the culture of spectacle just reinforces that.

He felt that the mega-events of 2017 had no beauty or truth, and did not reflect Hull:

> We watched a video that was the bid for Hull City of Culture and she [a woman who was part of a group he was a member of] said, "That's not my culture, my culture is standing behind somebody in the corner shop who's crying because she hasn't got enough money for her bread and milk and giving her some". That stuck with me. I've written a poem which I can read to you if you want which is a reflection on that statement, "That's not my culture". So, there are moments like that which to me, speak of beauty and it's like that is the kind of quality that people have and exhibit probably every day in the lives, in their struggles… I can't see any beauty in the systems that produce that kind of situation where that event has just happened.

4.4.11 Summary

City of Culture 2017 had a strong impact on most of my participants, and they saw God working through and in the year. Before any transformation could happen, the city needed the catharsis of Made In Hull at the beginning of the year. This art work allowed the city to turn from an introspective, isolated melancholia, to shared mourning, from which there was the possibility of healing. My participants saw God giving Hull a fresh start in 2017. They described this as rediscovery, renewal, resurrection, redemption. I saw no sign that my participants felt Hull had committed sins that needed redeeming; it was more that God was rescuing the city from oppression. My participants saw God's aims for the city being worked out 2017, reconciling Hull to its past, and allow it to be born into something new. There was also reconciliation between previously antagonistic groups in the city, and a reconciliation between Hull and the rest of the UK. Just as Made in Hull acted as catharsis to reconcile the city to its past, City of Culture in general seems to have acted as a wider catharsis to allow Hull to tell its unheard story of pain, and be reconciled to the rest of the country. My participants saw God working through this cathartic rebirth to build up self-esteem, joy, community and creativity in the city. They saw this self-esteem, joy, community and creativity being achieved through the city's flourishing, and also lead to more flourishing in turn. There was the sense that when people are expressing self-esteem, joy, community and creativity, they are joining in with God's plan for Hull, and working towards God's goals for Hull.

However, there was the sense that not City of Culture did not always work towards that flourishing, either by being too focussed on the city centre, or by being dominated by outsiders and not the people of Hull. Participant 10 felt that the poorest and most oppressed people of Hull had not been heard, and the transformation of Hull had not gone deep enough.

4.5 Interview 2: Engagement with City of Culture

I will now turn to examining how Hull Christian leaders' theologies of culture relate to their engagement with City of Culture 2017. Of the sixteen participants I spoke to after the end of City of Culture, nine held their own City of Culture events in their church, and a further one hosted events but did not put on their own events. Six churches did not hold or host specific City of Culture events: some of these held large events, but felt they would have held these even if 2017 were not City of Culture. Of these six, all bar one got involved in other City of

Culture events, sometimes organising the ecumenical City of Culture events, even though their own church may not have held an event.

4.5.1 Holding events

Those churches which did hold their own City of Culture events varied hugely in their engagement. At one end of the scale was participant 2's church, who 'launched an art competition which never really took off', and at the other end was participant 5's church which held and hosted over a hundred events. Most of the events that these churches were involved in were arts based. Participant 5's church 'had big concerts, little concerts… We had what we started, something called 'open access', which is on Friday lunchtime and Saturday lunchtime so, people can book it and perform because they might be musicians, they might be spoken word, theatre companies who for an hour or so bring in a performance into the chancel'. They also held a retelling of the Noah mystery plays, and a live nativity in December with camels and donkeys. Participant 13's church 'made a choir festival where we had a Danish choir coming in and there were three or four choirs from Hull singing, all afternoon', and participant 16's church held 'workshops, some of the folk in church are quite gifted at art and so I think it might've been over Easter or May half term and we just opened the church up and invited people in and encouraged the kids and the adults to be creative'. They also put on a couple of comedy events, including one by Jimmy Cricket.

One particularly imaginative art event, which also reflected on Hull's situation and history was held by participant 3's church, and facilitated by the ecumenical group Believe In Hull. Called 'Don't Miss The Boat', participant 3 (Anglican) talked about image xxxi and described it as:

> Birthed in a craft group that we have so [*name redacted*], in particular, headed this up and it's a canal boat on a river… [It was] linked in with the rivers' idea. The challenge, the spiritual challenge from this was from Ezekiel where you got the river, and someone walked into it up to their ankles and God takes them deeper and deeper and deeper until they can't walk anymore, they have to swim so, getting people to go deeper into God was a challenge that we had here. So, the children made this huge boat out of cardboard boxes and whatever but then we sat them down and did a very, well, some of the parents were listening as well, but a little bit of a chat about how God wants us to walk right into the deep and try things we've never done before, including getting to know Jesus.

This was a deliberately evangelical event, based on arts and crafts, and was designed to provide a City of Culture event for the people of the Longhill estate who might not travel to the city centre for bigger events.

Image xxxi: 'Don't Miss The Boat' at participant 3's church

Image xxxii: participant 9's photograph of the Alec Gill photo exhibition

Several churches held events reflecting on Hull's recent history. Participant 9's church, known as the Fisherman's church, particularly held events looking at Hull's fishing industry, including an art exhibition on the industry, a photographic exhibition by Alec Gill of Hessle Road in its heyday, and work with schools (image xxxii). They also engaged with arts events in an area which is not always associated with the arts. Participant 9 said that 'a choir… performed as part of our City of Culture bringing music into the area. People are not used to

choirs'. Participants 12 and 18 engaged with the Heritage Week for the first time, opening up their church buildings for visitors to tour. Participant 12 described that people had started getting involved with the church on the back of these tours:

> People have joined our Life College that we run, people have given finance to us, people have donated to the food bank. Because we're talking about what goes on in the building, they come into the building realising what's there, the people have resourced it… We had one family who came to the heritage-day. The doors were open at the front which they are not always on a Saturday and they came in for a coffee, had a look around and they said, "We'll come to be part of the church now". That totally cold contact out of nowhere.

A few churches held events looking at the multi-cultural nature of Hull; two of these were Pentecostal churches with a high proportion of black people in the congregation, one of which is led by a black minister: participant 15. Talking about a multi-cultural event, he felt he had to check this came under the heading of culture: 'I mean I think it was still culture, but we did an open-air service, we did an open-air service but we managed it just to create awareness that BME [black and minority ethnic people] we are part of the city you know and, in our church, we have about eighteen different nationalities'. Participant 17's church held arts and crafts events, and also their international service, as did participant 2's church.

4.5.2 Hosting events

Another way my participants engaged with City of Culture was by offering their churches as venues for other organisations to put on events. Again, there was differences in scale between these events: participant 5's church hosted the national Turner prize awards, and participant 12's church held broadcasts from BBC Radio 4 and 3.

Other churches held large events which they felt they would have held anyway, even if 2017 had not been City of Culture. Participant 8's church built a prayer labyrinth, participant 11's church held a Narnia trail and a Winter Wonderland treasure hunt. Other churches focussed on anniversaries which fell in 2017, sometimes linking in with City of Culture, sometimes not. Participant 2's church celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and the 210th anniversary of the abolition of slavery, led by Hull man William Wilberforce. Participant 20's church celebrated the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Bransholme estate.

There were three participants who felt their churches had no engagement with City of Culture: participant 10 felt the Quakers did not engage at all, participant 8 has no church

building to hold events in, and participant 18 encouraged his congregation to take part in other events rather than holding or hosting events themselves.

4.5.3 Believe in Hull

It is worth noting that five of my participants, numbers 4, 5, 11, 12, and 15, were part of the organising team for Believe in Hull, the ecumenical partnership engaging with City of Culture on a city-wide level. As well as helping churches such as participant 2's church put on events and engage with their communities, Believe in Hull organised several large-scale events including Easter Praise at Hull City Hall, Feed 5000 on 17th June, when 5000 shoppers were given a free fish sandwich, drama and retellings of the Bible Story, and displaying the national Methodist Modern Art Collection from Saturday 21st October to 31st December at the Princes Quay Shopping Centre.

4.5.4 Summary

My participants' engagement with City of Culture was greatly influenced by their understandings of culture. In chapter 3, I argued that my participants principally saw culture as being synonymous with the arts. The events that they held or hosted 2017, as described above, are focussed on the arts. My participants did not fundamentally change their understandings of culture as a concept because there was little in their City of Culture experience to change it. Hull City of Culture 2017 was primarily events and arts based; the organising team's implicit understanding of culture shown in their final bid document described culture as synonymous with the arts (Hull City Council, 2013a). Little happened in this year to enable my participants to gain any different understanding of culture.

Their engagement with City of Culture reflects some of their theologies of culture, but this was not always the case. Above, I described how my participants saw creativity and community as crucial elements of culture, created by God and given to humanity to help people to flourish. This focus on creativity and community is shown in the art competitions and workshops held by participant 2 and 16's churches, and the international services held by participants 2, 15 and 17. My participants' engagement with City of Culture was often focused on evangelism, such as participant 3's 'Don't Miss The Boat', or designed to encourage people to come into a church and a life of faith, such as participant 12's Heritage Week events. Participant 9 described having 'conversations with people and then those

people would come back to various services that we had over the Christmas time. It's about keeping those contacts with people and building on them. We saw these as stepping stone opportunities'.

However, the engagement with City of Culture overall seemed to stem from the theologies of culture described in my first interviews, not the theologies of culture seen in my second interviews. The themes of resurrection, reconciliation, redemption, rebirth, seem not to have been explicitly explored, or built into the events described above. Indeed, they seem to have taken some of my participants by surprise: participant 9 described that 'I think the reconciliation aspect was something that slowly, those opportunities became clearer. Sometimes it's not until you're actually engaged in the process that you can see, this is not actual by product of what we're doing, this is God at work here'. These theologies of resurrection, redemption, rebirth and culture seem to have emerged during 2017; these were emerging theologies rather than ones already known at the beginning of the year. This is entirely in keeping with the concept of contextual theology: these theologies have emerged from the context of City of Culture. It does however, given an indication of how quickly theologies can emerge from their concept: these understandings of God resurrecting Hull, redeeming the city, and reconciling conflicting groups through culture have emerged within a twelve-month period.

This does leave the churches in Hull in a privileged position. If Christian ministers are not taught about culture in theological college or via their training, they are left with a denuded understanding of culture, and how it might relate to God. However, through their interaction with City of Culture, my participants have been left with theologies of culture which see God resurrecting, reconciling and redeeming a marginalised and deprived city through and in its culture. This begs the question whether these theologies can be shared with churches in similarly marginalised and deprived cities, which I will explore further in chapter 7.

4.6 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have described the data arising from my two sets of interviews, explored the contextual theologies of culture of my participants, and asked how these theologies related to their engagement with City of Culture. In doing so, I have addressed my second and third research questions: what are Hull Christian leaders' theological understandings of culture,

and how do they change over 2017; and how do Hull Christian leaders' theologies of culture relate to their engagement with City of Culture 2017?

I began by sharing Hull's geographical and historical context, which necessarily shaped my participants' theologies. This is a context of pain and shared loss from the deaths in the fishing industry, the decline of that industry, the effects of the Blitz and the so-called slum clearance. I described how a great deal of Hull's pain came from the sense that this story of loss and dislocation had not been recognised by the rest of the UK. Despite this context of pain, my participants believed that God wants people to flourish, and that God has given people culture and creativity in order to flourish. My participants deeply love the city of Hull, and believe God does too. However, these theologies stemming from my first interviews, felt somewhat intangible and distanced from real life.

Returning to my participants after 2017, I sensed that they had seen these theologies enacted in Hull, and that God had worked powerfully in Hull in its time as City of Culture. My participants described how God had enabled people to flourish in 2017: community bonds had been made stronger, and people became more creative. God reconciled Hull to the rest of the UK, and reconciled people in Hull to each other. God raised people's self-esteem and self-confidence: the identity of the people of Hull is tightly bound to the identity of the city itself.

My participants' engagement with City of Culture was strongly affected by their understandings of culture explored in chapter 3. Their main way of participating in 2017 was by holding or hosting arts-based or heritage events. The sense of culture being a place where God would enact flourishing, resurrection, reconciliation, or rediscovery was not explored in their events, as these understandings only grew out of their experiences in 2017. This attests to the power of contextual theology: these theologies grew and emerged from the context of City of Culture.

In the next chapter I will examine the theological literature on culture. This approach is in line with grounded theory method, which calls for the researcher to conduct the literature review after developing an independent analysis (Charmaz, 2006, p.5). In chapter 6, following my literature review, I will examine my participants' theologies of culture in conjunction with theological literature on culture, discuss my fourth research question, and

look at how Hull Christian leaders' understandings of culture relate to their theologies of culture.

Chapter 5: Literature Review – theology and culture

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the literature on the relationship between theology and culture, and place my research within the wider literature on theology and culture, urban theology, and contextual theology. In the next chapter, I will analyse this literature in dialogue with my participants' responses, allowing my participants' beliefs and experiences to speak in conversation with the theologians discussed in this chapter. In doing so, I will build up a contextual theology which is informed by the best of both worlds. In this chapter, I argue that contextual rather than systematic theology is best placed to understand the relationship between God and culture. Theology needs to use the methodology of the social sciences to fully understand people's beliefs and practices, and only by examining these beliefs and practices can we understand the work of God in the present day. In order to fully engage in contextual theology, understand people's beliefs and practices and understand God's work in the present day, it is more fruitful to engage in theology as process rather than product, on method rather than categorising theologies of culture into models, which has dominated the literature from Niebuhr onwards. I argue that in order to understand the relationship between theology and culture, and how God works in and among contemporary culture, we need to develop a truly Trinitarian theology of culture which encompasses creation, reconciliation, redemption and eschatology. My research represents a significant contribution to the literature described in this chapter, providing a detailed examination of Christian leaders' understandings and theologies of culture, and how God is at work in a context of UK deprivation in the present day.

5.2 Contextual theology

In this section, I explain how my research sits within the sphere of contextual theology, rather than within systematic or philosophical theology, and why my use of social science methods is important. I explore the legacy of liberation theology on contextual theology, and explain how my research relates to liberation theology, inculturation, and urban theology.

5.2.1 Systematic or contextual theology?

The division of theology into three spheres – philosophical, historical and practical – dates to the post-Enlightenment period and the writings of Friedrich Schleiermacher (Schleiermacher,

1893; Schleiermacher, 1963). Graham, Walton and Ward argue that this division of theology led to a hierarchy of knowledge, with philosophic or systematic theology in prime position, and practical theology as the pastoral application of 'hints and helps' arising from systematic theology. They argue that in Schleiermacher's model, which has defined the study of theology in the subsequent centuries, practical theology is 'not regarded as generative of theological insight' (Graham et al., 2005, p.3).

Despite this post-Enlightenment relegation of practical theology as a source of theological insight, Bergmann sees the same period as the time when the emerging approach to knowledge started to develop characteristics which eventually led to the inception of contextual theology (Bergmann, 2003, p.68). Firstly, Bergmann draws attention to changes in epistemology after Nietzsche, as 'ever-increasing importance [was] attached to the perspective character of knowledge', and the acceptance that contrast and different perspectives 'shape new ways of achieving and producing knowledge' (Bergmann, 2003, p.68). Secondly, Bergmann argues that the enlightenment focus on the essence of knowledge was replaced by a focus on the 'social context and focus of knowledge', which assumed that the 'subject of knowledge constitutes itself through a large number of social factors in its cultural context' (Bergmann, 2003, p.68-69). Thirdly, Bergmann argues that the method of making knowledge in this period shifted from conflict to a dialogue between empiricism and hermeneutics, deductive and inductive methods, interpretations of historical material and contemporary materials (Bergmann, 2003, p.69). Finally, Bergmann points to a shift toward problem-oriented knowledge, which put a priority on the problems and solutions which are important for people's lives (Bergmann, 2003, p.70-71). Bergmann uses the work of Per Frostin to ask how these post-enlightenment and postmodern changes to the approach of knowledge challenge theology. Bergmann (via Per Frostin) argues that the analysis of context can be

> (i)… used as a heuristic tool, that is, like an instrument to detect hidden and hard to understand contexts and messages in theological expressions; ii) it works as a critical principle and prevents by analysis both a false centring on the interpreter as well as a misguided idealization of the other; iii) it challenges the interpreter to a new self-understanding (Bergmann, 2003, p.72).

It is this approach I have taken in my research, allowing the context of Hull to speak to theological expression, to temper my own role and that of my participants, and to challenge my own understanding.

Graham, Walton and Ward describe the outworking of this epistemological shift on theology in the latter half of the twentieth century, leading to a position where practical theology could be seen as a source of theological understanding, going from a '*therapeutic* to a *hermeneutic* model' (Graham et al., 2005, p.3-4, italics original). They cite the influence of the pedagogy of Paulo Freiere, and the work of Donald Schön in professional identity, in showing that knowledge and expertise are 'generated from the inside-out and not the inside-in' (Graham et al., 2005, p.4). This postmodern shift in the epistemological understanding of knowledge allowed for the birth of practical theology, which in turn generated the field of contextual theology: a practice which recognised knowledge of the nature of God as being generated by people in different contexts (a fuller history of contextual theology is explored further in section 5.2.2). Although Schleiermacher is a useful starting point for the understanding of the division of theology and the recognition of practical theology as a discipline, contemporary theology has outgrown the Enlightenment: I agree, with Bevans, Graham, Walton and Ward that all theology is contextual and practical, and that systematic or philosophical theology can and should be viewed as such. Using the work of Ellen Chary, Graham, Walton and Ward argue that much of systematic or philosophical theology was generated with a practical bent and was created 'to nurture, to inform, to communicate' (Graham et al., 2005, p.10). Systematic or philosophical theology was formed in specific cultures, and is no less informed by the historic, geographic, economic, political and social contexts of its creators, than theologies generated in Latin America, Africa, the Far East, or even Hull.

As described above, one of the features of contextual theology, which Bevans and Pears also make clear, is its subjective nature. Bevans describes theology and reality as always subjective, as reliant on the human person and human society (Bevans, 2002, p.4). Pears traces the development of contextual theology as being in line with post-enlightenment and postmodern thinking, which rejects the idea of universal claims to truth, and post-structuralist thinking which sees knowledge as fluid and shifting (Pears, 2009, p6-8). This is one of the reasons I am particularly drawn to contextual theology: my epistemology is pragmatic, which sees all knowledge as subjective and filtered by the prism of experience (see section 2.2.3). Corbin and Strauss describe this approach to knowledge: 'the act of knowing embodies perspective. Thus, what is discovered about "reality" cannot be divorced from the operative perspective of the knower, which enters silently into his or her search for, and ultimate conclusions about, some event' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.4).

5.2.2 Contextual theology, liberation theology and tradition

Studying the inception and application of contextual theology is bound up with liberation theology. Therefore, I need to consider the history of liberation theology and its relationship with tradition, before asking how my research sits within these spheres. Contextual theology, as a theory and a methodology, came to prominence in Latin American, Asia and Africa in the mid twentieth century as Christians from these continents started to look at how different cultural contexts affected the interpretation of Christianity (Bergmann, 2003, p.xiii). This move to contextual theology came from a rejection of western, colonial forms of theology, which centred the history of Christianity in the West, and not its present reality in the global South or East. This contextual theology was often liberative in its approach, calling for Christianity to champion those people who were socially, racially and economically oppressed, and declaring God's preferential option for the poor.

Schreiter credits Karl Rahner in 1979 with drawing the northern and western theological community's attention to the growth of Christianity in the global south, and the shift in outlook this brought: 'the church found itself moving from a predominantly Hellenistic world-view into an era of world church, characterized by a pluralism in world-view and multiplicity of new pastoral and theological problems unprecedented in Christian history' (Schreiter, 1985, p.xi). Contextual theology was further influenced by 'feminist theology, African and North American black theology, Ecotheology, Minjung- and Palastinian theology, native spirituality, and in the regional "kairos processes"' (Bergmann, 2003, p.xiii) . During the 1980s, contextual theology spread from the global South to the North and West as the Nordic forum for contextual theology was set up in 1991, and the Theologie Interkulturell was founded at the Catholic Faculty of Frankfurt University in 1990 (Bergmann, 2003, p.xiii).

The contextual theology which found expression in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s also saw the birth of liberation theology. The context of populist governments in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico 'inspired national consciousness' and the creation of 'strong popular movements seeking profound changes in the socio-economic structure of their countries' (Boff and Boff, 1987, p.67). In this context of Marxist revolution, many Roman Catholic churches in Latin America 'began to take their social mission seriously', and Christians began to engage in liberation theology: standing in solidarity with the poor, and creating base

worshipping communities in deprived and oppressed areas (Boff and Boff, 1987, p.67). This move from the Latin American churches began receiving official support with the 1965 Second Vatican Council, which 'brought theological sanctioning of a more progressive, liberative theology for Latin America', and gave 'authentic theological backing to a different vision of both Church and humanity in the world' (Pears, 2009, p.62). From the Second Vatican Council emerged a document from fifteen Africa, Asian and Latin American Bishops: *A Message to the Peoples of the Third World*, which responded 'on a theological and organizational level to the realities of social, political and economic injustice as it occurred globally' (Pears, 2009, p.62).

As described above, liberation theology has its roots in the context of Marxist revolution. Boff and Boff argue that liberation theology always remains sceptical of Marx. They wrote that liberation theology 'uses Marxism purely as an *instrument*', borrowing methodological pointers but retaining a critical stance (Boff and Boff, 1987, p.28, italics original). I see this viewpoint as somewhat naïve, and favour Gutiérrez's understanding of the relationship between liberation theology and Marx. Gutiérrez argues that contemporary theology's focus on the transformation of the world was inspired by Marxism, and that the dialogue with Marx 'helps theology to perceive what its efforts at understanding the faith receive from the historical praxis of humankind in history as well as what its own reflection might mean for the transformation of the world' (Gutiérrez, 1973, p.8). Gutiérrez defines the theological aspect of liberation as expressing the 'aspirations of oppressed people and social classes, emphasising the conflictual aspect of the economic, social and political processes which puts them at odds with wealthy nations and oppressive classes' (Gutiérrez, 1973, p.24). Liberation also expresses a sense of history, wherein humanity can make a 'gradual conquest of true freedom', which will lead to 'the creation of a new humankind and a qualitatively different society' (Gutiérrez, 1973, p.25). Finally, liberation expresses a theological role, with Christ bringing people liberation and making 'humankind truly free' (Gutiérrez, 1973, p.25). Guitiérrez describes liberation theology as incorporating both "secular" and "sacred" praxis, arguing that existing economic, social and political processes must be overturned for Christ's freedom to prevail.

I see liberation theology as contextual theology 'committed to its context, to the local as the key to the global, to the concrete, and to the necessity of praxis' (Gorringe, 2002, p.21). The two theologies are intertwined, but not equivalent. Schreiter makes the link between

contextual theology and liberation theology clear. In his three-fold models of translation, adaption, and contextual models, Schreiter sees the contextual models as tending to have either an ethnographic or liberation approach (Schreiter, 1985, p.14). He sees these liberation approaches as prioritizing oppression, social ills, and the dynamics of change in human societies. He describes them as associated especially with Latin America, but able to be found 'whenever Christians are experiencing political, economic, and social oppression' (Schreiter, 1985, p.14). Schreiter sees liberation models, in theological terms, as keenly concerned with salvation, analysing the lived experience of a people to uncover the forces of oppression, struggle, violence and power. They concentrate on the conflictual elements oppressing a community or tearing it apart: 'in the midst of grinding poverty, political violence, deprivation of rights, discrimination and hunger, Christians move from social analysis to finding echoes in biblical witness in order to understand the struggle in which they are engaged or to find direction for the future' (Schreiter, 1985, p.14). Schreiter argues that the special strengths of liberation models are what can happen when the realities of a people are 'genuinely and intimately coupled with the saving work of God. The energies that are released, the bonds of community and of hope that are forged, the insight into the divine revelation received and shared have already enriched the larger Christian community immediately and have challenged the older churches to a more faithful witness' (Schreiter, 1985, p.15).

One of the biggest challenges facing liberation and contextual theologies is the question of the role of tradition. Bergmann argues that the role of tradition has 'become overlooked' in contextual theology, and that contextual theology 'ought to reflect upon the traditions of Christianity and the conditions of its interpretation to be able to develop a comprehensive interpretation of Christianity' (Bergmann, 2003, p.49). If theology is generated from a local context, which is often absent in the wider traditions of Christianity, how can local and newer theologies be reconciled to the wider tradition? Schreiter categorises four problems for the encounter between traditional theology and encounters local theology: the desire for unity in the midst of diversity, the possibility of syncretism and dilution of the Christian message, the varying emphases put on differing elements of the tradition, and how and when should tradition challenge local theology? (Schreiter, 1985, p.102-3).

Bergmann's solution to this problem argues that tradition should not be understood as essential or modernist, in which tradition is normative, and 'that which is handed over

remains the same in different times and places. Instead, tradition should be 'composed of various processes of handing-over in time', and as being able to 'trans-contextualize itself through changing states in time' (Bergmann, 2003, p.62). He argues that the Christian tradition is 'not only a series of local theologies… but a social and cultural memory which helps the fellowships of the holy to actualize series of local theologies for the sake of their future' (Bergmann, 2003, p.62). Bergmann argues that three principles should lead the way in the contextual interpretation of tradition: a focus on the 'common biospherical history' of the 'cultural environment of humanity and the life environment of nature', a precedence for the 'silenced traditions' of 'those living on the underside of cultural and natural history', and a 'trans-modern representation of the traditions of victims and losers' (Bergmann, 2003, p.63-4).

Schreiter similarly encourages his readers to see church tradition as 'a series of local theologies, closely wedded to and responding to different cultural traditions' (Schreiter, 1985, p.93). He argues that local theologies must engage with tradition to be truly Christian, but that:

> That encounter with the tradition can raise many problems for the churches as they develop their local theologies. They are not trying to dilute or avoid aspects of the tradition; there is a deep desire to remain truly faithful to the apostolic tradition and to be themselves faithful witnesses to the gospel in their own circumstances. The problems arise instead from wondering whether or not the encounter with the tradition actually takes place at all, whether or not there is sufficient dialogue taking place to allow for mutual understanding between tradition and cultural situation. A heightened sensitivity to culture has made local churches only more keenly aware of the difficulties in communication. How can the tradition be truly received if the very grounds for dialogue are not first achieved? (Schreiter, 1985, p.95)

Using Chomsky's model of language acquisition, Schreiter posits an analogy of tradition as the entire language system, the Christian faith as language competence, and local theologies as texts of language performance. He writes:

> Local theologies (performance texts) cannot simply be derived from received formulas or from previous performance texts. Rather, their pattern of generation is parallel to that of other performance texts. Access to competence (Christian faith) is not reserved to theologians or older churches. Astonishing and well-formed performance texts can come out of the youngest of churches, just as young children can speak well-formed sentences never spoken before. Orthodoxy is not the source of texts so much as it is the guarantor of non-ill-formed performance texts.
> But what of the tradition in all of this? In this proposal, tradition is the equivalent of the language system. Tradition is more than unarticulated faith, but it includes them. Tradition is more than the loci of orthodoxy, but it includes that. And tradition is more than the history of theology, but includes that. Without the competence of faith, the loci of orthodoxy are barren. Without the performance texts of communities,

> Christianity is mute. Without the grammar of orthodoxy, the performance texts disintegrate into babble (Schreiter, 1985, p.116-7)

In *Discerning Spirit*, Gorringe asks how tradition and revelation can be balanced, and how the workings of God can be known in the everyday. He suggests a hermeneutic spiral which is similar to Schreiter's call for dialogue: 'we begin from the fact that there is no non-interpreted data, and that the word "experience" presupposes interpretation. Revelation happens in the context of dissonance between our experience and the interpretation tradition offers' (Gorringe, 1990, p.24-5). I agree with Bergmann's call for tradition to be seen as 'various processes of handing-over in time' (Bergmann, 2003, p.62), and I can see how Gorringe's idea of a hermeneutic spiral could be crucial to engage with the role of tradition, and of relevance in Hull. I shall explore this further below and in chapter 7.

5.2.3 Hermeneutics of liberation theology

In order to further understand the influences of liberation theology, it is necessary to trace its hermeneutics. Taking the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, Anthony Thiselton describes a tension between a socio-critical approach to hermeneutics and a socio-pragmatic approach. Thiselton describes socio-critical theory as 'an approach to texts (or to traditions and institutions) which seeks to penetrate beneath their surface-function to expose their role as instruments of power, domination, or social manipulation' (Thiselton, 1997, p.379). In contrast, socio-pragmatic theory is 'explicitly ethnocentric', wherein a community can only be corrected and reformed from within itself, but risks imperialising other communities 'by extending its own boundaries until it disintegrates under its own weight and internal pluralism' (Thiselton, 1997, p.27-28).

Like Schreiter, Thiselton sees liberation theology as strongly influenced by black and feminist theologies. He argues that these hermeneutics share major themes:

> First and foremost, they construct critiques of frameworks of interpretation which are used or presupposed in dominant traditions. From within liberation theologies, these frameworks may be perceived as Western, thought-centered, or bourgeois-capitalist; from within some black theologies, as white colonial, racist, or imperialist; from within some feminist theologies, as androcentric or patriarchal. These frameworks transmit pre-understandings and symbolic systems which perpetuate, it is argued, the ideologies of dominant traditions. Second, liberation, black, and feminist approaches offer alternative re-interpretations of biblical texts from the standpoint of a particular context of experience and action. This may take the form of a history of social oppression, or an exposition of "women's experience". Third, each approach seeks

> critical tools and resources to unmask those uses of biblical texts which serve social interests of domination, manipulation, or oppression, to expose them as what they are. Each claims to embody some critical principle, by means of which to reveal the unjust goals and bases of manipulative interpretative devices and procedures (Thiselton, 1997, p.410).

However, Thiselton sees these theologies as containing both socio-critical and socio-pragmatic approaches to hermeneutics:

> Black South African hermeneutics include theoretical models drawn from materialist and Marxist approaches to texts; but black hermeneutics assume a different form in North American and in black African states. The most striking feature in feminist hermeneutics from the point of view of hermeneutical theory is the different, even opposing, theoretical models which different strands within feminist theologies represent. Some seek a universal critique in the name of freedom and justice, appealing to trans-contextual criteria which identify them as socio-critical approaches. Others seek from hermeneutics the affirmation of particular community-relative social norms, and presuppose a socio-pragmatic rejection of the possibility of any such trans-contextual critique. In effect, if not causally, the figures of Habermas [the socio-critical approach] and Rorty [socio-pragmatic approach] stand respectively behind each set of opposing theoretical assumptions (Thiselton, 1997, p.14-15).

Thiselton posits that in order to evolve a genuinely liberating critique of injustice and oppression in which uses of biblical texts in the interests of oppressors are unmasked, Latin American hermeneutics, black hermeneutics, and feminist hermeneutics must 'disentangle those strands which utilize socio-critical theoretical models from others which crumble and collapse into socio-pragmatic systems of hermeneutics' (Thiselton, 1997, p.27). Thiselton argues that 'socio-contextual pragmatism can achieve nothing beyond the attempt to fight oppressors with the oppressors' own oppressive weapons. Whoever is the most militant, the most articulate, the most manipulative, the most self-confident (sometimes even the most supposedly pious) appears to win this rhetorical power struggle' (Thiselton, 1997, p.27).

Thiselton argues that because socio-pragmatic hermeneutics remain explicitly ethnocentric, the community cannot be corrected and reformed from outside itself. 'Its only hope of change is to imperialize other communities by extending its own boundaries until it disintegrates under its own weight and internal pluralism' (Thiselton, 1997, p.27-8). The risk of this socio-pragmatic hermeneutic is that they 'filter out from the biblical text any signal which does anything other than affirm the hopes and aspirations of a given social group' (Thiselton, 1997, p.410). Instead, Thiselton argues that what is needed is a socio-critical approach to texts which seeks to:

> penetrate beneath their surface-function to expose their role as instruments of power, domination, or social manipulation... In the most authentic forms of socio-critical

> hermeneutical theory this is affected by establishing a metacritical or transcendental dimension distinct from the horizons of the texts or traditions in question, on the basis of which their manipulatory or oppressive functions and mechanisms can be made transparent. It is clear that within Western traditions certain ways of reading and using the biblical writings, far from transforming readers, serve effectively to re-affirm pre-existing prejudices, traditions, attitudes, and social relationships. In such a context socio-critical hermeneutics becomes both a tool for potential liberation and rediscovery of truth, and also a weapon against individual and corporate self-deception. This may lead not only to the liberation of persons, but also to liberation of the biblical texts (Thiselton, 1997, p.379-380).

I agree with Thiselton that a socio-critical hermeneutic approach is needed to fully explore the use of Biblical texts as 'instruments of power, domination, or social manipulation'. However, I recognise that this will look very different in a Western context of deprivation from how this might look in a Latin American, African or Black American context. Hull sits within the white, Western tradition which needs to be approached with a socio-critical approach by many other global contexts. In my interviews, I only encountered one person who approached tradition with an explicitly socio-critical hermeneutic approach: participant 20 (independent Evangelical). He said he had 'massive issues with any culture be it state or church that overdoes the whole issue of power and control', and felt that Jesus culture 'embodies values of meekness, of forgiveness not of power and control'. He was particularly critical of churches which had 'somebody prancing around on stage you know claiming the power and the glory to themselves', and especially of famous evangelists:

> I mean what would Nathan Morris bleeding do, you know if you've heard of him, he's coming back to Hull, big shot evangelist, we'd have a swimming pool wouldn't we on the stage and we'd walk across it at every event would we not and I see Jesus, the way that he plays himself down the whole time, this is the son of God in the flesh but he is gentle, he is unassuming, he is not controlling.

However, he was the exception among my participants in taking a socio-critical approach to the Bible, and it is here that Gorringe's idea of the hermeneutical spiral could come into use: could more church leaders be encouraged to enter their contextual experience into dialogue with the interpretive tradition, and through a socio-critical hermeneutic approach, discover a fresh Hullensian approach? I shall explore what this might look like further in chapter 7.

5.2.4 Inculturation

The concept of inculturation is also linked to contextual and liberation theologies, and emerged from the Roman Catholic church's 1974 Synod of Bishops and Pope Paul VI's apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (Shorter, 2006, p.xi). Inculturation is direct

missional approach which sees a dynamic and ongoing relationship between 'faith and culture or cultures' (Shorter, 2006, p.11). Shorter defines inculturation as not simply the insertion of the Christian message into a non-Christian context, but part of a developing process which acknowledges the Christian massage cannot exist except in a cultural form. Shorter sees inculturation as transcending acculturation: with inculturation human culture is enlivened by the Gospel from within. The latter point is crucial: inculturation understands that God is already present in non-Christian contexts, and that those contexts' meeting with Christianity enlivens or clarifies non-Christians' understanding of God within their context. Arbuckle argues that this enlivening can happen because the Holy Spirit is the source of all truth, no matter where this truth is found. As no one culture has normative status in expressing the truths of faith, the truths of faith are translatable into all cultures (Arbuckle, 2010, p.169).

Arbuckle makes it clear that in the process of inculturation, Christians and the Christian faith are also transformed by the encounter. He defines inculturation as a 'dialectical interaction between Christian faith and cultures in which the cultures are challenged, affirmed and transformed towards the reign of God, **and** in which Christian faith is likewise challenged, affirmed and enhanced by this experience' (Arbuckle, 2010, p.152, emphasis mine). Arbuckle sees Jesus interacting interculturally with his culture, proclaiming God's love for all, healing the sick and welcoming outcasts. Arbuckle also sees Jesus as having an openness to learn and be changed in the story of the Syrophoenician woman: Jesus is surprised by the woman's profession of faith, and agrees to heal her daughter (Arbuckle, 2010, p.158). Arbuckle gives three stages to inculturation: initial contacts and conversations between cultures and faith; liminality, with dialogue and exchange, discernment, acculturation and transformation; and finally, the implementation of inculturation (Arbuckle, 2010, p.180). Whiteman argues that the function of inculturation6 in mission gives rise to three challenges: firstly, the prophetic challenge as inculturation changes and transforms the context. Secondly, there is the hermeneutic challenge, when inculturation expands the understanding of the gospel because it is seen through a different cultural lens. Finally, there is the personal challenge, as inculturation changes missionaries: they will not be the same once they have become part of

6 Whiteman uses the term contextualization rather than inculturation, but sees them as equivalent and 'companion' terms (Whiteman, 1999, p.43). I have chosen to use the term inculturation throughout as it is the most commonly used term in the literature.

the body of Christ in a context different from their own (Whiteman, 1999, p.51). It is this final point which can be the hardest, when Christians must understand they are not the holders of the truth of God, and become receptive to God changing them in dialogue with "non-Christian" people, cultures or societies.

Schreiter argues that biggest point of tension in inculturation is the question 'how much emphasis should be put on the dynamic of faith entering the process, and how much emphasis should be given to the dynamics of culture already in place?' (Schreiter, 1999, p.68). He gives three examples of situations where strong identification with culture is recommended: in situations of cultural reconstruction, where 'a culture has been so damaged by outside cultural forces that a people has to engage in a conscious reconstruction of their culture'; in situations of cultural resistance, where 'a culture is threatened by an alien force and need to take a posture of resistance in order to survive'; and situations of cultural solidarity, where the 'church is a tiny minority in the population and is suspected of being alien to the majority' (Schreiter, 1999, p.72-3). Schreiter also gives two examples of situations where faith seems called to stand over culture: situations where injustice is perpetrated and sanctioned by the culture, and situations where the culture faces challenges it does not have the resources to meet (Schreiter, 1999, p.73). In my interviews, I saw elements of inculturation in line with Schreiter, Arbuckle and Whiteman, and I will explore this more in the next chapter.

5.2.5 Urban theology

A strong strand of contextual theology in the 20th century in the UK comes from urban theology, where the city is examined as 'the context in which "God takes place"' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.158), and this contextual theology is obviously relevant to my research in Hull. Authors in this sphere include Andrew Davey, Laurie Green, Christopher Baker and John Atherton. This is not to say that all urban theology is contextual: for example, in *Cities of God*, Graham Ward writes a detailed systematic theology of the city, drawing on Augustine and Gregory of Nyssa as well as modern architecture, literature and film (Ward, 2000). Graham and Lowe describe the 'spatial turn' in theology as influenced by the work of Edward Soja and Henri Lefebvre, and their understanding that places are never just physical spaces or abstract concepts, but are instead places of social relations: '"a sense of place" requires people and societies to inhabit and occupy it and – crucially – to invest it with

meaning' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.50). Gorringe asks whether there can be a theology of the built environment and cities, and whether there is such a thing as sacred or secular space. He traces the lineage of a refusal to see a division between sacred or secular space to the existentialism of Tillich and the 'theology of the everyday' of Barth (Gorringe, 2002, p.12-13).

Pivotal in British urban contextual theology was the 1985 report *Faith in the City*, by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas. Rather than setting out a particular theology of the city, the report asked the Church of England to focus on urban priority areas, and made recommendations to the church and to the UK government to reduce the effects of poverty on the most marginalised and deprived areas of the UK. In *Theology in the City*, Anthony Harvey explores the theology arising from report *Faith in the City*. I agree with Harvey in his rejection of criticism that *Faith in the City*'s theology was weak, inadequate and incoherent: instead, he sees it as pointing to a different way of doing theology. Harvey argues *Faith in the City* asked questions about the nature of theology, and asked whether there was 'an "alternative theology" more appropriate to the needs of Urban Priority Areas' (Harvey, 1989, p.1). Harvey asks whether it is possible to speak of theologies in the plural, and whether the idea of "alternative theology" is a logical possibility. Harvey argues for the possibility of a multiplicity of theologies, that the 'relationship between any theological system and the truth about God is a good deal more problematic than used to be thought', and that theological principles are less indicators of reality and more like 'grammatical rules governing the use of a particular type of language', or like mathematical principles which are not the only way to explain a world (Harvey, 1989, p.5-6). Harvey argues with Macquarrie that theological propositions may exist as a type of dialectic: 'if two theological propositions are logically impossible, this does not mean that one is true and one is false, but that both may have part of the truth and they may continue in dialectical tension with one another until further advances in knowledge have achieved a synthesis' (Harvey, 1989, p.7).

I also agree with Andrew Kirk's argument that the UK's cities should pay attention to liberation theology when constructing local theologies. Kirk also rejects arguments that *Faith in the City* was 'weak on theology', arguing instead that it rejected conventional systematic theological reflection, and instead offered a re-evaluation of such theology, and an encouragement to for the church to 'look afresh at the way it thinks about the significance of

its God-given faith' (Kirk, 1989, p.15). Kirk argues that traditional Western theology is unfit for this work, and attention should be given instead to liberation theology's preference for the poor. Kirk draws parallels between the oppression faced by Latin American churches, and that faced by churches in English Urban Priority areas. Kirk rejects Harvey's acceptance of alternative, apparently mutual models of doing theology which spring from local theologies. Kirk sees that behind this acceptance of multiplicity is the 'correctness of a plurality of beliefs' which 'springs directly from one of the basic assumptions of Western culture' (Kirk, 1989, p.18). Kirk argues this plurality offers no critical principle for modern theology, and should be rejected as part of the Western academic model of theology rejected by much of the 'Third World' (Kirk, 1989, p.18). Kirk instead sees liberation theology's rejection of plurality as a way of 'releasing the power of God's people… to be agents of transformation' (Kirk, 1989, p.19).

Describing his experiences in Peckham, Andrew Davey describes themes which are comparable to those described in Hull. He writes that 'social and geographical dislocation is a common experience in Peckham', as many of his congregation have roots in the Caribbean and Africa, with some from Vietnam and Somalia. Davey takes Walter Brueggemanns's Old Testament land theologies, and applies them to Peckham, reflecting that 'space becomes place only when there are stories and hopes lodged there. The experience of exile and captivity is the experience of coerced space in contrast with trusted place' (Davey, 1998, p.9). Although Hull does not have comparable numbers of overseas migrants as Peckham, people who have longs roots in Hull experienced similar dislocation and exile: I will explore this further in chapter six.

In *What Makes A Good City*, Graham and Lowe specifically examine the Cities of Culture project. They question the role of culture in urban regeneration, ask what kind of regeneration strategies are implied by the Cities of Culture initiatives, and what the role of the church is in the revitalised Cities of Culture (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.99). Graham and Lowe argue that 'local and regional regeneration strategies have come increasingly to rely on cultural and creative industries as key drivers of economic revival and growth' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.102), but that these strategies are 'top-down "initiatives" imposed on local people and neighbourhoods, which emphasise high-profile and prestigious developments at the expense of long-term sustainability or provision for the many' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.100). They ask whether churches have a role to play in challenging this model of urban regeneration, and

in championing the 'experiences and aspirations of ordinary people' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.111). However, they do point out that it is 'not necessarily the task of Christian theology to oppose all attempts to boost a city's pride, let alone its economic well-being, through cultural renaissance', and that there needs to be 'some thinking about "culture" and its role in the building of the good city' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.111). Echoing Gorringe, Graham and Lowe argue that 'culture is one of the things that make us human', and is 'one of the signs of our image and likeness to God' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.112). They challenge urban churches to hold in balance the roles of 'celebrating the best of culture as pointing towards human self-transcendence and to the divine origin of all beauty', and the role of 'social justice and a preferential option for the poor' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.112-3). They argue that:

> This is where the words of "Christ" and "culture" have to be held in tension. This may entail monitoring the implicit values embedded in culture, and choosing those of inclusion, agency and integrity… Does culture point towards a city of inclusivity and dignity; is it honest about the human condition; is it realistic about the long-term sustainability of "signature" events and developments? (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.113)

I agree with Graham and Lowe's call for churches to engage critically and constructively with Cities of Culture initiatives. They encourage churches to 'nurture effective discipleship… to foster individuals' pride in their own stories and experiences as worthy of inclusion in a wider narrative of identity and aspiration'; to strengthen common bonds and social capital; to 'build up congregations to contribute actively to a cultural renaissance, by hosting cultural events or fostering the collective memory of a neighbourhood'; to enable communities 'to articulate questions about what makes a good city'; to 'speak to the wider population of the things that make us human: to celebrate our own creativity but to be wary of versions of culture that are ideological, exploitative or unsustainable' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.113-14). However, this assumes that churches are able to do this, and I will explore in later chapters whether this ideal was possible for the churches in Hull.

5.2.6 Summary

My research needs to take place within the sphere of contextual theology. By starting from the pragmatic epistemological understanding that knowledge is subjective and filtered by the prism of experience (see section 2.2.3), only contextual theology allows for an understanding of theology and reality as always subjective. Grounded theory method requires participants'

experiences to be given primacy, and only contextual theology allows contrasting and different perspectives to 'shape new ways of achieving and producing knowledge' (Bergmann, 2003, p.68). With Bevans, Graham, Walton and Ward, I argue that all theology is contextual, that theologies emerging from unlikely locales are valid, and add to our understanding of God. Following Bevans' assertion that context adds a third *locus theologicus* to the two standard sources of scripture and tradition (Bevans, 2002, p.4), my research asks what knowledge of the nature of God is generated by people in Hull in 2017.

I argue that liberation theology is intertwined with contextual theology, but that there are significant differences between the two. Liberation theology is but one form of contextual theology, arising from contexts of deprivation and oppression: other forms of contextual theology will emerge from contexts with different histories and political systems. Perhaps because of this emergence from different contexts, liberation theology shows a variance in hermeneutical approach. I recognise that a socio-critical hermeneutic is needed, but that this approach needs to be appropriate to a Western context, and may look different to the socio-critical hermeneutic of Latin America or of Black theologies. Contextual theology is necessarily shaped by the experiences of people from a particular geography and history, and with particular social, economic and political experiences. Contextual theology must always wrestle with the dynamic between the local and global expressions of Christianity, and the present day and the wider Christian tradition. My research does not assume that all my participants are coming from the perspective of liberation theology, despite living in one of the most marginalised and deprived cities in the UK, but allows them to articulate their own understandings of oppression, praxis, and relationship with Christian tradition. Similarly, I do not assume that my participants will engage with inculturation, and in the next chapter I will explore whether their practices could be described as inculturation.

Contextual and liberation theology is hugely influenced by the post-Vatican II Roman Catholic church, which in turn influenced the Anglican report on *Faith in the City* and subsequent urban theologies. Urban theology in the UK, and in particular, case studies of particular contexts, should continue to follow the agenda set by *Faith in the City* and its subsequent theological reflections. My research adds to this literature by examining Hull, a city which has received little or no focus in the literature, and by specifically examining the relationship between God and culture in the city: the research that Graham and Lowe call for in *What Makes A Good City*, into '"culture" and its role in the building of the good city'

(Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.111). My research fits into this gap in the literature, asking what church leaders understand culture to be, what God thinks about culture, and how God may be working in and through culture for the good of the city. In the next sections of this chapter, I explore how my research fits into the existing literature which examines the relationship between God and culture.

5.3 Models or methods?

The literature of theology and culture is dominated by the use of models or ideal types to describe theologies of culture. This undoubtedly comes from H. Richard Niebuhr's influential 1951 *Christ and Culture*, which was the first theological text to attempt to map the relationships between the Christian faith and culture (although Niebuhr was not the first modern theologian to write about theologies of culture: I shall return to Barth, Tillich and Torrance later in this chapter). In the following section I will map out the use of models to describe theologies of culture in the literature, and also the use of methods to understand the relationship between faith and culture. In order to fully engage in contextual theology, understand people's beliefs and practices and understand God's work in the present day, I argue it is more fruitful to engage in theology as process rather than product, and to focus on method rather than models.

5.3.1 Niebuhr: Christ and Culture

Niebuhr uses Weber's concept of ideal types to describe five models of the relationships between Christ and culture: Christ against Culture, when Christian integrity and obedience necessitates the denial of culture, and renunciation of the world; Christ and Culture in Paradox, where Christian calling necessitates obedience to worldly powers, salvation lies beyond history but the constraints and norms of culture must be accepted; Christ above Culture, where human achievement can be celebrated but only as a partial fulfilment of the revelation of Christ; Christ Transforming Culture, which says whilst revelation and reason are essentially compatible, critical engagement is necessary for the transformation and reorientation of human culture; and Christ of Culture, where faith baptises and fulfils the crowning achievements of culture.

Niebuhr is undoubtedly pioneering in his use of models to describe the relationship between Christ and culture, but his work falls short for several reasons. Firstly, Niebuhr focuses

exclusively on Christ and ignores the potential for a wider Trinitarian theology of engagement with culture. A focus on one person of the Trinity does not allow for a full understanding of God, and leaves one asking whether a typology of God the Father and culture, or the Holy Spirit and culture could look very different from a typology of Christ and culture. The type of Christ that Niebuhr presents is also problematic, with Kreider calling Niebuhr's Christ 'culturally rootless, abstracted from particularity of place and time... curiously blurred' (Kreider, 2001, p.31). Kreider instead argues for a Jesus who is eminently cultural, born into one of several first-century Jewish cultures, yet who in many ways swam with the stream also opposed the culture.

Niebuhr's understanding of culture is also awkward and inconsistent. Although he describes culture as 'the total process of human activity,' he equates it with Western 'civilisation', and sometimes with the "world" of the New Testament, set in opposition to the Word (Niebuhr, 2002, p.32). Gorringe criticises Niebuhr's sense of culture as ahistorical. He sees Niebuhr as writing from the context of world reconstruction after WWII, and concerned with the 'values which would underpin such reconstruction, values which he found in the Christian gospel' (Gorringe, 2004, p.13). Gorringe also argues that Niebuhr does not distinguish between culture and civilization, and also ignores the aspect of power in culture (Gorringe, 2004, p.21). Similarly, Lee sees Niebuhr as focusing narrowly on Western heritage and mainstream American culture: he points out that this is a valid point of view for Niebuhr, writing when he did, but that this view of culture cannot be seen as this as normative (Lee, 2016, p.43).

Carter also criticises Niebuhr's use of culture as 'culture-devoid-of-Christ', and also sees Niebuhr equating culture with the New Testament understanding of the world, despite the fact that culture does include customs, social organizations, beliefs, and values, which do embrace Christ (Carter, 2009, p.12). Carter also sees Niebuhr as writing at a time when Christendom was taken for granted, which renders his models invalid in what Carter sees as a post-Christendom world. Carter defines Christendom as the 'concept of Western civilization as having a religious arm (the church) and a secular arm (civil government), both of which are united in their adherence to the Christian faith, which is seen as the so-called soul of Europe or the West' (Carter, 2009, p.14). Carter argues that the West is now in a post-Christendom era, and Niebuhr's models are now not only invalid, but that it would be actively dangerous to follow them, so antithetic is the concept of Christendom to radical discipleship. Instead of Niebuhr's models, Carter uses a new Post-Christendom typology,

involving Christendom types which accept violent coercion from the state, and non-Christendom types which reject violent coercion from the state (Carter, 2009, p.113). With Carter, Gorringe and Lee, I see Niebuhr's work as inconsistent, partial, and too focussed on Western "civilization" as the norm to be of use in my research. However, he must be recognised as deeply influential in the 20th century writing on the relationship between God and culture, and his use of models greatly dominated the following literature.

5.3.2 Models after Niebuhr

Following on from Niebuhr, many other theologians have used models or typologies to map the relationships of Christ, faith or the church and culture. Kraft takes Niebuhr's three basic models of Christ against culture, Christ in culture, and Christ above culture, and identifies five further 'God-*above*-culture' positions: God unconcerned about human culture, Niebuhr's synthetic view, Niebuhr's dualist view, Niebuhr's conversionist view, and a 'God-*above-but-through*-culture' model, in which Kraft positions himself (Kraft, 2005, p.82-9). This model sees God as not against, in, or above culture, but outside culture and working through culture to accomplish God's purposes. Kraft does make a further change from Niebuhr, using 'God' in his models rather than 'Christ', but he does not identify why he makes that change, or what implications that might have for his typology. Kraft looks to the social sciences, particularly anthropology, to shape his understanding of culture, which he calls the 'nonbiological, nonenvironmental reality in which humans live', and the 'models of reality that govern our perception (Kraft and Kraft, 2005, p.38-39).

Marsh and Ortiz similarly use Niebuhr, but distil his five categories into three: Christ against culture, Christ in agreement with culture (Niebuhr's Christ of Culture), and dialogue or dialectical relationships with culture (Niebuhr's Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox, and Christ the transformer of culture models) (Marsh and Ortiz, 1997, p.24-8). Instead of describing their typologies as Christ and culture, Marsh and Ortiz focus on theological engagement, calling their models theology against culture, theology immersed in culture, and theology in critical dialog with culture: it is the latter that they recommend as it allows both theology and culture to be challenged and even radically questioned (Marsh and Ortiz, 1997, p.28). Marsh and Ortiz follow Williams' culturalist understanding of culture (discussed in chapter 3), and give a nod to Geertz in their description of culture as a 'whole web of interpretive strategies by which human beings make sense of their experience (Marsh

and Ortiz, 1997, p.24). Marsh and Ortiz's three models are similar to Sanneh's three Christian attitudes towards culture: quarantine, a self-sufficient attitude nurtured in isolation, sometimes even in defiance of the world; accommodation, where attitudes of compromise predominate over those of defiance; and prophetic reform, when a critical selectiveness determines the attitude toward the world (Sanneh, 1989, p.47-8). Sanneh takes a more structuralist approach to culture describing it as an organic whole greater than the sum of its parts, which are material, social and religious. After the linguist Nada, Sanneh sees language as the 'system of symbolization for its [culture's] explicit parts' (Sanneh, 1989, p.201).

Instead of looking to Niebuhr or other theologians, Schreiter instead takes his experience as a missionary to describe three types arising from local contexts, offering three types: translation, adaption, and contextual (Schreiter, 1985, p6-17). Translation is a two-step procedure: the Christian message is freed from as much cultural accretion as possible, and translated into a new situation. The adaption model tries to take local culture more seriously, and expatriates, in conjunction with local leaders, will try to develop an explicit philosophy or picture of the world-view of the culture, which can be used to parallel to philosophical models or cultural anthropological descriptions to develop a theology. Contextual models focus more on the local context, and Schreiter describes two types of approach to a contextual model: ethnographic approaches, which prioritize cultural identity and social change, and liberation approaches, which focus on oppression, social ills, and the dynamics of change in human societies (Schreiter, 1985, p.6-17). Schreiter favours a semiotic study of culture, where culture is seen as a vast communication network whereby verbal and nonverbal messages are circulated along elaborate, interconnected pathways which, together, create systems of meaning (Schreiter, 1985, p.49).

Martyn Percy's 2005 work *Engaging with Contemporary Culture: Christianity, Theology and the Concrete Church* looks at three ways theology responds to culture. Percy starts from Peter Berger's 1980 work *The Heretical Imperative*, and expands Berger's work to incorporate recent theological developments. The first of Berger's models is 'deductive possibility', where the Word of God (or tradition) is the starting point, and there is no other way of knowing God, which Percy identifies with the Radical Orthodoxy of John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, and Niebuhr's Christ against culture (Percy, 2005, p.65). Percy argues this position does not use modern social sciences adequately or representatively, and criticises Radical Orthodoxy as a movement that is trying to re-narrate the church as an

‘assertive intellectual episcopacy’ (Percy, 2005, p.68). Secondly, there is the ‘reductive possibility’ model, which states that tradition has to be rationalised in order to be credible to the modern age, and ‘faith’ has to be rescued from ‘religion’, which Percy identifies with Niebuhr’s Christ for culture model (Percy, 2005, p.65). Percy sees this position as a journey, where ‘truth is encountered in the future through teleology or eschatology. Christianity is transformed from a propositional religion into pilgrimage, in which God goes with us, yet is beyond us’, but warns that someone adhering to this position ‘might be swayed by culture rather than discerning it and exercising discrimination’ (Percy, 2005, p.73). Thirdly, there is the ‘inductive possibility’ model, a movement from tradition to experience, and the recovery of experience as a means of reconstituting the tradition in the modern world (Percy, 2005, p.65). Percy sees this position as mediating between the two other possibilities, whilst also being sociologically informed (Percy, 2005, p.231). Percy takes his understanding of culture from social or cultural anthropology, and describes culture as that which is 'overlaid, built or imposed on the natural environment’, echoing Williams' sense of culture as cultivation discussed in chapter 3. Percy sees culture as concerned with artificiality, and the meanings that are given to such things (Percy, 2005, p.2).

Gordon Lynch, also writing in 2005, gives four ways in which dialogue between theological norms and popular culture might be conducted. Firstly, there the an applicationist model, where popular culture is subjected to a critique on the basis of certain fixed theological beliefs and values; a correlational method where theology correlates the questions raised by contemporary culture with answers revealed through religious tradition; a revised correlational method, ‘where questions that have previously been regarded as important in religious tradition can be put to contemporary culture [and] the often implicit answers to contemporary struggles that are offered within popular culture are also treated seriously as a resource for thinking about issues of meaning and value’, and a praxis model, which builds on the revised correlative method, but focusses on the ability to promote well-being and liberation (Lynch, 2005, p.101-4). Lynch write that he is indebted to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham for his understanding of culture, and indeed wrote this book while at Birmingham (Lynch, 2005, p.xi). Influenced by the Centre’s use of literary criticism in the cultural sphere, Lynch sees popular culture as a ‘term that points us towards the study of the environment, practices and resources of everyday life’ (Lynch, 2005, p.19).

5.3.3 Bevans: Models of Contextual Theology

Like Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*, Bevans' *Models of Contextual Theology* stands tall in the literature of theology and culture. Like Schreiter, Bevans uses his experience as a Roman Catholic missionary to inform his descriptions of the relationship between God and culture. Bevans does not describe either culture or the gospel as static, monolithic concepts. Instead, he explores how each model of contextual theology would define both culture and the gospel. Bevans gives six descriptive, complementary models to plot different ways Christians have of engaging with culture: translation, anthropological, praxis, synthetic, transcendental and countercultural. He begins with the translation model, which sees the message of the Gospel as an unchanging message, faithful to an essential content. Christians following this model would try to find the kernel of the Gospel, and plant it into native ground. Culture would be studied for potential equivalencies in the gospel, and biblical ideas would be communicated through these equivalencies. The values and thought forms of culture and the structures of social change are understood not so much as good in themselves, but as convenient vehicles for this essential, unchanging deposit of truth (Bevans, 2002, p.37-53). Instead of trying to translate the core message of the Gospel into a culture, the anthropological model roots the gospel in culture, taking what exists in a given culture and looking for God in it. In this model, Christianity is about the human person and their personal fulfilment, and it focusses on the value and goodness of the human person.

With the praxis model, the Gospel is an agent for change. This is a model which is focused on action, which regards theology not as a generally applicable, finished product that is valid for all times and all places, but as an understanding of and wrestling with God's presence in very particular situations. Bevans identifies this model with liberation theology and its preference for the poor, as well as the discipline of practical theology, with is focus on a continuous cycle of action, reflection, action (Bevans, 2002, p.70-87). Bevans' describes the synthetic model as one which tries to balance the insights of translation, anthropological, praxis and countercultural models, and other people's contexts. Bevans describes this as which preserving the importance of the gospel message and the heritage of traditional doctrinal formulations while at the same time acknowledging the vital role that context has played, even to the setting of the theological agenda. This is a middle-of-the-road model, where every voice belongs at the theological table (Bevans, 2002, p.89-102).

The transcendental model takes a different approach from the previous four. With this model, theology happens as a person struggles more adequately and authentically to articulate and appropriate this ongoing relationship with the divine. There must be a conversion of our minds in order for us to comprehend the revelation of God into ourselves through the Holy Spirit (Bevans, 2002, p.103-116). In his first edition of *Models of Contextual Theology* in 1992, Bevans's models consisted of the five described above. However, for the second, revised edition, he introduced the countercultural model. With this model, Bevans argues some contexts are simply antithetical to the gospel and need to be challenged by the gospel's liberating and healing power. With this model, the gospel represents an all-encompassing, radically alternate worldview that differs profoundly from human experiences of the world and the culture that humans create. Bevans argues this type sees revelation as narrative and story, the 'fact' of Jesus Christ; scripture and tradition as the 'clue' to the meaning of history, as a lens to interpret, critique and challenge context; and culture as radically ambiguous and resistant to the gospel, unequal to scripture or tradition (Bevans, 2002, p.117-137).

Bevans also describes a map of these models of contextual theology, with the Anthropological model on the far left and the Countercultural model on the far right. Between these lie the Praxis, Synthetic, and Translation models, with the Transcendental model floating above 'since it is more concerned with the theologizing subject than the theological content'. The models on the left put more prominence on experience of the present, human experience, and culture, and come from a creation-centred theological orientation. The models on the right put more prominence on experience of the past, valuing scripture and tradition, and come from a redemption-centred theological orientation.

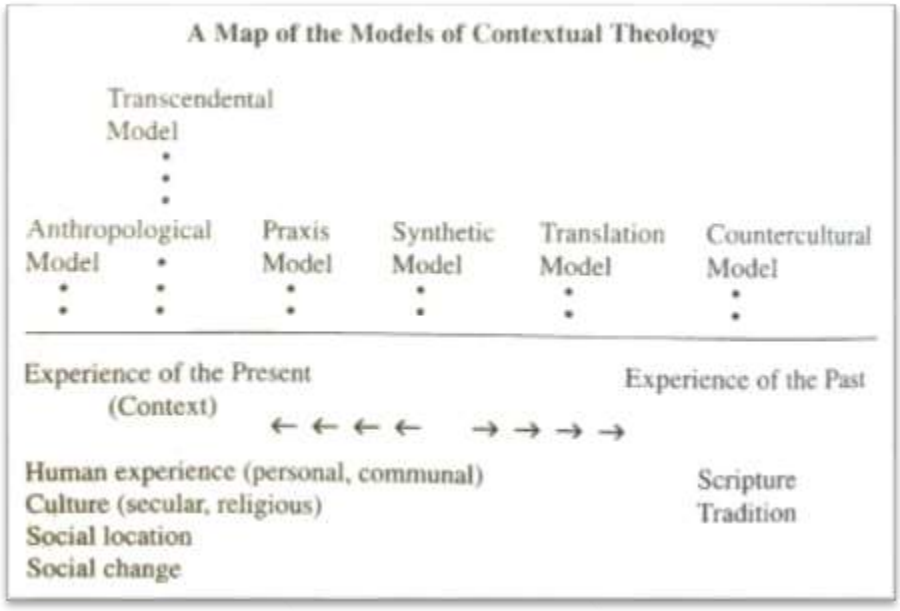

Image xxxiii: Bevans' map of these models of contextual theology (Bevans, 2002, p.27)

Bevans' models are perhaps the most nuanced and pragmatic in the literature of theology and culture, but they are not without criticism. Bergmann criticises Bevans' anthropological and synthetic models in particular: in the anthropological model, Bergmann argues that Bevans seems unclear about what the Gospel really is: is it a collection of texts, or 'the interpretation of life which we preach, receive and live believing in Christ' (Bergmann, 2003, p.90). I do not see Bergmann's criticism here as wholly valid: in his exploration of this model, Bevans is exploring the nuances between these two positions, recognising that in the anthropological model the Gospel is not fixed, and can look different in different contexts. To Bevans' five models, Bergmann adds a sixth: his human ecological model, focusing on the relationship between people and their locales. Bergmann sees place as important to a Trinitarian and pneumatological forming of Christian theology, shaped by the biblical and Early Churches' notion of 'the place where the Holy Spirit takes its dwelling'. In this model, Bergmann does not see a polarity of gospel and culture, instead the gospel is 'a form of expression of the belief that Son and Holy Spirit act visibly in nature and in culture' (Bergmann, 2003, p.99). This model allows seeing of God in nature, and sees traditions and cultural patterns as offering way to perceive and interpret God in nature. Bergmann describes this as a model of praxis, which 'interprets God in function, the God that through a liberating movement "circles" between perception and cooperation with those created', and the created world is seen as 'an object for and a partner of God's love'. Bergmann poses human ecological theology as widening liberation theology to comprise natural history, answering 'the question

of the surrounding worlds, organisms and humans: God, why did you create us and why and into what are you liberating us?' (Bergmann, 2003, p.100). I see Bergmann's insertion of this sixth model as valid, bringing Bevans' work into conversation with the spatial turn in theology described in section 5.2.5 above. This addition also resonates with the experience of my participants described in chapter 4: they saw the topology and geography of Hull as deeply important as a place where God could be known and described.

5.3.4 Constants in Context

In *Constants in Context*, Bevans and Schroeder simplify Bevans' *Models of Contextual Theology* by looking at the theological paradigms which lead to the expression and practice of contextual theology explored in *Models*. Bevans and Schroeder start with Dorothy Solle's three theological paradigms from *Thinking About God*: type A are the orthodox or conservatives, who see mission as saving souls and extending the church; type B are the liberals, who see mission as discovery of the truth, and type C are the radicals and those who practice liberation theology, who see mission as commitment to liberation and transformation (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.42). They then draw these three types into conversation with six constants in Christianity which shape the way the church preaches, serves and witnesses to God's reign:

1. Christology - Who is Jesus Christ and what is his meaning?
2. Ecclesiology - What is the nature of the Christian church?
3. Eschatology - How does the church regard its eschatological future?
4. Soteriology - What is the nature of the salvation it preaches?
5. Anthropology - How does the church value the human?
6. Dialogue with culture - What is the value of human culture as the context in which the gospel is preached? (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.34).

I will briefly look at how the three theological paradigms approach dialogue with culture, anthropology and eschatology (as these are the categories most relevant to my research), and how these types relate to Bevans' *Models of Contextual Theology*.

Bevans and Schroeder argue that type A, the orthodox or conservatives, tend to see culture as normative, universal and permanent: the final achievement of culture is the culture of the West. In terms of mission, local culture is swept aside so people can practice "pure" or Western forms of Christianity (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.47). In terms of anthropology,

type A see humans as fallen creatures: humanity was created in the image and likeness of God, but lost that image and likeness in the fall. Bevans and Schroeder see this type as tending to have a hierarchical understanding of humanity: inequality is built into the human system (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.46). Type A see the eschaton as the time when God's judgement of the world will finally take place, and the good will be rewarded while the evil will be punished. The world's order will once and for all be restored, and all the just will live forever according to God's eternal law. Bevans and Schroeder argue this type tends to see the world and human history as ultimately unimportant, as these will be swept away in God's final judgement (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.42-43). In terms of Bevans' models of contextual theology, type A can fall under the translational model, but more often fits the counter-cultural models (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.49).

Type B, the liberals, see culture as good and trustworthy, and a context in which one can encounter the divine. Bevans and Schroeder argue this type see culture and Christianity as essentially compatible, and that these liberals believe that Christians could learn more about Christianity by engaging with culture. In terms of anthropology, Bevans and Schroeder see type B putting confidence and trust in human reason and experience; what is truly human is good, and the truly human is the door to the holy. Mission is the leading forth of the holy within the human, giving birth to what is already there (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.59). Liberals are fundamentally hopeful about the eschaton, in terms of universal history and individual human lives (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.59). Rather than understanding God's reign as totally in the future or as totally present in individual spiritual encounters, type B believe the end of history is understood as already inaugurated by the death and resurrection of Jesus, but not yet fully present (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.58). In Bevans' models of contextual theology, type B falls into the anthropological model (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.60).

Bevans and Schroeder describe type C, the radicals and those who practice liberation theology, as following the theology of Irenaeus. They argue this type see History is neither detrimental nor accidental to God's saving action, but as essential to it: history is the stage on which the drama of salvation is played out (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.70). Culture is basically good, but needs to be purified, perfected and healed. Bevans and Schroeder argue type C has an anthropologically positive appreciation of human beings whilst not being naive about human failure and sinfulness. They trace this to Irenaeus' view of humanity as created

good but not yet complete, perfectible but not yet perfect. God is calling humanity to constant growth: humans are created in God's image and called to grow into the divine likeness (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.69). Bevans and Schroeder see type C taking history seriously, and understanding eschatological fullness not as the end of the historical process and the inauguration of a timeless, spiritual state, but as history's transformation and fulfilment. History is the context in which humanity can develop and grow into full humanity and maturity. The goal of history is the 'divinization' of human beings as they enter into full communion with God (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.67). Bevans and Schroeder see type C as fitting in the praxis model or the more positive versions of the counter-cultural model (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.71).

5.3.5 Methods

In section 5.2.1 above, I described the growth of contextual theology in the second half of the twentieth century. This acceptance of the validity of context as a *locus theologicus* allowed for dialogue with social sciences. If theology is understood as being generated by the whole people of God, it follows that people's understandings of God will be shaped by their different historic, geographic, economic, political and social contexts. Theological enquiry then becomes a practice generated by context (Graham et al., 2005, p.8), and context or culture is brought into theological discussion as a valid source of theology. Graham, Walton and Ward categorise this use of social sciences as a shift from the understanding of theology as product, to theology as process: 'theological reflection enables the connection between human dilemmas and divine horizons to the explored, drawing on a wide range of academic disciplines including social sciences, psychotherapeutic and medical disciplines and the arts' (Graham et al., 2005, p.6). Graham, Walton and Ward's 2005 work *Theological Reflection: Methods* looks at the methods by which theological reflection can be done and studied. Graham, Walton and Ward offer 7 methods of theological reflection: theology by heart, where 'God is experienced as immanent, personal and intimate, speaking through the interiority of human experience'; speaking in parables, where the 'authoritative narrative of Scripture is augmented and challenged by the voices of alternative experiences'; and telling God's story, where Scripture is authoritative and Christian identity is 'shaped around 'God's story as found in biblical narrative' and 'the world stands in judgement under the power of that revelation' (Graham et al., 2005, p.14). The fourth method, writing the body of Christ takes the experiences of the community of faith as the 'raw material of theological reflection'; speaking of God in public, where 'theological reflection occurs via a process of

conversation or correlation between Christian revelation and surrounding culture'; theology-in-action where God is seen as 'active in history, which is ushering creation towards an ultimate vision of redemption'; and theology in the vernacular, where 'the gospel finds expression across cultural differences of historical or geographical context' (Graham et al., 2005, p.14).

Despite Graham, Walton and Ward's preference for methods of theological enquiry, and a shift from theology as product, to theology as process, I find that their 7 methods still consist of a typology. They offer different types of process, and in practice, I found that my work overlapped several of their models. Instead, I favour Gorringe's call for research into the relationship between gospel and culture to be researched with more nuance and complexity. As discussed above, Gorringe (2004) strongly critiques Niebuhr and rejects the use of models outright, arguing for a more complex mapping of the interrelation of gospel and culture. Gorringe's more nuanced approach to theology and culture is fourfold: theology is concerned with the whole of human endeavour, not just the religious element. This comes from the doctrine of creation and the Lordship of Christ. Culture is marked by sin and idolatry, but also by grace (Gorringe, 2004, p.102). Secondly, religion is part of culture, but not reducible to it: after Barth Gorringe argues that the gospel is 100% human and 100% divine, wholly part of culture but a foreign element within it as well (Gorringe, 2004, p.102). Thirdly, Gorringe argues that eschatology is the central category for any theology of culture, and fourthly, a theology of the spirit that reflects on Pentecost will be a theology of diversity in unity. It will include the valuing of real difference and have an underlying unity (Gorringe, 2004, p.102). I shall explore Gorringe's arguments further below.

5.3.6 Summary

As described above, the literature is dominated by the use of models to map the relationship between theology and culture. In Weber's original concept of models, or ideal types, he saw them as 'formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct' (Weber, 1904/2011, p.90). Weber never saw the ideal type as accurately describing reality: 'in its conceptual purity, this mental construct is not found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a Utopia' (Weber, 1904/2011,

p.90). This is a paradigmatic understanding of models: they provide an angle of vision on to reality. Bevans criticises Niebuhr's models for being exclusive rather than complementary, systematic rather than descriptive (Bevans, 2002, p.30). Bevans, instead, creates models which are descriptive and complementary: they are a more tentative picking out of reality, and more than one model can be held or entered into at and one time (Bevans, 2002, p.30-1). Schreiter describes Bevans' use of models as heuristic, as serving as an aid to learning, discovery, or problem-solving by experimental or trial-and-error methods (Schreiter, 2002, p.x). Types and models become the first word in a discussion, not the last.

Although Avery Dulles wrote about *Models of the Church*, rather than models of God and culture, his work was inspired by Bevans and is useful here. Dulles uses models to describe ecclesiological types, using models rather than 'aspects' or 'dimensions' to indicate that 'the Church, like other theological realities is a mystery' (Dulles, 2002, p.2). Dulles argues that these mysteries are best talked about via analogy, and analogies provide models. These models cannot be integrated into a 'single synthetic vision on the level of articulate, categorical thought. In order to do justice to the church, as a complex reality, we must work simultaneously with different models' (Dulles, 2002, p.2). Dulles divides models into two types: explanatory and exploratory. Explanatory models 'synthesize what we already know or are inclined to believe. A model is accepted if it accounts for a large number of biblical and traditional data and accords with what history and experience tell us about the Christian life' (Dulles, 2002, p.17). On the other hand, exploratory or heuristic models

> lead to new theological insights. This role is harder to identify, because theology is not an experimental science in the same way that physics, for example, is. Theology has an abiding objective norm in the past - that is, in the revelation that was given once and for all in Jesus Christ… But even the past would not be revelation to us unless God were still alive and giving himself to mankind in Jesus Christ. Thus the present experience of grace enters intrinsically into the method of theology. Thanks to the ongoing experience of the Christian community, theology can discover aspects of the gospel of which Christians were not previously conscious (Dulles, 2002, p.17-18).

With regards to the heuristic function of models, 'there is a particular problem of verification in theology'. Using his example of models of the Church, Dulles argues that 'because the Church is mystery, there can be no question of deductive or crudely empirical tests'. Instead, theological verification depends upon a 'corporate' discernment of spirits (Dulles, 2002, p.18). If the faithful, 'insofar as they are docile to the Spirit', find an 'intensification of faith, hope and charity, or to an increase of what Paul in the fifth chapter of Galatians calls the fruits of the Holy Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and the like (cf Gal 5:22-25)', then we

know the Spirit of God is at work. 'Where the result is inner turbulence, anger, discord, disgust, distraction, and the like, the Church can judge that the Spirit of Christ is not at work' (Dulles, 2002, p.19).

As described in section 5.2, I situate my research within Bevans' description of contextual theology, and agree with his understanding of context as a third *locus theologicus*, with the two standard sources of scripture and tradition (Bevans, 2002, p.4). I find *Bevans' Models of Contextual Theology* to be the richest and most detailed of the models between God and culture. His tentative picking out of reality allows for mutual positions to be held at one time and flows from a pragmatic understanding of reality. However, with Graham, Walton and Ward, I prefer to see theology as process rather than product (Graham et al., 2005, p.6). Despite Dulles and Bevans' nuanced use of exploratory or heuristic models, I still find their use to be prescriptive in my research context. As explored in chapter 2, I want the theories to arise from my participants' responses. Should models or types arise from my participants, that would be acceptable, but I do not want to impose categories on their responses. There is a possible risk of ignoring data which does not fit into the pattern of the models: there is a danger that if you look for models, you will find models. It is much truer of grounded theory method to allow the participants' responses to generate analytic categories, rather than imposing categories, types or models from the literature. Once the categories from the data have been allowed to arise, then the data can come into dialogue with the literature (I will explore this further in chapter 6).

Using methods rather than models allows for a much more creative generation of theology. Models can be reductive: rather than trying to categorise my participants and their responses into Bevans, Niebuhr, or Kraft's models, I will allow their responses to speak more fully. Graham, Walton and Ward's focus on process allows theology to be generated more creatively, and in a way that allows my participants' beliefs to take precedent. However, despite this focus on theology as process, Graham, Walton and Ward's seven methods are presented as models or types of theological reflection. The use of models in theology after Niebuhr seems so ingrained that even methods of reflection must be offered as models. Rather than following one of Graham, Walton and Ward's theological methods, I am choosing to follow Gorringe's call for a more complex contextual theology, allowing my participants' views to be expressed in all their nuance and complexity.

5.4 Trinitarian theologies of culture

In the previous section, I explored how Niebuhr's use of models in *Christ and Culture* has dominated the literature on theology and culture. His focus on the person of Christ has also led to a focus in the literature on Jesus. In this section I will explore the understandings of God in theologies of culture, and how the nature and persons of the Trinity are explored in relation to culture.

5.4.1 Jesus Christ

In section 5.3.1 I explored Niebuhr's focus on Christ, in my analysis of the use of models in theologies of culture. The pre-eminence of Christ in Niebuhr's theology of culture seems influenced by the work of Karl Barth. Barth saw Christ as the beginning and end of the conversation between God and culture. The incarnation of Christ affirms the importance of culture, and takes precedence in the understanding of culture: 'no independent, actual relation between God and nature, God and history, God and human reason, can be asserted except that the Word is spoken and received in the world of sinners. And therefore in the world of nature, of history, of reason, relation to God depends on the one possibility which sinners have not destroyed…. it depends wholly on God's claim on man and the claim becomes effective essentially through the reconciliation' (Barth, 2015, p.342). God has created humankind, and claims humankind, despite its rebellion from God. Barth sees God as not only creating all things, but redeems them, and in doing so, brings fulfilment to all creation: 'in this sense it is true that "Grace does not destroy nature but completes it" (Gratit non tolit nautram sed perfecit). The meaning of the Word of God becomes manifest as it brings into full light the buried and forgotten truth of the creation' (Barth, 2015, p.342). He argues that despite the Fall and humankind's sin, God is still positive about human life and culture: 'there persists also a promise of divine friendship, essentially approving man. God's affirmation of man as his creature and his image still stands; God's affirmation of man's life in communion with himself, a life to which the desperately sought unity of existence is not denied; for which such unity is not unattainable' (Barth, 2015, p.342). Humankind is capable of this communion with God, and 'the term culture connotes exactly that promise to man: fulfilment, unity, wholeness within his sphere as creature, as man, exactly as God in his sphere is fullness, wholeness, Lord over nature and spirit, Creator of heaven and earth' (Barth, 2015, p.343).

Robert J. Palma and Paul Metzger take Barth's extensive Christology and trace his arguments to form a theology of culture. Palma argues that Barth sees Christ as the paradigm of a free theology of culture (Palma, 1983, p.31). Palma uses 'free' as the key word here because Barth uses it frequently to mean 'multiplex' and multifaceted, and signifying God's gratuity: 'It is God's freedom understood as gratuity of free grace and love for humanity which is most fundamental for Barth in determining the nature of free culture and discerning the same' (Palma, 1983, p.33). Free culture, to be truly fulfilled, must align itself with the axis of free culture, Jesus Christ (Palma, 1983, p.34). Barth expects to see paradigms of free culture where man has been liberated from the quest to be autonomous (which is described as being synonymous with the Fall) (Palma, 1983, p.35). Palma argues that Barth sees culture as being free for God, as being 'called to join God's creation in the freedom of praising God', and free liberating people to be obedient to God (Palma, 1983, p.64).

Rather than setting forward a theology of culture on behalf of Barth, as Palma does, Metzger examines Barth's explicit considerations of culture, and sets forth implications which arise from that doctrine (Metzger, 2003, p.xv). Barth's focus is on the Word as Jesus Christ, and the relationship of Jesus and culture, not Christianity and culture. Metzger sees Barth as not constructing a theology of culture as such, but seeking to preserve a balance between the sacred and secular, religion and culture. He argues that Barth did not see these as separate, nor as to be amalgamated into one. Barth wants to view culture in light of humanity's ultimate concern, the manifestation of the Logos in human history (Metzger, 2003, p.xix).

Fundamentally, Metzger sees Barth as arguing the Word of God directed to culture frees culture to be truly human (Metzger, 2003, p.34). Metzger sees this argument as saying people are not hypostasized in the Divine Nature as Christ is, but are human persons. Christ is not: he is a divine person who is human, whose human nature has its personhood in the divine person. Similarly, the church and culture do not have an independent relationship from Jesus Christ, but remain inseparably related to him:

> In a way analogous to the divine Word taking to himself a non-hypostasized human nature in the incarnation, thereby indicating that the human nature of Christ has no independent existence, so too, the church, humanity in general, and human culture, exist in inalienable relation to God in his Word. The reverse is also true. Not only does the human nature exist solely in its being enhypostasized in the divine person of the Word, but also in becoming human, the divine Word exists in an indissoluble union with human nature. By extension, God chooses not to exist in isolation from his church, nor humanity in general (Metzger, 2003, p.58).

Metzger traces Barth's reasoning from God in Christ to wider human culture, and reasons that theology that is dialectical and incarnational, critical and positive about God's Word's engagement of the world and human culture. He sees Barth speaking of a positive relation between Christ and culture. The church and culture are not confused with Christ or one another, and neither do they exist independently of Christ or one another (Metzger, 2003, p.59). Barth's theology protects against the domestication of the gospel, or prioritising one cultural form, by arguing that 'because the Word as Jesus Christ is not exhausted by or reduced to his incarnate existence, the Word as Jesus Christ can enable other words to bear witness to himself and take form in other cultures, again without being overwhelmed by those cultural forms' (Metzger, 2003, p.154). Metzger sees Barth's theology as 'driven by the love and freedom of the triune God who creates and preserves, elects and addresses humanity in and through the person of the Word, Jesus Christ, safeguards the distinction between God and the world, Christianity and broader culture, whilst also connecting the two spheres, the divine and human, sacred and secular, in an integral manner' (Metzger, 2003, p.233-4).

I cannot fully agree with Palma and Metzger about Barth's positivity about the relationship between Christ and culture. I agree that Barth does affirm culture as part of God's grace, as beloved by God, and a place where God exists with humankind. Nevertheless, Barth's discussions of culture always start from a place of negativity. The fall, and human sinfulness always start the discussion: for Barth, God's grace in human culture is always despite the role of people. In his articulations of culture, Barth may end up in a place of affirmation, but he begins from a negative place. My participants' experiences would challenge this entirely: they started from a place of positivity about culture, even though they might add words of caution later. They saw culture as a place where God could be found, and a place of community, creativity, reconciliation and redemption. They may have tempered their enthusiasm with an understanding that culture can become "bad" if people do not cherish one another and work to the common good, but their overall view was positive. If my participants say "yes" to culture and then temper that with a "no", Barth starts from a "no" and qualifies it with a "yes". I see this approach as at odds with my participants, and will not be using Barth as a primary conversation partner with my participants.

Lesslie Newbigin also puts Christ at the centre of his theology of culture. He argues that there is not a gospel which is not culturally embedded, and although we cannot understand the Bible other than through the concepts and categories of thought with which our culture has

equipped us, the Bible also speaks of things that are not simply of human culture but of God (Newbigin, 1989, p.193). Newbigin explores the differences between different Christians and different cultures, and argues that we must go back to the person of Jesus when there are cultural differences. He explores the divide of Christians looking to heaven and those looking to earth, seeing those looking to the heavenly city and feeling isolated from the world as inspired by the crucifixion: 'the cross, where Jesus was rejected and cast out by the representatives of human cultures... would (if it were the last word) imply that the normal situation for Christians is that they reject and are rejected by the world' (Newbigin, 1989, p.194). However, Newbigin sees the cross as not the last word; there is also the resurrection:

> in raising his beloved Son from the dead, God has given the pledge and foretaste of his unconquerable grace in kindness and patience towards the world which rejects him... The world of human culture rejects God and is under God's judgements. But God in his patient and long-suffering love sustains the created world, and the world of human culture, in order that there may still be time and space for repentance and for the coming of the new creation into the old (Newbigin, 1989, p.194).

Newbigin argues that the double event of Jesus' death and resurrection means that people are called to neither a simple rejection of human culture nor simple acceptance of it. God accepts human culture and also judges it, and we can only discern when we are to accept human culture and when to judge it in mutual correction with all churches across the world (Newbigin, 1989, p.195-7). Newbigin takes an anthropological approach to culture, seeing it as human behavior in its corporate aspect (Newbigin, 1989, p.188).

The Mennonite American theologian Alan Kreider offers the argument that the church be seen as a 'second culture' devoted to social change, centred around the understanding of Jesus as not only the Son of God but also a normal human being who challenged the wealth and power, violence, sex and truth of his culture, who 'called his followers to band together through his love and pardon to continue his struggle to bring normality to humanity' (Kreider, 2001, p.40). The church must learn the everyday practices of normal living, contributing to culture with a "no" and a "yes". Saying no to culture reaffirms the conviction that it is Christ who is able to transform culture:

> Christians across the centuries have discovered endless ways of removing the imaginative radicalism from his message: the result has always been Christendom, in which Jesus' words must appear to be "against culture". A "second culture" church in post-Christendom has the opportunity of agreeing with Jesus rather than arguing against him. If it stopped sanding down the jagged edges of Jesus' utterances and started saying "yes" to them and asking how they might be lived, the church's cultural impact would be transformed" (Kreider, 2001, p.42).

Saying no also allows boundary rituals to be constructed: observing these is a reminder that one is a disciple of Jesus. The "yes", on the other hand, is a yes to the positive utterances of Jesus, and Krieder uses the example of truth-telling in the contexts of oaths (Kreider, 2001, p.43). Krieder argues that Christians will transform cultures when they learn to live the teachings of Jesus, practicing and refining these in 'second cultures' (Kreider, 2001, p.50).

Instead of using the person of Christ as the starting point of a theology of culture, Graham Ward looks to contemporary culture (the concepts of mimesis, the erotic politics of the church, sexual difference) to construct his Christology. He argues that every statement about Christ is a statement about ourselves and our culture: 'to enquire is to engender Christ; to enter the engagement is to foster the economy whereby God is made known to us. To do Christology is to inscribe Christ into the times and cultures we inhabit' (Ward, 2005, p.1-2). Ward seeks to imaginatively define a Christology that is always responding to contemporary culture, seeking engagement with and also transformation of culture (Ward, 2005, p.18-19). However, he also takes into account the 'two millennia of such negotiations with that historical embodied exousia that proclaimed [Jesus] was the revelation of God. We may not have simple access to that past, but the sheer brute contingency of Jesus's existence, and the Scriptural witness to it, legitimates and governs all our subsequent reflections' (Ward, 2005, p.20). Ward concludes that the relationship between Christ and culture is always impossible to answer, as Christ is already a cultural event, and we have no access to a Christ who has not already been encultured (Ward, 2005, p.21). Instead, Ward offers another approach to this question, to think through the grammar of Christian believing on the basis that there can be no distillation of Christ from culture. He argues that we should 'pursue a certain theo-logic announced in the final lines of Niebuhr's book: "the world of culture — man's achievement — exists within the world of grace — God's kingdom"?'. Ultimately, he sees that Christ is the origin and consummation of culture in the same way as he is both the prototype and the fulfilment of all that is properly human (Ward, 2005, p.22). I find the arguments of Ward, Krieder and Newbigin to be more relevant than those of Barth. They allow for a more open dialogue between gospel and culture, allowing for both rejection and acceptance of human culture, and the understanding that God cannot be divorced from culture. However, these arguments are still rather abstract: systematic theologies that do not allow the revelation of Christ in context to speak to theology. In my interviews, I saw how vital the concepts of resurrection and reconciliation were to the people of Hull: the way that Christ works in context needs to be added to the wider theological literature.

5.4.2 God the Father

Very few theologians explicitly start with start with God the Father when exploring the relationship between faith and culture, or in establishing theologies of culture. This is perhaps unusual, given the relationship between the concept of God as creator, and creativity and culture, which my participants frequently raised in our interviews. The relationship between creativity and culture is most commonly explored by theologians looking at an explicitly Trinitarian theology of culture, which I will explore further below.

Paul Tillich does not explicitly name the first person of the Trinity in discussions on culture, but he does talk about God's creative characteristics in his 1959 essay *Aspects of a Religious Analysis of Culture*. He argues that creativity is a human quality, that people possess creative powers analogous to those of God's, and exercising that creativity is part of human destiny (Tillich, 1964, p.44). Taking a structuralist understanding of culture, Tillich sees language as the basic cultural creation, and all languages as the result of 'innumerable acts of human creativity. All functions of man's spiritual life are based on man's power to speak silently or verbally. Language is the expression of man's freedom from the given situation and its concrete demands. It gives him universals in whose power he can create worlds above the given world of technological civilization and spiritual content' (Tillich, 1964, p.47).

John Milbank similarly sees the process of creation as an integral part of Christian practice and redemption. Taking inspiration from the semiotic understanding of culture, he argues that humans are sign-makers who only become human in the activity of creation, and in doing so catching up with their 'proper destiny' (Milbank, 1997, p.125). He sees creation as an 'abbreviated, hieroglyphic version of the divine pictograph.... by writing this pictograph, humanity is constituted as Human' (Milbank, 1997, p.74). Milbank argues for a 'Christian ontology which does justice to culture and history as an integral element of Christian being alongside contemplation and ethical behaviour', which understands humans as makers, and acknowledges the 'possibility in the case of the linguistic, cultural objects which we make (and which mediate to us) ethical goals, natural realities and God as the permanent object of understanding' (Milbank, 1997, p.79). Milbank takes a semiotic view of culture, seeing it as inescapable meaning-making: 'we make signs, yet signs make us, and we can never step outside the network of sign-making' (Milbank, 1997, p.2). Taking William Warburton's work

on the origin of language, Milbank sees compares culture to Warburton's original 'language of action' of gestures, pointing and mimicry, which is economised in writing with the hieroglyph and then the ideograph. This transition from hieroglyph to ideograph moves from direct interpretation of the 'language of action' to similitude (Milbank, 1997, p.57). The ideograph becomes so remote from its mimetic roots that it becomes linked to speech rather than the 'language of action'. At the last, alphabetical stage, metaphors enter, and further distance language from its original actions, becoming more and more symbolic and obscured (Milbank, 1997, p.57). Milbank sees a parallel with culture, as it moves from natural to symbolic and obscured (Milbank, 1997, p.59).

Charles Kraft looks at God the creator as also creating culture, arguing that God created humans in ways that they themselves produce culture (Kraft, 2005, p.81). In saying so, Kraft does not wholly say that culture is therefore a good and holy thing, saying that even if culture is a 'by-product of the fall in Eden', God nevertheless 'created humanity with at least the capacity for culture'. (Kraft, 2005, p.81). Kraft sees God choosing to engage with and use human culture, but not being bound to it as people are. He argues that 'God's basic attitude towards culture is that which the apostle Paul articulates in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22. That is, he views human culture primarily as a vehicle to be used by him and his people for Christian purposes, rather than as an enemy to be combated or shunned' (Kraft, 2005, p.81). The ultimate aim of this engagement with culture is for people to use culture to God's glory (Kraft, 2005, p.83). My participants expressed an understanding of creativity similar to that of Tillich, Milbank, and Kraft, in that exercising creativity was an important part of being fully human. However, they did not express the sense that the ultimate aim of culture was for people to glorify God: I felt that they saw human flourishing as the chief aim of engagement with creativity and culture.

5.4.3 The Holy Spirit

As with the person of God the Father, few theologians start with the Holy Spirit in their theologies of culture. In her 2012 book on pneumatology and world mission, *Joining in with the Spirit*, Kirsteen Kim uses Bevans' models as a way of examining Spirit and cultures. She quotes Gorringe's criticism of Niebuhr as insufficiently Trinitarian, and although she does not criticise Bevans for being insufficiently Trinitarian, her pneumatological repurposing of his models shows further depths that can be generated from the models if a wider

interpretation of the Trinity is explored (Kim, 2012, p.46). Kim argues that the Holy Spirit can only be encountered through human culture, as the Gospel is never encountered and the Holy Spirit never at work except within a particular cultural setting (Kim, 2012, p.42). She sees the Spirit as at work in those cultures transforming culture and challenging cultural oppression, and sees all mission activities as needing to begin by discerning where the Spirit is at work within cultures (Kim, 2012, p.42, 45).

In *Furthering Humanity* Gorringe argues that a theology of culture is the same as a theology of the Spirit, about God active in the historical process, not God asleep or unconcerned. This results in the life-affirming aspects of culture, and the affirmation of diversity. A theology of the spirit that reflects on Pentecost will be a theology of diversity in unity, and will include the valuing of real difference and have an underlying unity (Gorringe, 2004, p.102). In *Discerning Spirit: A Theology of Revelation*, Gorringe argues that a theology of the Holy Spirit is a question of learning to discern God in our day-to-day life, of learning to discern where, in the world, God meets us (Gorringe, 1990, p.2). For Gorringe, there are two poles of pneumatology: God the 'Wholly Other', strange, and beyond human experience, and God active and encountered in human experience (Gorringe, 1990, p.6). Gorringe posits that revelation is the spark between these two poles, and a theology of the Spirit is concerned with the problem of discernment. He argues that to find the criterion for discernment of God, we must look for a 'Christic structure'. Quoting Boff, Gorringe argues that every time someone opens to God and the other, wherever people seek justice, reconciliation and forgiveness, a Christic structure and true Christianity can be found (Gorringe, 1990, p.46). Christ must always be found 'outside the camp', and it is in these places where the Spirit blows (Gorringe, 1990, p.136).

Gorringe also describes a pneumatological view of community. Gorringe argues that God is community, and it is only in community that we encounter God. As we relate to other people, we are in the image of God, 'for the image is the echoing of the relationship God is. As, and only as, we relate we live in the Spirit' (Gorringe, 1990, p.74). Community is also the only place of the revelation of God: 'the one who is other to me, who I cannot ultimately colonize, who resists me and interrogates and so stands outside my totality is always the potential place of revelation – what I cannot tell myself'. Gorringe recognises that this concept is difficult for many in the West, with a focus on the individual and not the community, but argues that individualism has no place in the Old or New Testament. Gorringe does not argue that

community is inherently a place of grace: it can also be a channel for destruction, where community solidarity is pitted against communal solidarity (Gorringe, 1990, p.79). Nevertheless, community can be a '"sacramental"… a means or a channel of "grace", a mediator of the forgiving, healing, restorative power of God' (Gorringe, 1990, p.79). This focus on the person of the Spirit is vital, and I argue that a pneumatological understanding of culture is vital: I shall explore this further in the next chapter.

5.4.4 The Trinity

In *Models of Contextual Theology*, Bevans writes that the past few decades have seen a renewal of Trinitarian thought in theology (Bevans, 2002, p.15), with theologians revisiting the work of their elders and reinterpreting them in a Trinitarian light. Russell Re Manning is one of those theologians, who takes the work of Paul Tillich and develops his theology of culture into a Trinitarian theology of culture. Manning sees Tillich arguing that 'the relationship between the cultural and the religious is a dynamic one. Religion and culture, while immanent to one another are not unified' (Manning, 2006, p.115). Tillich identifies a drive towards autonomy with the cultural functions, and a parallel tendency towards heteronomy within the religious, and argues that these types can only be lived in relation to theonomy, 'just as their corresponding "spheres" of culture and religion can only be understood from the perspective of the theology of culture' (Manning, 2006, p.115). Manning sees Tillich arguing that the 'essential inter-relation of religion and culture demands that theology be reformulated as theology of culture' (Manning, 2006, p.121). 'The object of theology is neither God nor revelation, but religion. As such, theology cannot - and should not attempt to - distance itself from culture but rather reconsider itself as precisely theology of culture. Theology is the synthesis of religion and culture, that is to say' (Manning, 2006, p.122).

Manning argues that Tillich was developing a Trinitarian theology of culture in his last lecture *The Religious Dimensions of Contemporary Art* in 1969 (Manning, 2013, p.445). From this, Manning traces Tillich's thought into a Christonomous theology of culture and a pneumanomous theology of culture. This Christonomous theology of culture 'emphasizes the dimension of actuality within cultural productions against a cultural autonomy that denies such spiritual freedom and against a religious heteronomy that can only repeat an ahistorical particularity', and sees Jesus as the Christ as the 'bearer of new being and meaning'

(Manning, 2013, p.446-7). Manning advances Tillich's pneumanomous theology of culture 'to expose the religious meaning of our contemporary culture through what [Manning calls] its "utopian dimension" under the guiding revelatory norm of the Spirit' (Manning, 2013, p.447).

Eric Flett similarly takes the work of an older theologian and develops their thoughts into a Trinitarian theology of culture, this time with Scottish Reformed theologian T. F. Torrance. Flett starts with Torrance's idea of God as triune Creator: the Father is the 'originate cause of creation' (Flett, 2011, p.8); the Father's creative activity flows through the Son as the 'mediate or operative cause of creation'(Flett, 2011, p.18), and the Spirit is the 'perfecting cause of creation', 'completing, perfecting and consummating what is initiated by the Father and secured by the Son' (Flett, 2011, p.28-9). Flett sees Torrance as arguing that 'God's activity as Creator is conditioned and determined by his being as triune' (Flett, 2011, p.139).

Improvising from the line he takes through Torrance's work, Flett sees human culture as a design for living (Flett, 2011, p.230). People are 'granted access to the Being and character of God... only as we consider the perichoretic relationships between the Father, Son and Spirit in their creative activity'. He sees those relationships as personal, and therefore we can 'affirm that God's creative power is exercised in both freedom and in love and for the purposes of redemption' (Flett, 2011, p.231). Flett argues that 'human cultural activity is only possible because our triune Creator has given us the capacity to create by forming the human person after his image... The purpose of human culture is then to sustain and nourish an environment where the personal is sustained and nourished through human cultural activity' (Flett, 2011, p.233). Flett concludes that 'a Trinitarian theology of culture fashioned within the boundaries of Torrance's theological framework will require one to assert that the purpose of human culture is the glorification of the triune God of Jesus Christ. This purpose is accomplished as the created order is enabled to bear witness to this God through the unique constitution, agency, and vocation of the human person as a cultural being' (Flett, 2011, p.239). Flett, through Torrance, sees culture as semiotic and structuralist. Culture is first externalised, 'whereby the needs of the human creature are externalized into the physical and social world'; objectified, 'whereby the products of externalization, both material and symbolic, come to confront the human person as a facticity outside of itself, even though they originated in the subjectivity of the self', and finally internalised, 'whereby the objectivated externalized world is reabsorbed into the consciousness of the human person, and where the structures of that

world come to determine the subjective structures of consciousness itself (Flett, 2011, p.57-59).

A similar argument is advanced by a perhaps unlikely theologian: the crime writer Dorothy L. Sayers, in her 1941 book *Mind of the Maker*. Sayers compares the Triune God to is like the mind of a creative writer: God the Father is the 'full personality of the writer', God the Son is 'the full power of that personality', and God the Holy Spirit is the 'complete awareness of his own personality' (Sayers, 2004, p.70). Sayers argues that the mind of a maker is revealed in its creation, and that in the world, God wrote God's own autobiography (Sayers, 2004, p.71). She describes God the Father as being like the creative idea of a book, 'passionless, timeless, beholding the complete work complete at once, the end in the beginning'; the Word, Jesus Christ, is the Creative Energy, 'begotten of that idea, working in time from the beginning to the end with sweat and passion, being incarnate in the bonds of matter'; and the Holy Spirit is the Creative Power, 'the meaning of the work and its response in the lively soul' (Sayers, 2004, p28). Or, God the Father is the complete idea of the book, God the Son is the book itself, and God the Holy Spirit is the book being read by others. Sayers argues that God has made people in God's image to be creators ourselves, and the purpose of creativity is to allow people to become more human: 'if we conclude that creative mind is in fact the very grain of our spiritual universe… by confining the average man and woman to uncreative activities and an uncreative outlook, we are doing violence to the very structure of our being' (Sayers, 2004, p.149). If people are not allowed be creative, they are denied the expression of God in their selves, and made less than human. This is, of course, similar to Gorringe's argument that the task of culture to be that of furthering humanity, which I will explore in more detail later in this chapter (Gorringe, 2004).

In his 1985 book *Constructing Local Theologies*, Schreiter also uses the Trinity to deconstruct the nature of local theology. Schreiter sees local theology as dialectical relationship between three factors: the Gospel, the church and culture. He identifies the Gospel as the Good News of Jesus Christ and the salvation that God has wrought through him. This Gospel includes and reaches beyond the Scriptures to the worshiping context of the local community, and the aspects of praxis of the community announcing the Good News, with the 'the living presence of the saving Lord that is the foundation of the community, the spirit of the risen Lord guiding that community, the prophetic Spirit challenging the culture and the larger church' (Schreiter, 1985, p.20-21). Schreiter suggests that the prevailing mode

of evangelization and church development should be one of finding Christ in the situation rather than bringing Christ into a situation, which he bases on the theology of the incarnation, and without this attitude, there is the risk of introducing and maintaining Christianity as an alien body in a culture Schreiter, 1985, p.39).

Markham's Trinitarian theology of culture does not set out an explanation for the purpose of culture or an explanation of the relations of the persons of the Trinity to culture, but instead takes the persons of the Trinity as a starting point for engagement with culture. Markham argues that 'all good theology has been and needs to be in the business of engagement', (Markham, 2003, p.48), and that a theology of engagement 'an encounter that subsequently shapes the theology itself' (Markham, 2003, p.10). Markham describes this engagement as having four elements: assimilation, resistance, and overhearing, which have parallels in the work of the persons in the Trinity:

> overhearing is made possible by the Christian conviction that God's Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of all people and all cultures... Engagement in the form of assimilation is clearly linked with the work of the second person of the Trinity. God becoming embodied and human is an act of assimilation. And engagement in the form of resistance is part of the work of the Father. Although the creation is totally dependent on God and... that the creation is part of God, God is not reducible to the creation. In that sense there is a 'resistance' between God and the creation (i.e., a proper and appropriate distance) (Markham, 2003, p.61).

In *The Theology of the Built Environment*, Gorringe describes a liberative theology of the built environment with the Trinitarian shape of creation, redemption and reconciliation. The triune God points us to community, the crucified God points us to the simultaneous presence of good and evil, and the spirit works in each place for human freedom (Gorringe, 2002, p.17). Gorringe's theology is a theology of lived space, of everyday experience, and can be extended to apply to culture in general, not just the culture of the city. Gorringe argues that we are invited to understand our experience of life in and through the narrative of God's engagement in creation, incarnation and Pentecost (Gorringe, 2002, p.47). I saw my participants' responses as unconsciously Trinitarian, in line with the work of Gorringe, Flett and Markham. Any theologies of culture must be fully Trinitarian, with a proper focus on the role of the Spirit, and I shall describe what this might look like in the following chapters.

5.4.5 Eschatology and culture

In the previous section, I explored how Manning advances Tillich's pneumanomous theology of culture 'to expose the religious meaning of our contemporary culture through what [Manning calls] its "utopian dimension" under the guiding revelatory norm of the Spirit' (Manning, 2013, p.447). By utopian dimension, Manning means the 'impossible idea of a "no place" (ou-topos) rather than the perfectionist ideal of a "good place" (eu-topos),' calling utopian imaginings of the impossible' (Manning, 2013, p.447). As such, Manning argues Tillich's theology recognises that

> such pneumanomy stands both with and beyond the dominant forms of contemporary cultural autonomy, transforming it from capitalist realism's seamless occupation of the horizons of the possible to an openness to the miracle of the impossibility of the future. Similarly, rejecting new heteronomies that envisage a nostalgic return to an alternative pre-capitalist imagination, the pneumanomous emphasis on the utopian dimension of culture pushes us towards the, in principle, unimaginable reality of the future (Manning, 2013, p.450).

In *Furthering Humanity*, Timothy Gorringe (2004) takes Raymond Williams' idea of the long revolution: 'that complex of economic, political and cultural changes which began in the late eighteenth century and… delivered manifest goods for the working class' and marries it with Barth's argument that the task of culture is the furthering of humanity (Gorringe, 2004, p.17). Gorringe sees this as suggestive of Herder's idea of the furthering of humanity, where Spirit and nature exist in tandem, and Spirit must mould nature and nature actualise Spirit (Gorringe, 2004, p.18). Implicit here is the sense of culture as a place of transformation and civilisation, as discussed in chapter 3. From these, Gorringe takes three points for his theology of culture. Firstly, the moulding of spirit and nature points to the importance of the incarnation, which also resonates with Williams' on cultural materialism – culture is produced within the society, and cannot stand outside it. Similarly, the Word became flesh, and questions of justice and value cannot stand outside society (Gorringe, 2004, p.19). Secondly, Gorringe sees Barth's argument that that the gospel meets every culture with 'sharp scepticism' as pointing towards 'what the liberation theologians called the "eschatological proviso", the fact that no culture embodies the kingdom. In Barth's terms, it is torn between nature and spirit, in other words marked by antagonism and the fact that reconciliation has not been reached. A theology of culture has to address this antagonism and alienation and think through ways of addressing it' (Gorringe, 2004, p.19).

As mentioned above, Gorringe (2004) rejects the use of models, arguing instead for a more complex mapping of the interrelation of gospel and culture. This more nuanced approach to theology and culture is fourfold: theology is concerned with the whole of human endeavour, not just the religious element; religion is part of culture, but not reducible to it; eschatology is the central category for any theology of culture; and a theology of the spirit that reflects on Pentecost will be a theology of diversity in unity (Gorringe, 2004, p.102). He takes his third point from Barth and Moltmann, arguing that eschatology is the central category for any theology of culture because eschatology is not simply about last things, but about direction and goal, and hope that sustains us in the face of hopelessness (Gorringe, 2004, p.102).

Gorringe sees culture as 'instinct with promise', quoting Herder's phrase that culture gives 'glimpses of a divine theatre through the openings and ruins of individual scenes' (Gorringe, 2004, p.20). Following on from this, eschatology is crucial, and allows us to see culture as the process of becoming: 'eschatology, then, construed as a theology of hope, and grounded in the resurrection, is one of the main keys to any theology of culture' (Gorringe, 2004, p.21). I shall describe how this should fit in with a Trinitarian theology of culture in the next chapter.

5.4.6 Summary

The theological literature exploring the relationship between God and culture is dominated by the person of Christ. Although the first and third persons are also explored in the literature, it is to a much lesser degree than the writings on the person of Christ and Christ's relationship to culture. Although the incarnation of God into the midst of human life is a crucial event in theologies of culture, it is not the end word. I see Barth as the starting point for a modern interrogation of culture in the theological literature, but I will not be using him in conversation with my participants, as they start from such radically different points of view in their interrogation of culture. As described above, my participants start with a "yes" to culture, tempered by "no", and Barth starts with "no", qualified by "yes". Kreider's position on Christ and culture is closer to my participants, but insufficiently Trinitarian to truly align with their responses. Although Tillich and Milbank talk about God's creativity in a similar way to my participants, their structuralist approach and focus on language as the expression of culture find no parallels with my participants' responses.

Instead, I shall take a more Trinitarian and pneumatological theology of culture. This approach resonates with my participants' responses, which I believe show a deeply Trinitarian, albeit unarticulated, understanding of theology that resonates with the work of Flett, Schreiter and Gorringe, which points to an eschatological approach to culture as being about direction and goal, and hope that sustains us in the face of hopelessness (Gorringe, 2004, p.102). I note that this also sits in line with Bevans' description of the past few decades as having seen a renewal of Trinitarian thought in theology (Bevans, 2002, p.15). In order to understand the relationship between theology and culture, and how God works in and among contemporary culture, we need to develop a truly Trinitarian theology of culture which encompasses creation, reconciliation, redemption, and eschatology.

5.5 Links between theologies and understandings of culture

In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature on the relationship between God and culture, looking both at theologian's theologies of culture and also their understandings of what culture is. However, I have found it hard to draw conclusions between the writer's theologies of culture and understandings of culture.

Most theologians discussed above take broadly anthropological understandings of culture: Barth, Bevans, Kim, Markham, Newbigin, Percy and Ward. Others take a more semiotic or structuralist approach: Schreiter, Flett, Milbank, and Tillich. There seems to be no pattern to why these theologians take a particular approach to culture, or why these cultural approaches stem from particular theological approaches. Of those who take an anthropological approach, some more theologically negative towards culture, such as Barth, Markham and Kraft. Others are more positive about the interaction between God and culture, such as Bevans, Kim and Percy. Of the structuralists and semioticists, Schreiter, Flett and Sanneh are broadly positive about culture, and Milbank is decidedly not. Similarly, these theologians come from a range of countries (although mainly from the USA or UK), and there is no distinct mapping between country of origin and theological approach to culture. The only writers where an easy line can be drawn through country of origin and approach to culture are Lynch and Gorringe (both from the UK) where the influence of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham and a Gramscian, neo-Marxist approach to culture can be seen.

There is, however, a strong tendency towards a positive theological view of culture from those theologians with a missiological background. Some are American Roman Catholics: Bevans, Sanneh, and Schreiter; Kim is a British Anglican, Shorter is a British Roman Catholic, and Sherer was an American Lutheran. These missiologists share experiences of working in missionary contexts in Africa and Asia, places which have been traditionally regarded as "other" or "lesser" by Western theology. I posit that these missiologists take a positive view of culture as a way of expressing the theological validity of their missionary locales, and as a way of expressing the love of God in these places. In this way, I see these missiologists as having a lot in common with my participants: they are ministering in places which have traditionally been seen as marginalised, deprived, or as "other" to the Gospel. In chapter 4, I explored how my participants had a positive view of the relationship between God and culture: God loves Hull and its culture, and worked in and through the city's culture in 2017. By affirming the relationship between God and culture, my participants and missiologists such as Bevans, Schreiter and Kim are expressing God's love for the places where they minister. They are showing that these are good places, not Godless, but places where the Spirit of God resides. I shall explore the implications of this further in chapters 6 and 7.

5.6 Conclusion

In *The Theology of the Built Environment*, Gorringe calls for all God's people to be prophets (after Numbers 11:29). He reminds us that contexts 'do not themselves speak,' and that God must be discerned in the context (Gorringe, 2002, p.16). My research sits within this call for discernment, giving a deep and rich exploration of a specific context at a specific point in time, allowing Christian leaders in Hull to speak of their beliefs and understandings of culture, and of the way God acts within that culture.

In keeping with my pragmatic epistemology (see section 2.2.3), I agree with Graham, Walton and Ward that knowledge and expertise are 'generated from the inside-out and not the inside-in' (Graham et al., 2005, p.4), and the recognition that knowledge of the nature of God is generated by people in different contexts. With Bevans, I see context as a valid source of theology, a third theological source to add to the two standard sources of scripture and tradition (Bevans, 2002, p.4). In order to study that context in detail, I use visual research methods and grounded theory method from the social sciences to the practice of contextual

theology. In doing so, I have generated detailed and deep data from my participants (see chapters 3 and 4) which reveals their understandings of the relationship between God and culture, and reveals more about the nature of God.

My research fits into the spheres of contextual and urban theology, whilst bringing new elements to both domains. Firstly, Hull has simply not been an area of theological study in the way that Manchester, Birmingham, London and other UK cities have been. My research enriches the literature with the particularities of this geographically and socially marginalised, ex-fishing port city. Contextual theology argues that knowledge of the nature of God is generated by different people in different contexts, and therefore their beliefs, practices and understandings must be researched in order to generate a fuller understanding of God. My research allows for the voices of Hull Christian leaders to be heard, and their contextual understandings of God to enrich theological literature.

My research also brings a fresh angle to urban theology by looking specifically at the relationship between God and culture in the city. British urban theology since *Faith in the City* has been concerned with marginalised and deprived urban areas, but there is little in this literature that looks at the concept of culture in the city. In *What Makes A Good City*, Graham and Lowe examine the role of churches and the City of Culture initiative. They call for research on '"culture" and its role in the building of the good city' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.111). My research beings to fill this gap in the literature, asking what church leaders understand culture to be, what God thinks about culture, and how God may be working in and through culture for the good of the city.

I follow Graham, Walton and Ward's call to see theology as process rather than product (Graham et al., 2005, p.6), and Gorringe's call for a more nuanced approach to theology and culture (Gorringe, 2004, p.102). I therefore reject the use of models which dominate the literature on theology and culture. I argue that using models to plot the relationship between God and culture holds the risk of ignoring data which does not fit into the pattern of the models, and that it is truer to grounded theory method to allow the participants' responses to generate analytic categories, rather than imposing categories, types or models from the literature.

I also argue that using methods rather than models also allows for a much more creative generation of theology, and allows for a more nuanced approach to the creation of a Trinitarian theology of culture. Gorringe calls for a theology of Spirit, in which people learn to discern God in our day-to-day life, and learn to discern where in the world God meets us (Gorringe, 1990, p.2). By using the methods of grounded theory and visual research, I allow my participants to show their theologies of culture, and where they see God at work in Hull.

I argue that not only is Gorringe's call for a nuanced approach to the relationship between culture and theology most appropriate in my research, but also that my participants' theologies of culture follow Gorringe's most closely. I shall therefore primarily use his work to discuss and examine their theologies in the next chapter, to weave a richer picture of the theologies emerging from Hull in 2017. In doing so, the richness and depth of my participants' theologies are honoured (in line with contextual theology and grounded theory method) and not dismissed because they are not "professional" theologians. Bringing my participants into dialogue with theologians who start from very different understandings of God and culture, such as Barth, Ward or Milbank, risks allowing the work of "professional" or historically venerated theologians to speak over my participants' voices. Instead, by using Gorringe, I begin by affirming the truth of my participants' experiences and beliefs (again, in line with contextual theology and grounded theory) and allow Gorringe to deepen and expand their theologies.

In his 2002 work, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, Gorringe argues that cities are places pregnant with possibilities. He calls for churches to reimagine the built environment, guided by a Trinitarian vision of sustainability, justice, empowerment, situatedness, diversity and enchantment (Gorringe, 2002, p.249-50). In the next chapter, I will explore how my churches have described a similar vision of the city of Hull, inspired by their understandings of God working in and through the City of Culture.

Chapter 6: Culture as human flourishing

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined the literature on the relationship between theology and culture in order to place my research within the wider literature on theology and culture, urban theology, and contextual theology. My research adds to this literature as a pioneering contextual theology arising from a deprived UK city, using grounded theory method and visual research methods to allow theology to arise from below. In this chapter, I will bring together the data described in chapters 3 and 4 into discussion with the literature of the last chapter, particularly the work of Tim Gorringe. I will bring my participants' responses on the nature of culture, on their theologies of culture, and their engagement with City of Culture into dialogue with the literature. I also will ask if and how my participants' theologies are local, contextual, liberative, and urban. I will explore the Trinitarian and eschatological aspects of my participants' theologies in relation to the literature, and ask how their theologies of culture fit into the existing theological literature. In doing the above, I will explore my fourth and final research question:

> 4. How do Hull Christian leaders' understandings of culture relate to their theologies of culture?

In bringing my participants' responses into dialogue with Gorringe I will create a full and nuanced picture of the theology of culture in Hull 2017: my analogy is that of weaving, allowing my participants' responses and theories to weave into academic theology to create a contextual and grounded theology.

6.2 Trinitarian theology in Hull 2017

In their responses to my two photo elicitation interviews, I believe my participants expressed unconsciously Trinitarian theologies. As explored in chapter 4, my participants did not explicitly examine the Trinitarian nature of God in relation to culture. Most participants spoke about God as creator, or about God in a general sense. I found it was rarer for participants to talk about either Jesus, or the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, their responses about God showed a deeply Trinitarian theology, which I see mirroring Gorringe's work in *The Theology of the Built Environment*.

6.2.1 Creation, redemption and reconciliation

Participants 1, 13 and 16 spoke about the Holy Spirit in relation to culture. Participant 1 (United Reform Church) felt that the Spirit speaks through society and that it is the churches' job to respond, and participant 16 (Anglican) felt the Spirit is always at work within culture, drawing people to God. Participant 13 (Danish Lutheran) was one of the few people to explicitly mention the relationship between the Holy Spirit, culture and creativity when he described how God breathed the Spirit into Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. However, these were rare mentions of the Spirit. Similarly, the Incarnation was only mentioned twice, both in the context of the Gospel being rooted in culture. Participant 4 (Methodist) said that, 'God doesn't sit apart from culture, God is within it, transforming culture'. Participant 20 (independent Evangelical) thought similarly, saying, 'I also think God is very happy to work within and through, God always works incarnationally, and he is always more than, not just willing, but he wants to work in and through human culture'. Participant 18 (Roman Catholic) alluded to Jesus always being present in culture, saying 'I think about the words of Christ when he says, "where two or three are gathered in my name". Now I think God is there, I think the question for people is, some people don't realise that he's there, or some people push God out of their lives, so I think God is everywhere'.

Reading *The Theology of the Built Environment* after conducting my interviews, I found that my participants had unknowingly expressed Trinitarian theologies of culture which were similar to Gorringe's. In *The Theology of the Built Environment*, Gorringe describes a liberative theology of the built environment with the Trinitarian shape of creation, redemption and reconciliation, where the triune God points us to community, the crucified God points us to the simultaneous presence of good and evil, and the spirit works in each place for human freedom (Gorringe, 2002, p.17). He argues for a Trinitarian mapping of spatiality; of imagination, order and justice (Gorringe, 2002, p.48). My participants' theologies of culture in Hull 2017 show a similar mapping of creation, reconciliation, and redemption, which leads people to community and to flourishing. In Gorringe's Trinitarian mapping of spatiality God the Creator brings order out of chaos: not 'as a form of Stalinist central planning' but in freedom and in consultation with the people of God (Gorringe, 2002, p.48-49). Many of my participants descriptions of God frequently started with the description of the creator. These participants also saw creativity as a gift from God, because people are created in God's image. Participant 20 summed this up saying, 'I think God loves culture in

terms of the arts because he is the ultimate creative being, so I think God is delighted that these beings he's created are using their God given gifts to create music and art and all sorts'. God is not the sole creative being: God has made people who are also creative, and who join in with God in the collaborative creation of Hull.

Gorringe describes God the Reconciler as taking 'flesh in order to teach peace to the nations', so that social justice is made concrete in the built environment and in the everyday (Gorringe, 2002, p.49). Reconciliation was one of the strong elements my participants saw rising from 2017, as described in section 4.4.3. Previously antagonistic groups within Hull had reconciled, Hull had been able to reconcile itself with the griefs of the past, and Hull had been reconciled to the rest of the UK. My participants also felt that unity was an important feature that 2017 had brought to Hull, with Black and ethnic minority groups being valued as part of Hull's culture. Participant 15 (Pentecostal) described people in unity as being a sign of God, and felt that God had enabled unity and peace to happen in Hull by enabling City of Culture to happen there. Gorringe describes God the Redeemer (the Holy Spirit) as author of all hopeful visions and of all human creativity'. Gorringe argues there is no divine blueprint for these visions, but that God constantly negotiates 'those spatial forms in which life, justice and joy are nurtured' (Gorringe, 2002, p.48). The Spirit works in each place for human freedom (Gorringe, 2002, p.17). I described in section 4.4 how my participants saw God working in and through the City of Culture: participant 16 summed this up by saying that God loves to revive and redeem, and that the people of Hull had been inspired and freshly invigorated. Other participants described people's rising sense of confidence and self-esteem, a renewal and a rediscovery of the city, which echoes Gorringe's sense of hopeful vision and redemption.

6.2.2 God as community

As well as Gorringe's understanding of the Trinity as encompassing, creation, redemption and reconciliation, imagination, order and justice, the nature of the Trinity also encompasses that of community. My participants expressed a strong sense of the holiness of community, and the encounter with God in encounter with the "other". In section 5.4.4, I looked at Gorringe's understanding of God as community in *Discerning Spirit*. Gorringe argues that it is only in community that we encounter God, and that community is the only place of the revelation of God. Gorringe describes the encounter and revelation of God in the other, not the self: 'the

one who is other to me, who I cannot ultimately colonize, who resists me and interrogates and so stands outside my totality is always the potential place of revelation – what I cannot tell myself'. (Gorringe, 1990, p.79). Community can be '"sacramental"… a means or a channel of "grace", a mediator of the forgiving, healing, restorative power of God' (Gorringe, 1990, p.79).

Participant 5 (Anglican) believed that 'a good culture surely must build community and for me as a Christian, good culture actually contributes to my relationship with God'. He noted that the City of Culture events generated community:

> And there was sort of a group of us sort of just standing, looking at this thing and they just started chatting to each other so, there was this kind of… it happened with other installations – it happened with the poppy thing… but the blade, in particular, I think, really got people talking. So… and that's gone on right through the year and it happened with Noah. You know, you would stand there watching it and people would get chatting and... and a sense of community.

Participant 18 also saw that this creation of community from God: 'Christianity is about relationships and that's in relation to people and God and that's a relationship collectively with God but also individually with God'. I believe that the sense of the sacramental nature of community described by Gorringe was felt by my participants, even though most did not explicitly express it as such. I felt this most strongly in my participants' responses about Made in Hull, described in section 4.4.1. Made in Hull clearly made a great impact on my participants, with nine of the sixteen participants who took part in the second round of interviews talking about it. This sound and light installation of Hull's history by Hungarian animator Zsolt Balogh in Victoria Square from 1st to 8th January deeply moved my participants and the crowds who saw it. These included participant 5, who started welling up in tears at the memory of the installation, and the effect it had had on the crowds, and participant 12 (Independent Evangelical), who recalled tears from the audience as well as himself. Made in Hull allowed the city's losses in the Blitz and the fishing industry to be remembered and experienced in community. The people watching Made in Hull saw their pain and joy mirrored in the experience of the others in the crowd, and were able to come to terms with these losses. I believe my participants saw the communal experience of Made in Hull as a channel of grace, where the forgiving, healing, restorative power of God was experienced. When I discovered that the installation had been created by a Hull "outsider", a Hungarian artist, I was surprised: it felt as though it had resonated so much with Hull that I just assumed it had been created by a Hullensian. But perhaps there was a resonance that

came with the gaze of an "outsider", an "other" to Hull, who was able to speak of these pains, and challenge the people of Hull to heal.

My participants did speak of their engagement with the "other", and also found this to be a place of grace and revelation. As described in section 3.2.3, my participants were keen to engage with people from "other cultures", holding multi-national services and international food nights. City of Culture also allowed reconciliation between antagonistic groups in the city, with participant 9 (Anglican) telling the story of how two fishing heritage groups had come together to hold a memorial service together. By encountering the "other", the antagonist, healing could start to happen, and God was able to bring reconciliation and peace. My participants also experienced the revelation of God in the "other" in 2017, and were changed in the process, most notably through the Gay Pride march. Three of my participants (two Anglican, one Roman Catholic) mentioned that they had been to the Gay Pride March in Hull, and found it a positive experience. Participant 18 (Roman Catholic) felt attending the march had made him 'more tolerant and by having my horizons broadened a little bit I have just a greater awareness of just acceptance perhaps. Acceptance and tolerance of all people and all things you know'. Participant 8 felt that 'God was in that [the Pride march] and I… probably close to my heart is, I met people there… so many people that I'd never seen in church and I thought, this is wrong! This is wrong! Why are people of different genders and of different sexuality or whatever it may be not feel that a church is a place where you can be at home. I'd much rather be there face-painting people with… Yes and, you know, for me it was a working through of stuff as well, I think, it's not a case of, "Alright then, no problem!", it was… you know, "Let's go and work this out, let's work our theology out on the ground"'. I see him as saying he had previously not seen God in LGBT+ people, but in encountering these "others" in the march, he was changed and saw the presence of God. His views on both LGBT+ people and God were changed.

6.2.3 Summary

I argue that my participants expressed a strong, although unconscious, Trinitarian theology of culture, which resonates with Gorringe's understanding of the Trinity as creation, reconciliation, and redemption. My participants also expressed a strong sense of the holiness of community, and the encounter with God in encounter with the "other", in line with Gorringe's argument that it is only in community that we encounter God, and that community

is the only place of the revelation of God. My participants strongly expressed the sense that God was positive about Hull's culture, and that God was working in and through the City of Culture. The whole City of Culture year was an exercise in community, bringing an isolated city into contact with the rest of the country, and bringing dispersed and hurt communities together. It was in this coming together as a community that Hull could rediscover itself, be renewed, and gain self-confidence and self-esteem. In this expression of community, the communal, Trinitarian God brought healing and rebirth to Hull.

6.3 Furthering Humanity: 'God wants us all to flourish'

As described in chapter 2, I am using grounded theory method in my research. For me, this involved conducting my participant interviews, analysing and coding my data, using my participants' responses to shape the emerging categories, developing theories and paying close attention to the theologies emerging from the data, and only then turning to literature on culture and theologies of culture. This meant that as I studied the literature, I was able to see which theologians' work resonated with my participants' responses. As explored in chapter 5, I found my participants' responses echoed the work of Bevans, Bergmann, Schreiter, Flett, Graham and Lowe. However, I found that the theologian who most closely mirrored my participants' theologies of culture was Tim Gorringe. I explored above his approach to the Trinity in *Discerning Spirit* and *The Theology of the Built Environment*, and I shall now turn to Gorringe's best-known work, *Furthering Humanity: A Theology of Culture*.

In *Furthering Humanity* Gorringe takes Raymond Williams' idea of the long revolution: 'that complex of economic, political and cultural changes which began in the late eighteenth century and… delivered manifest goods for the working class' and marries it with Barth's argument that the task of culture is the furthering of humanity (Gorringe, 2004, p.17). Gorringe sees this as suggestive of Herder's idea of the furthering of humanity, where Spirit and nature exist in tandem, and Spirit must mould nature and nature actualises the Spirit (Gorringe, 2004, p.18). From these, Gorringe takes three points for his theology of culture. Firstly, the moulding of Spirit and nature points to the importance of the incarnation: culture is produced within the society, and cannot stand outside it. Similarly, the Word became flesh, and questions of justice and value cannot stand outside society (Gorringe, 2004, p.19). Secondly, Gorringe sees Barth's argument that that the gospel meets every culture with 'sharp scepticism' as pointing towards

> what the liberation theologians called the "eschatological proviso", the fact that no culture embodies the kingdom. In Barth's terms, it is torn between nature and spirit, in other words marked by antagonism and the fact that reconciliation has not been reached. A theology of culture has to address this antagonism and alienation and think through ways of addressing it (Gorringe, 2004, p.19).

Gorringe's approach to theology and culture is fourfold: theology is concerned with the whole of human endeavour, not just the religious element; religion is part of culture, but not reducible to it; eschatology is the central category for any theology of culture; and a theology of the spirit that reflects on Pentecost will be a theology of diversity in unity (Gorringe, 2004, p.102). In this section, I will show how Gorringe's arguments in *Furthering Humanity* also echo my participants' understandings of culture.

6.3.1 Culture

Working from Raymond Williams' sense of culture as cultivation, Gorringe principally defines culture as *process*. Gorringe argues that process leads to successes and to failures, and that culture is the discussion which seeks the criteria by which we define what is success and what is failure (Gorringe, 2004, p.4). Although Gorringe's understandings of culture take much from the neo-Marxist workings of Terry Eagleton and Stuart Hall, Gorringe's principal definition of culture is theological. He sees culture chiefly as the 'name of the whole process in the course of which God does what it takes… to make and to keep human beings human'. Under God, culture is the task of being human (Gorringe, 2004, p.4). Reading Gorringe, after having conducted my interviews with my participants, I was struck by the similarities in the understandings of culture. Gorringe argues that there are two main senses of culture: as a way of life and as creative achievement (Gorringe, 2004, p.45). In chapter three, I argued when asked about culture, my participants' first thoughts turned to aspects of 'high' art and 'high' culture. Their secondary thoughts were of culture as a lived experience, of popular culture of culture as 'other', and culture as transformative or improving. Gorringe explores the influence of Coleridge, Arnold and Elliott on the relationship between religion and culture, writing that 'their influence on the discussion has been so profound that we cannot go around them, only through them' (Gorringe, 2004, p.23). I found this influence in my discussion with my participants, and their first thoughts of culture as 'the best that has been thought and said in the world' (Arnold, 1869, p.viii). Gorringe challenges their conflation of church and culture through Barth's sharp critique of culture Protestantism (as explored in chapter 5). Gorringe argued that Barth wanted to liberate the church from Christendom, and tear up the synthesis

between religion and culture represented by Arnold and Elliott: my participants responses suggest this has not fully happened.

If this task of being human under God is a process, and if it involves successes and failures, culture is also about values, and deciding what is a success or a failure. Gorringe discusses these values by looking at high culture, popular culture or mass culture, and folk culture. As discussed in chapter 3, my participants also talked about high culture and popular culture, but the concept of folk culture was not one that they used. Gorringe draws a distinction between popular culture and folk culture: popular culture is a product of capitalist modernism, whereas folk culture is the place where we hear the voice of the marginalised, 'is a celebration of ordinary life' which involves 'protest against the injustice of a tyrannical social system' (Gorringe, 2004, p.65-6). When my participants talked about the popular culture of Hull, they talked about sport, about festivals such as the Freedom Festival, the Roebank Shopping Arcade, and the fibre-glass Larkin toad sculpture. Folk culture was only once mentioned, by participant 4, who described a folk memory in the residents of Askew Avenue: although most residents were now young families who did not go to any church, they had a folk memory that they are Methodists, and should get their babies baptised at the Methodist church. However, in their discussions of the popular culture of Hull, my participants described something closer to Gorringe's sense of folk culture. Although sport and shopping are part of a capitalist world, participant 9 described people using these avenues to express identity and a resistance against power:

> I can remember in the Spanish Civil War, the Catalan people were forbidden to use their language or to fly the flag and they actually took that opportunity when they went to the football games in Barcelona. There they gathered in numbers and possibly it was the fact that they had gathered in numbers that gave them the courage to sing their songs, to fly their flags, and to wear their colours. The same thing happened at the old Boulevard. People would come from different parts of the city, have a pint in the local pubs that they'd always shared with their friends, then they went to watch the game, and then they'd go back into the local pubs with their pals. And that was a gathering, in a sense, of the community and, in a very small way, the same thing happens now. If I go into the cafes on the Hessle Road to take out the posters for events with the church, there'll be people who come across from different parts of the city just to have a lunch, a breakfast, or fish and chips in their community. To meet their friends, to do their shopping on the road – to do the shopping in the familiar shops – and that's all part of what it means to be in the Hessle Road community.

Participant 9 also described people who were displaced to outer estates such as Bransholme in the "slum clearances" of Hessle Road, and yet who defied that displacement and continued to find community, identity and a sense of resistance in their old haunts.

Gorringe argues that it was a failure of liberation theology in Latin America to ignore the question of folk culture, rootedness and particularity represented by ancient indigenous religions (Gorringe, 2004, p.63). He argues that if it is true that the poor show the direction of history that is in accord with God's plan, then the church must listen to folk culture: 'both the celebration of ordinary life, and the protest against the injustice of a tyrannical social system are theologically significant if the premises of liberation theology are granted' (Gorringe, 2004, p.66). Despite Gorringe's plea, I still think it is a little romantic to look to folk cultures in a British context. Celebrations of an ordinary life, protests against injustice, and the voice of the marginalised can be heard in and through popular culture, as shown above. The co-option and repurposing of capitalist culture is a postmodern idea which I suspect Gorringe would not approve of. Gorringe rejects both modernity and postmodernity in *Furthering Humanity*. He identifies modernity as the 'possibility of infinite development', a capitalist state of being which capitalises the cultural spaces of 'less developed' societies, stifles creativity, and leads to disenchantment with tradition (Gorringe, 2004, p.93-4). Gorringe sees that modernity can be resisted by focussing on the universal and particular: not the false universalism of capitalism which does not account for the common good, but one based on the incarnation. He similarly resists postmodernism, and sees it as consisting of two strands: the rejection of meta narratives as oppressive and a feature of the Enlightenment, and as the cultural logic of late capitalism which sees the human project as the valorisation of choice (Gorringe, 2004, p.245). He argues that postmodernity can also be resisted by the same focus on the universal and particular. With a focus on the incarnation, we see that God took flesh at a particular time and place, taught in a particular language, and was tortured to death under particular laws, and yet the purpose of this was the redemption of the whole of history (Gorringe, 2004, p.101). This universal redemption is always particular: Gorringe cites Pedro Casaldálgla's statement that '"the universal word only speaks dialect"' (Gorringe, 2004, p.175).

So, to summarise: Gorringe is speaking much the same language about culture as my participants are. He acknowledges the legacy of Arnold, Elliott and Coleridge's understandings of culture as 'high culture' which shape my participant's understandings of culture. He also works from Williams, with his sense of culture as cultivation and lived experience. He uses the concepts of high and popular culture that they are familiar with, and also introduces the idea of marginalised people's voices being heard through folk culture. As

explored in chapter 3, my participants had received little teaching or training on the concept of culture, either as part of their ministerial training, or in secular education. A couple had read around the subject and done some thinking on the topic, and a couple had received some training that helped them think about the topic of culture, but overall, my participants' understandings of culture seem to have come from wider societal understandings of culture: participant 2 (Baptist) summed this up as a process of 'osmosis'. Gorringe's focus on the universal and particular echoes with my participants' deep understanding of the way God acted in 2017, in the historical, geographic, economic and social particularities of Hull. It could be particularly interesting for my participants to explore the folk culture of Hull, in a way that Gorringe did not see happening in the liberation theologies of Latin America. My participants had a great concern for the marginalised and the ordinary, and wanted God to lift 'the needy from the ashes and [seat] them with the princes' (participant 12). However, I would add in a point from Stuart Hall here: that folk culture is not necessarily "purer" or more authentic than popular culture, and it is just as capable of being appropriated by mass culture (Hall, 2018, p.570). As explained above, my participants' first thoughts about culture was about high culture, and their second thoughts were about culture as a lived experience. Gorringe argues that the elision between these two main senses of culture, as a way of life and as creative achievement, can lead us to think of culture as 'inherently positive' (Gorringe, 2004, p.45). However, Gorringe argues that all cultures are marked by imbalances of power on gender, racial and class lines, which I will explore further in section 6.3.3.

6.3.2 Flourishing

Analysing my participants' attitudes to God and culture, both before and after City of Culture, one particular concept emerges strongly: that of flourishing. I see this concept aligning closely Gorringe's idea of furthering humanity and God's purpose for the 'long revolution' (Gorringe, 2004, p.23). In my interviews, I did not ask any specific questions about "flourishing". I had not given it much thought before my interviews, and did not particularly expect to discover it in my research. However, in line with grounded theory method, close attention to my participants' responses revealed fresh categories, and the concept of flourishing stood out. In the first interviews, before 2017, my participants brought up the concept of flourishing and living life to its fullness. Participants 9 and 10 felt God wanted people to live life to the full and have abundant life, and participant 4 said 'I see God celebrating culture simply because it's my profound belief that God wants us all to flourish,

and to know the truth that will set us free, and that fulfilment of life'. These descriptions of flourishing encompass love, justice, peace, happiness, contentment, safety, coming together, being together, supporting each other, and culture. I see in these responses an allusion to the Bible verse from John 10:10, 'I have come that you might have life, and life in all its fullness'.

In the second interviews, I found a more articulated sense of what flourishing might look like, as my participants described how they saw God working in and through culture in Hull 2017. My participants saw God giving Hull a fresh start in 2017. They described this as rediscovery, renewal, resurrection, redemption. My participants saw God's aims for the city being worked out 2017, reconciling Hull to its past, and allow it to be born into something new. There was also reconciliation between previously antagonistic groups in the city, and a reconciliation between Hull and the rest of the UK. Just as Made in Hull acted as catharsis to reconcile the city to its past, City of Culture in general seems to have acted as a wider catharsis to allow Hull to tell its unheard story of pain, and be reconciled to the rest of the country. My participants saw God working through this reconciliation and rebirth to build up self-esteem, joy, community and creativity in the city. The saw this self-esteem, joy, community and creativity being achieved through the city's flourishing, and also lead to more flourishing in turn. There was the sense that when people are expressing self-esteem, joy, community and creativity, they are joining in with God's plan for Hull, and working towards God's goals for Hull.

I see this sense that God wants the people of Hull to flourish, through community and creativity, by resurrecting, redeeming, renewing and reconciling the city, and building up the self-esteem and joy of the people of Hull, as fitting in with the work of Gorringe in *Furthering Humanity*. Gorringe sees culture as 'what human beings make of their world', and after Herder, believes that the task of culture to be that of 'furthering humanity' (Gorringe, 2004, p.173). Furthering humanity to Gorringe, is the result of Williams' 'long revolution', and argues that:

> The revolution is the working out of the faith, hope and love of which Paul speaks: faith in the God who raised Jesus from the dead; hope in the possibilities for creation living under the God of hope; and arduous and patient work for a society which echoes or corresponds more closely to God's kingdom, which is the work of love (Gorringe, 2004, p.265).

So, Gorringe's view of 'furthering humanity' corresponds with 'God's kingdom': 'there is a "strange new world" towards which culture is directed, the theological symbol of which is the kingdom' (Gorringe, 2004, p.45). To Gorringe, this kingdom is a place where 'the injustices which deform each and every culture' are ended, and 'imbalances of power on gender, racial and class lines' are righted (Gorringe, 2004, p.45). Similarly, improvising from the line he takes through Torrance's work, Flett also sees human culture as a design for living (Flett, 2011, p.230). He argues that 'human cultural activity is only possible because our triune Creator has given us the capacity to create by forming the human person after his image... The purpose of human culture is then to sustain and nourish an environment where the personal is sustained and nourished through human cultural activity' (Flett, 2011, p.233). I see this also as the end point of the flourishing described by my participants: that all the people of Hull, this despised and forgotten city, regardless of their social and economic standing, should be able to live life in all its fullness. They saw God working through the City of Culture, and the concept of culture itself, to contribute to people's creativity and community, to their self-esteem and joy.

6.3.3 Power and hegemony

One of the dominant themes in *Furthering Humanity* is the concept of power, and how power relates to culture, to the Gospel, and to mission. Gorringe argues that power is the great omission from Niebuhr's Christ and culture, and he sees power as 'the thread which stitches the seams of the cultural garment' (Gorringe, 2004, p.105). Gorringe analyses the concept of power through the neo-Marxian ideologies, hegemony, and cultural politics. Gorringe uses Thompson's understanding of ideology as '"meaning in the service of power", the way in which "the meaning mobilized by symbolic forces serves to establish and sustain relations of domination"', tempered by Eagleton's reminder that ideology includes beliefs which never enjoyed power, such as those of the Levellers and Diggers (Gorringe, 2004, p.109). Gorringe posits that 'the centrality of domination to the pejorative reading of ideology must be maintained', and gives four ways in which the gospel is not an opiate of the people, and able to counter ideologies. Firstly, Gorringe argues that Scripture critiques ruling systems of power, and secondly, the nature of Scripture itself, as an ongoing debate, is an irritant to power. Gorringe argues that ideology must be condemned as a form of idolatry, and finally, that the materialism of the incarnation commits to the nature of the gospel as a destabilising force to power (Gorringe, 2004, p.106-7, p128).

Turning to the concept of hegemony, Gorringe asks whether there can be stable society without hegemony, whether hegemony can only be fractured by the rise of oppressed groups, whether hegemony is only replaced by other hegemonies, whether Christianity is anti-hegemonic, and whether the kingdom is a form of hegemony (Gorringe, 2004, p.129-30). Describing hegemony as 'consent the majority give to the prevailing system', Gorringe argues that a stable society requires some sort of hegemony, and that the kingdom of God is such a hegemony (Gorringe, 2004, p.141-2). The hegemony of the kingdom involves the idea of subalternity, where a new society is built from the bottom up, and not the top down. Gorringe sees this as the work of liberation theology, with its priority of the poor. As well as being entailed through ideology and hegemony, Gorringe also sees power being articulated through the cultural politics of class, gender and race. Gorringe sees Christianity as historically a prime cause, rather than solvent, of class, race and gender differentiation, although this should not be the case: 'understood properly... it is committed to an equality in difference which follows from both incarnation and Pentecost, our understanding of the work of the Son and the Spirit' (Gorringe, 2004, p.262). He argues that the church should be 'committed to constructing a counter hegemony to all imperialisms which rule by repression and violence' (Gorringe, 2004, p.262). Gorringe sees the power of the church instantiated when it is found alongside the poor, not those in authority. This is best understood by liberation theology, when 'power is redefined by the gospel from the base upwards' (Gorringe, 2004, p.173).

A few of my participants were particularly vocal when it came to issues of ideology, hegemony and power, although they did not always use these terms. Participant 10 was very critical of the capitalist hegemony which had rendered the UK's cities almost identical to each other. When I asked him if there was a difference between Hull's culture and culture in general, he replied that there was not:

> I think there are probably little nuances of difference about Hull from other places and somebody like [name] has some interesting ideas about that sort of thing. But basically, no, I think culture's the same… it's pretty much been levelled. It's getting increasingly the same.

He said that when he thought about the idea of culture, his mind usually went 'to mass culture and then my critiques of that and so some of the pictures that represent that for me were probably some of the ones like... There was a street in there where I just think, that's what we've done to our city – to create monstrous little spaces like that'. He felt that there was a

‘suppressive culture [in Hull] which actually imprisons… and prevents… flourishing’. He felt that people’s flourishing was prevented by ‘systemic structural injustices that go back throughout time and are linked with the accumulation of land and capital by certain groups’. He was very critical of the City of Culture project, its decision to take sponsorship money from BP, and its failure to address the real lives of many people in Hull. Participant 20 was firmly in agreement with Gorringe when it came to the church’s history of appropriating power, and felt that this was a disaster for the church. He felt that the church’s opinion on culture was all about power, and that the church had imposed its power on society for many centuries. He felt that God’s culture was not a culture of power and control, and that Jesus embodied values of meekness, of forgiveness not of power and control. Participants 7 and 9 saw the UK government was to blame for much of Hull’s historical difficulties. Participant 9 felt that the government had not protected Hull’s fishing industry during the Cod Wars, and participant 7 (Anglican) felt that the “slum clearances” and the decline of the fishing industry had brought Hull to its knees.

However, these participants were exceptions. The majority of my participants did not express clear reflections on the concept of hegemony or power. My participants *did* have strong opinions of what Gorringe calls cultural power: the roles that race and class play in culture. Again, my participants often did not use the word “class”, but I feel it was strongly implicit in many of our discussions. My participants wanted all people to be equal, with no class distinctions. Participant 4 described good culture as ‘culture in which there is parity of esteem and everybody has a place which is valued’, participant 10 as ‘flourishing together’, and participant 13 as creating ‘good thoughts and good ways of living, and good ways of being a good fellow human being’. These participants saw bad culture as ‘divisive, which will separate, which will have value judgements about people's worth’ (participant 4), not allowing ‘people to flourish, that represses and just deadens the soul’ (participant 10), and producing ‘hate and evil’ (participant 13). This desire for people to flourish also encompassed race: participant 2 described how he tried to break down racial imbalances of power in his church:

> if God’s got a heart for justice, where’s ours and how are we then critiquing the culture of society? But, first how are we critiquing ourselves? ... When I first came, it was very obvious that if I sit in the congregation in front – it’s a white church – if one’s reading, preaching, praying, playing music, the leadership… it’s a white church! If I stand on the platform looking out, it’s not!

One area of cultural power which was not, overall, mentioned by my participants was that of gender. Participants 9 and 14 were the only participants who explicitly talked about the role of women in Hull, and that was with regards to the fishing industry. Participant 14 (Anglican, male) saw Hull as a matriarchal society, because the men were absent for long periods of time, working on the trawlers. He criticised this 'matriarchal kind of ethos… I'm not sure if that always works, really. I said that because whether that's one of the reasons why Hull isn't as strident, because, because, because there has been a strength in its domesticity, rather than it's going out and getting things'. Participant 9 (also male) disagreed with this, saying 'the only people who actually created change were the wives – the "headscarf brigade" – and these were major safety changes brought about by them,' referring to Lil Bilocca, Christine Jensen, Mary Denness and Yvonne Blenkinsopp's campaign for trawler safety after the triple trawler disaster of 1968. Participant 9's view of women in the fishing industry was changed by a young woman in 2017, engaging with the Fishing Heritage Art Exhibition:

> One of the young girls… Because of course, at the heart of Fishing Heritage Art Exhibition, it was young people. It was their take on Hull's losses. These were the students from South Holderness. One of the girls did a painting of a young mum and she had lost her husband at sea and she was having to bring up the bairns by herself. The number of times I've taken a funeral service of someone and her children, her sons would say, "Mam never married again, she was always faithful to me dad, he was the one true love for her." This young girl from the college saw it a different way because her painting, her mother would say, "Who wants someone with six kids?" That was something I had never thought about. So, not only did they have that pain of loss but there was that sense that nobody would want them. So, actually, they're resigned to bringing the kids up, but they would never know that intimacy again, that closeness, that love. Who wants somebody with six kids?

It is noticeable that of twenty original participants, only three were women. If Hull has a matriarchal past, this does not extend to the leadership of its churches. An interesting exception was participant 17, the female leader of a Pentecostal church. I was surprised to find a woman leading a Pentecostal church, and asked her if this was increasingly common. She told me:

> It's less common than the men, there's much more men, but saying that, I've got quite a few friends that are. So, for instance, the Pastor of the Grimsby church, she is a female. I've got a friend in Sheffield. There's not quite so many of us, and there's a few more that would be like Assistant Pastors, but there's not so many of us as like Senior Pastors or, you know, actually running a church on their own... I say, I think it's something that's growing as time goes on, sort of thing, really.

Women tend to be silent in my interviews: both as active participants, and as subjects being talked about. And yet, the above story about the photography exhibition shows that women's insights are needed into live in Hull, in its past and in its present. If I were to do future

research, I would love to interview more women, and question further issues of gender and cultural power in Hull. Its absence in my current research may well tell its own story.

There was one element of cultural power which my participants picked up on which was not mentioned by Gorringe in *Furthering Humanity*: that of sexual equality. As discussed above, three of my participants mentioned that they had been to the Gay Pride March in Hull, and found it a positive experience. Participant 5 (Anglican) felt that Pride was supported by the whole community of Hull, and the church should be part of it. His church held a service of welcome before the Pride march, which received criticism from other church leaders, but participant 5 was adamant that the service of welcome was important. Despite the fact that he received criticism from other church leaders, participant 5 felt that it was important the church show solidarity with the LGBT+ people of Hull, and that God would be pleased with this. These participants recognised sexuality as a contested area of cultural power, but they clearly felt that God was on the side of the people marching in Pride, and that the church should be too.

I discussed in section 3.3.2 Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, and argued that my participants did not see themselves as possessing cultural capital, and yet were leaders and influencers in their communities. They seem to overlook the cultural capital they possess, and instead identify more strongly with the more disempowered in their communities. I wonder whether this perceived lack of cultural capital leads them my participants feeling powerless to enact change on a wider scale. Influencing this is also their understanding of the relationship between power and culture. In section 3.5, I explored the idea that culture can be seen either as a form of power, or a site in which power relations are exercised. I argued that most of my participants' understandings of culture showed an underlying sense that culture is a form of power. They felt that because Hull did not possess high culture, it lacked culture itself: the city was marginalised, deprived and therefore powerless. I argue that participants 10 and 20 differed from my other participants, in that they had thought about the relationship between power and culture, and their responses expressed a sense that culture was the site of power struggles, rather than a source of power in itself. Gorringe's approach above shows an understanding that culture is a site in which power relations are exercised, similar to Hall's approach explored in chapter 3. I wonder whether a sense of culture as a place where power is exercised, rather than a form of power in itself, would help my participants realise some of

their own cultural capital, and realise their role as influencers and leaders in their communities.

However, there is another approach to power, which needs to be added at this point. Gorringe's neo-Marxian approach often approaches power as a negative force, and he talks about it most frequently in relation to human power. Of course, power is not automatically a negative force: it is entirely neutral, and can be used as a force for good. Instead of a Marxist concept of power, the sense of power expressed by Hannah Arendt and Stephen Lukes may be of use here. In her exploration of violence, Hannah Arendt made it clear that violence and power are not the same thing: 'Power is indeed the essence of all government, but violence is not. Violence is by nature instrumental; like all means, it always stands in need of guidance and justification through the end it pursues. And what needs justification by something else cannot be the essence of anything. The end of war - end taken in its twofold meaning - is peace or victory; but to the question "And what is the end of peace?" there is no answer. Peace is an absolute... Power is in the same category; it is, as they say, "an end in itself" (Arendt, 1970, p.51). Similarly, Lukes argues that power is not always a negative, oppressive category, writing that 'you can be powerful by satisfying and advancing others' interests... power as domination is only one species of power' (Lukes, 2004, p.12). Power is a potentiality, not an actuality, and it is not always actualized. Taking the writings of Spinoza, Lukes argues that power exhibits two distinct variants: *potentia* and *potestas* (Lukes, 2004, p.73). *Potentia* is the power of things in nature, including humans, to exist and act, whereas *potestas* is being in the power of another. 'Power as *potestas*, or "power over", is, therefore, a sub-concept of power as potentia: it is the ability to have another or others in your power, by constraining their choices, thereby securing their compliance' (Lukes, 2004, p.73).

The ultimate expression of a power for good is the power of God, and it is this that needs to be brought into the discussion. I saw, and I understand my participants as seeing, that God worked in and through City of Culture 2017. God brought about healing, reconciliation and renewal, through expressions of creativity and community, in Christian and non-Christian contexts throughout the city. In order for this to happen, God must possess power: the ability to change things. When writing about God bringing order out of chaos, Gorringe refers to God acting not 'as a form of Stalinist central planning' but in freedom and in consultation with the people of God (Gorringe, 2002, p.48-49). I see God's power being enacted in Hull in 2017 in a similar manner: not with force or violence, but in great gentleness, and working

with the people of Hull's creativity and community. Improvising from the line he takes through Torrance's work, Flett similarly argues that creative power is exercised in both freedom and in love and for the purposes of redemption' (Flett, 2011, p.231). Gorringe's critiques of power come from a neo-Marxist framework, with the implicit understanding that a change of power requires revolution. He argues that the church should be 'committed to constructing a counter hegemony to all imperialisms which rule by repression and violence' (Gorringe, 2004, p.262). I believe that my participants would agree with this statement, but that the power of God, as expressed in the change of human culture, perhaps does always not need violent revolution to achieve such counter hegemony. The change in Hull over 2017 was not violent: it came gently, with joy, a rebuilding of self-esteem, and the flourishing of the City's people.

6.3.4 Mission and inculturation

Gorringe argues that as well as addressing power, theologies of culture must address the relationship of the Christian faith community to non-Christian cultures. If the gospel can change culture, culture can also radically change the gospel (Gorringe, 2004, p.177-9). He defines salvation as being at the heart of the gospel: not in the sense of salvation from individual sin and evil, but a salvation which incorporates justice between races, classes and sexes. This gospel, through the incarnation, is a fundamental expression of solidarity, of the Creator sharing in the Creation's pain. (Gorringe, 2004, p.210-3). Gorringe argues that this gospel has something to offer which is of unique value to all people, and that Christian missions can and should eschew colonialism and violence in sharing this gospel (Gorringe, 2004, p.193). Gorringe argues that missionary principles of inculturation rather than translation are the best ways to reject that colonialism and violence, and instead offer a salvation of justice, and a gospel that celebrates difference. Gorringe argues that the church can pursue evangelism in a moral way, which avoids the violence implicit in conversion and pursuit of a moral monism. Gorringe sees this mission as universal and particular: understanding that there is more that unites people than divides them, and yet celebrates diversity: '"the universal word only speaks dialect"' (Gorringe, 2004, p.175).

In section 5.2.4 I explored the Roman Catholic teaching of inculturation, and argued for the use of Arbuckle's definition of inculturation as a 'dialectical interaction between Christian faith and cultures in which these cultures are challenged, affirmed and transformed towards

the reign of God, and in which Christian faith is likewise challenged, affirmed and enhanced by this experience' (Arbuckle, 2010, p.152). Participant 19 (Roman Catholic) was the only person who explicitly talked about the theory of inculturation. He felt missionaries travelling abroad were taught about the idea of inculturation, but not priests who were ministering in the UK. I asked if the Catholic church in Britain thought about inculturation in the context of the UK as well as foreign countries, and he replied

> Probably less so than it does when missionaries go across yes, yes because, well not because, I imagine part of it is that the clergy who're in this country haven't been through that rigorous analysis of the inherited ways to serve and minister to people of different cultures. So, for us it's a learning curve and I've, I have some experience now of the African culture especially in cases like weddings, it's very different from our own culture.

Despite this lack of recognition of inculturation among my participants I believe that there was dialectical interaction between my participants and the City of Culture, in line with Arbuckle's definition above. My participants certainly engaged with Hull's cultures, and were changed by them: for example, participants 8 and 18 attended the Gay Pride march. And were changed by it. It is harder to ascertain how much my participants' engagement with City of Culture changed the city, as my research focussed on church leaders and not their impact on the wider city. My participants did give indications that they felt the Christian faith had had an impact on Hull: for example, participant 9 felt his church, in its role as the Fishermen's church, allowed previously antagonistic groups to come together and for God to bring some reconciliation. Interestingly, some participants suggested that God had had an impact on Hull more than churches had: participant 8 said, 'I've seen God in the City of Culture in the renewal and that resurrection, that hope… in that inspiration, definitely, definitely! It was a whole spiritual thing going on. But not in the conventional churches of Hull now', These dialectical interactions, taking place via events in 2017, showed affirmation, enhancement and transformation, but as explored in sections 6.2.3 and 6.3.4, not as much challenge of the City of Culture. Arbuckle gives three stages to inculturation: stage 1, consisting of initial contacts and conversations between cultures and faith, stage 2, consisting of liminality, with dialogue and exchange, discernment, acculturation and transformation, and stage 3, consisting of the implementation of inculturation (Arbuckle, 2010, p.180). My participants' responses suggest they are at the liminal stage of inculturation. They worked with the City of Culture project, both with the official City of Culture team, putting on their own events, and even holding fringe events. However, they did not explicitly talk about inculturation or how it might be implemented: I feel sure that many of them would simply never have heard the term, or been taught about it.

Schreiter argues that the basic issue with inculturation is deciding 'how much emphasis should be put on the dynamic of faith entering the process, and how much emphasis should be given to the dynamics of culture already in place?' (Schreiter, 1999, p.68). As described in section 5.2.4, he gives three examples of situations where strong identification with culture is recommended: in situations of cultural reconstruction, where 'a culture has been so damaged by outside cultural forces that a people has to engage in a conscious reconstruction of their culture'; in situations of cultural resistance, where 'a culture is threatened by an alien force and need to take a posture of resistance in order to survive'; and situations of cultural solidarity, where the 'church is a tiny minority in the population and is suspected of being alien to the majority' (Schreiter, 1999, p.72-3). Schreiter also gives two examples of situations where faith seems called to stand over culture: situations where injustice is perpetrated and sanctioned by the culture, and situations where the culture faces challenges it does not have the resources to meet (Schreiter, 1999, p.73). If my participants wanted to engage with inculturation in Hull, there would be a case to strongly identify with the city's culture for cultural reconstruction, and a case to strongly identify with faith because the city faces challenges it does not have the resources to meet. This need for cultural reconstruction was caused by the death of the fishing industry in the UK, leading to economic deprivation and a loss of identity for people in the city, leading to poverty and isolation which the city lacked the economic or social resources to face.

Whiteman argues that the function of inculturation in mission gives rise to three challenges: firstly, the prophetic challenge as inculturation changes and transforms the context. Secondly, there is the hermeneutic challenge, when inculturation expands the understanding of the gospel because it is seen through a different cultural lens. Finally, there is the personal challenge, as inculturation changes missionaries: they will not be the same once they have become part of the body of Christ in a context different from their own (Whiteman, 1999, p.51). I argue that my participants describe inculturation is already overcoming the prophetic challenge in the city of Hull. They described the transformation of Hull in 2017: they saw God bringing rediscovery, renewal, resurrection, and redemption to the city. They saw God's aims for the city being worked out 2017, reconciling Hull to its past, and allowing it to be born into something new. However, I argue some of my participants are facing the hermeneutic and personal challenges of inculturation. As I will discuss in chapter 7, the next stage of my research is to share my findings with my participants and other church leaders

and Christians in Hull. However, I suspect that it may be hard for some of them to see the gospel through a 'different cultural lens', despite the fact that this is how they articulated their understandings of God working in 2017 to me. I suspect, based on our discussions of their theological or biblical training for ministry, that many will not have experience of viewing the gospel in different ways. I saw this in my conversation with participant 16 after 2017. I asked him if he felt City of Culture had a spiritual dimension, and he struggled to reply. He described how he saw God in the fireworks in Hull, in the new water feature at Hull Minster, and yet his first answer was that:

> obviously when the church engaged I think it's always the prophetic, I think God is in it, I wouldn't like to say, I wouldn't say there's a secular, I'm sure God was speaking through... So, I think, anyway do I think, I'm not sure if there was a primary focus on the spiritual thing, people probably focused on the secular, I don't know the, the humanistic side of it so yes.

I asked him what he meant by prophetic, and he replied

> I mean I just that God speaks through so many different ways and you can see it, or you can't see it, I don't know. I think you know, I think God just helps us to raise aspirations in terms of what is possible for our city but also, in Kingston Upon Hull, the King's Town, I don't know I just think what does God does, he wants to raise you know church aspirations of what is possible, that the harvest is plentiful you know. I'm not sure if I have anything specific, I was just reflecting on some of the things about it and I was thinking well what, some of the things that I was aware of, so the fireworks and the water coming up, I just think God does speak to us you know. I mean it's all, if you actually just look, he's got his DNA that pushes outside all of that you know, iso often we go around just taking it for granted and we refuse to see it.

Even the way he was speaking, with incomplete sentences, shows his confusion of thought. He often repeated 'I don't know'. His ideas bounced back and forward between his experiences of God working in Hull, and the more traditional idea of God speaking through the work of the church. I believe he had seen something new in Hull 2017, and yet could not reconcile this with what he had previously been taught. Similarly, I suspect that many of my participants will not see themselves as changed after 2017. I saw evidence of transformation in their responses (described above and in chapter 4), and yet I suspect that my participants may well "normalise" these transformations of personal experience and hermeneutics into their existing theologies and sense of being. The status quo is a hard thing to change.

To summarise, I argue that my participants are starting to engage in the inculturation that Gorringe sees as the best way to spread the Gospel of salvation which is of unique value to all people, which rejects colonial and violent history of Christian mission, which offers a salvation of justice and a gospel that celebrates difference. I argue that as described by Arbuckle, my participants certainly engaged with Hull's cultures, and were changed by them.

They engaged in dialectical interactions in 2017, showed affirmation, enhancement and transformation, but struggled to challenge the hegemony and political power implicit in the City of Culture project.

Using Arbuckle's stages of inculturation, my participants' responses suggest they are at the liminal stage of inculturation. Using Schreiter, I argue that if my participants wanted to engage with inculturation in Hull, there would be a case to identify strongly with the city's culture for cultural reconstruction, and a case to strongly identify with faith because the city faces challenges it does not have the resources to meet. I argue that my participants describe inculturation is already overcoming the prophetic challenge in the city of Hull. They described the transformation of Hull in 2017: they saw God bringing rediscovery, renewal, resurrection, and redemption to the city. They saw God's aims for the city being worked out 2017, reconciling Hull to its past, and allow it to be born into something new. However, I perceive that some of my participants are facing the hermeneutic and personal challenges of inculturation.

6.3.5 Eschatology

As described above, Gorringe argues from Barth that eschatology is the central category for any theology of culture. Gorringe sees Barth arguing that the gospel meets every culture with 'sharp scepticism', which Gorringe sees as pointing towards the "eschatological proviso", the fact that no culture embodies the kingdom (Gorringe, 2004, p.19). As discussed in chapter 5, I see Barth as addressing culture from a primarily negative viewpoint, and only later tempering this with positivity. I see my participants, and indeed Gorringe, approaching culture with a positive view, and letting this 'sharp scepticism' qualify that positivity later. Quoting Herder, Gorringe sees culture as 'instinct with promise,' giving us '"glimpses of a divine theatre through the openings and ruins of individual scenes"' (Gorringe, 2004, p.20). Following on from this, eschatology is crucial, and allows us to see culture as the process of becoming: 'eschatology, then, construed as a theology of hope, and grounded in the resurrection, is one of the main keys to any theology of culture' (Gorringe, 2004, p.21). Gorringe is careful to note that eschatology is not simply about last things, but as Moltmann has argued, about direction and goal, and hope that sustains us in the face of hopelessness (Gorringe, 2004, p.102). Gorringe sees hope as the eschatological dimension of liberation theology:

> the source of hope is extrinsic to the system as a whole, and Christians understand it as bound up in the story of the life, death and resurrection of Christ… There is a "strange new world" towards which culture is directed, the theological symbol for which is the kingdom. Rather than culture as destiny, this, according to the gospel, is the destiny of culture, reached by the long revolution, the journey from bondage to freedom (Gorringe, 2004, p.45).

My participants did not explicitly mention the concept of eschatology in their interviews. However, I found a strong sense of hope, direction and goal in my interviewees. My participants' deep understanding of Hull's painful past had not led them to despair, but to hope.

In the interviews prior to 2017, there was a good deal of hope about the City of Culture. Participant 1 hoped it would give people 'permission in order to do, sort of, to start things, and then from there, to keep them going because hopefully this is a pump priming exercise rather than just a one-off event'. Participant 11 (independent Evangelical) expressed a common theme of excitement about 2017, saying,

> I think it's exciting. It is, I can't remember the exact quote, but when we got City of Culture it was about a city coming out of the shadows, and I really loved that image. And it's this image of people growing in confidence, and in creativity, discovering themselves, looking outside of the themselves, beyond their own circumstances to other things. And that's exciting, and it's great for a city to have that achievement, and to feel special in that way. I think when we heard the news, everybody was so excited.

In the interviews after 2017, when my participants shared the general opinion that City of Culture had given Hull transformation, they described that transformation as redemption, reconciliation, renewal, and resurrection. They felt that Hull had been reborn into a hopeful future. This was not an over-optimistic hope, but one that was tempered with a sense of reality: I asked participant 8 what I might see if I came back to Hull in three years' time, and he replied, 'I really… I just really hope we don't slip back. I really hope we don't go back to that negativity!'. Nevertheless, the sense that Hull had been resurrected and transformed contained an implicit hope for a better future, a resurrection life.

My participants were explicit about the direction and goal they hoped for in Hull: they described a vision of a city where people were living life in all its fullness, full of self-esteem and joy, reconciled to Hull's past and the rest of the country, full of community, difference in unity, and creativity. I see this strongly echoing Gorringe's argument that the destiny of culture goes from bondage to freedom: in Hull, my participants saw City of Culture helping Hull go from the bondage of the past to a joyful and fulfilled future.

6.3.6 Summary

My participants' theologies of culture most closely express those of Tim Gorringe's in *Furthering Humanity*. Their understandings of culture are recognised and explored: Gorringe acknowledges the legacy of Arnold, Elliott and Coleridge's understandings of culture as 'high culture' which shape my participant's understandings of culture. Gorringe also explores Williams' sense of culture as cultivation and lived experience. He uses the concepts of high and popular culture that they are familiar with, and also introduces the idea of marginalised people's voices being heard through folk culture. In section 3.2.2, I described how my participants had not received any teaching about culture, either as part of their ministerial training or in secular education. They sometimes struggled to articulate what they understood by culture: they needed the photo elicitation process to prompt thoughts about culture and be able to describe it. They sometimes lacked the language to describe culture. In section 4.6, I discussed how my participants' theologies of culture changed over 2017. Before City of Culture, their descriptions of the relationship between God and culture were somewhat abstract and tentative, coming from an intellectual position rather than lived experience. It was only during 2017 that my participants were able to see God working in and through Hull's culture, and they became much more articulate in the second interview. Nevertheless, I believe my participants would benefit from a theological language which would help them discuss the 'bad culture' which holds people back and prevents them from flourishing. I am not convinced that this is Gorringe's language of ideology and hegemony, but something more theological which begins with the power of God.

I argue that my participants are starting to engage in the inculturation which Gorringe sees as the best way to spread the Gospel of salvation which is of unique value to all people. As described in similar terms by Arbuckle, my participants certainly engaged with Hull's cultures, and were changed by them. Using Schreiter, I argue that if my participants wanted to engage with inculturation in Hull, there would be a case to strongly identify with the city's culture for cultural reconstruction, and a case to strongly identify with faith because the city faces challenges it does not have the resources to meet. My participants' descriptions of inculturation already overcome the prophetic challenge in the city of Hull. They described the transformation of Hull in 2017: God bringing rediscovery, renewal, resurrection, and redemption to the city. They saw God's aims for the city being worked out in 2017,

reconciling Hull to its past, and allow it to be born into something new. However, some of my participants are facing the hermeneutic and personal challenges of inculturation.

I saw my participants outlining their hope, direction and goals for Hull. However, they expressed less of what Gorringe refers to as 'the eschatological proviso,' the idea that culture is marked by antagonism and the fact that reconciliation has not been reached (Gorringe, 2004, p.19). As above, my participants did not use Gorringe's language of ideology of hegemony to articulate the structures that might hold Hull back. I argue that my participants need a fresh theological vocabulary of power and flourishing to articulate their implicit eschatology. I shall explore what this might look like in the next chapter.

6.4 Denominational and geographical difference

I described above how my participants saw God working through reconciliation and rebirth to build up self-esteem, joy, community and creativity in the city. As explored in chapters 3 and 4, I found remarkable unity in my participants' responses, but I want to explore that in more detail, to show how deep their understanding of culture as a means of flourishing lay.

6.4.1 Denominational difference

In section 2.3.1, I explained how I selected my participant's churches to reflect the different denominations of churches in Hull. I interviewed seven Anglicans, three independent Evangelicals, three Roman Catholics, two Pentecostals, and one Methodist, one Baptist, one Lutheran, one Quaker, and one URC minister.

In chapters 3 and 4, I explored how my participants, overall, had very similar understandings of culture, and how God might relate to culture. Before I started my interviews, I had expected to find a wider denominational variance in theologies of culture, with more liberal denominations being positive towards the city's culture and more conservative denominations seeing human culture as more sinful or problematic. I had expected to see variance along Bevans' map of his models of contextual theology. Bevans describes the left putting more prominence on experience of the present, human experience, and culture, and coming from a creation-centred theological orientation. The models on the right put more prominence on experience of the past, valuing scripture and tradition, and come from a redemption-centred theological orientation.

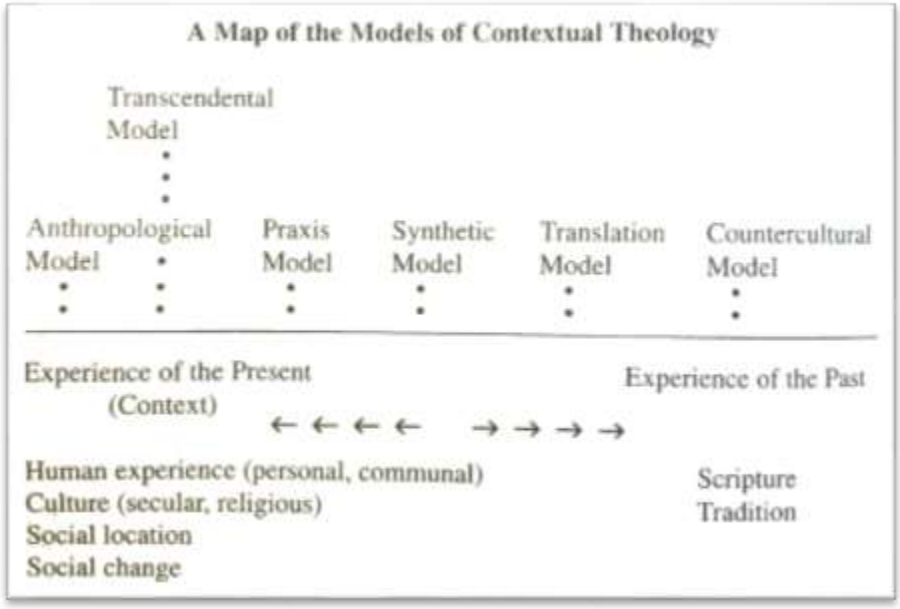

Image xxxiv: Bevans' map of these models of contextual theology (Bevans, 2002, p.27)

Instead, I found that almost all participants, of all different denominations, saw God working through Hull's culture to enable people to flourish. I explored this with participant 12, leader of an independent evangelical church. I said, 'I was really surprised how affirming all the church leaders were of culture. Do you think that would be the same for other people in your denomination, other church leaders?', and he replied 'Certainly, in my movement of churches, I think there would be. It's a change that's happened over the last maybe ten or fifteen years'. I clarified that he was talking about evangelical churches, and he affirmed this: 'With evangelicals. Coming back to the Earth is the Lord's and everything in it. I think it is about redeeming culture and honouring culture'. He felt that this had been a change in evangelicalism in the last 10 or 15 years:

> 'before, there would have been a suspicion of people in the arts and Christians in the arts, it's very liberal… They've labelled lots of art, it's a bit liberal or creative people are a bit awkward. I think that ten or fifteen years there has been a shift in evangelicalism to say, "Actually, creativity is good, God is creative, how do we express our creativity?" Even things in our charismatic churches for example, prophecy would be of spoken words. I feel God saying this, there would be a picture. But now, literally, we might have somebody doing a painting, this is a picture that God has given us, they might paint in the worship, they might express it in dance, this is what we feel God is saying'.

He saw the shift coming from people like Charlie Mackesy, an artist at Holy Trinity Brompton, Bill Hybels at Willow Creek in the USA, and the Hillsong churches. He identified

that the change had come with an embracing of creativity within the church, where formerly disapproved of forms of culture had been used in worship, or to evangelise.

One participant who was often at odds with the majority of my participants was participant 10, a Quaker. He felt God would not have approved of the City of Culture, as it just distracted and entertained people, and did not enable the change he felt Hull needed. He felt it had no beauty or truth, and did not reflect the reality of life for many people in Hull, and was the only interviewee who explicitly expressed liberation theology with regards to Hull. However, I feel participant 10 does not represent a wider Quaker view in this sense: this liberation theology is not characteristic of the denomination in Hull. Participant 10 articulated how different he was from the Quaker church in Hull in our first interview: 'we're [the Hull Quakers] a bit disengaged and distant from what's going on'. He went on to say he was not representative of the group:

> the kind of stuff that I do – I don't do as a Quaker. But, in terms of the Quaker meeting, with the Mad Pride stuff or whatever – I'm a Quaker involved in the heart of that and so there is Quaker stuff involvement. I have the privilege of being equivalent to a minister in the sense that I've been freed up through some funding to just spend my time doing all of this stuff. If you take me out of that then I don't think there's going to be much cultural stuff going on from Quakers.

Another participant who stood out in discussions of theology of culture was participant 13, the Danish Lutheran minister. He felt that that churches in England did not focus on the Holy Spirit as much as churches in Denmark: 'I have been wondering a bit because one of the big celebrations in the Danish Church is Whitsun. Because that was where church was started by the event in Jerusalem. When I came to England, I said, "How do you celebrate Whitsun here?" "We don't celebrate"… The Danish Church is a Lutheran Church and I think that they maybe emphasising the Holy Spirit a bit more in the Lutheran Churches'. I understand this statement as crucial to the theology of culture which could emerge from Hull 2017, and I shall explain this further in the next chapter.

6.4.2 Geographical difference

In section 2.3.1, I explained how I selected my participant's churches to reflect the different areas of affluence and deprivation in Hull. I used Hull City Council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) Deprivation Atlas (Hull City Council, n.d) to plot how many churches there are in the different areas of Hull, and select proportionate numbers of churches for each

quintile of affluence or deprivation. Seven of my twenty participants were from the fifth, most deprived, quintile, four were from the fourth quintile, four were from the second quintile, and five were from the first, most affluent, quintile. Despite this selection, I noticed no differences in understandings of culture, or theologies of culture, arising from the different areas of deprivation. Participant 17, whose Pentecostal church was in the second quintile, in the Avenue subward, mentioned that although people felt her area was affluent, it was not: 'usually, people from East Hull will say West Hull is the posh side, but they don't live in West Hull! And there's parts of West Hull are quite affluent, and so we're talking about Kirk Ella and then going out into Anlaby and Hessle. It's really nice round there. But they've not looked at like Springbank, Hessle Road, all of those areas'. Similarly, participant 9's church, with its strong affiliation with the fishing industry, did not feel that the community was particularly affluent:

> For some of the youngsters who come to the centre – the Hessle Road Network, particularly those who come during the daytime, they're youngsters who are really struggling in the system and they are offered an alternative learning opportunity here. But it is going to be tough for these kids to get jobs. And when you talk about the fishing community…because in those days there was a great deal of work. They used to say: for every man who went to sea, 10 people were employed. And with the demise of the fishing industry we also had an increase in unemployment.

Overall, the deprivation that Hull faces as a city overwhelmed any small differences between wards or subwards in the city, and therefore between my participants' responses. Further research in this area could encompass the much more affluent suburbs of Hull such as Kirk Ella or Cottingham, to see if there were wider differences from the city proper and its leafy suburbs.

6.4.3 Summary

My participants, despite their denominational and geographical differences, were overwhelmingly positive about the nature of culture, and the way that God used culture to allow people to flourish. My participants' deep understanding of Hull's historical, geographic social, and economic context, and their desire to see people flourish, went deeper than any superficial denominational differences. This lack of denominational difference is hinted by Bevans and Schroeder's' *Constants in Context* (explored in section 5.3.4). Bevans and Schroeder explore the theological origins of approaches to Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, soteriology, anthropology, and dialogue with culture (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004, p.34). They identify these approaches as stemming from conservative or orthodox, liberal, and radical types, not from particular denominations. Bevans and Schroeder recognise

that these types can be found in any denomination: it is the theological approach and context which shapes theologies of culture, not denominations. Participant 10's statement above also indicates this: he engaged with City of Culture not 'as a Quaker', but as an individual with particular beliefs and approaches.

In section 5. 5, I explored how there was little relationship between academic theologians' understandings of culture and their theologies of culture. I did notice, however, that theologians with a missiological background tended to have a positive understanding of culture. These missiologists, by affirming the relationship between God and culture, are expressing God's love for the places where they minister, and showing that the cultures and contexts of these locales are places where the spirit of God can be found. I argued that these missiologists have a lot in common with my participants: they are both ministering in places which have traditionally been seen as poor, deprived, or as "other" to the Gospel. My participants have a positive view of the relationship between God and culture: God loves Hull and its culture, and worked in and through the city's culture in 2017. I argue that what unites my participants is greater than the denominations that separate them: they are working as missionaries. Deeply rooted in the context in which they are serving, they see Hull as a good place, a place where the Spirit of God can be found. They want the city to understand its goodness, to understand that God loves this city, despite the way it may be seen by the rest of the UK. They want to the people of Hull to live life in all its fullness, which includes knowing and loving God.

6.5 Theology of Hull 2017: contextual, local, liberation, incultural, and urban?

I will now turn to the work of Schreiter, Graham and Lowe, and ask how reading my participants through the lens of Gorringe in *Furthering Humanity* and *The Theology of the Built Environment* furthers the discussion.

6.5.1 Contextual or local theology?

As explored in section 5.2.2, Schreiter differentiates between local and contextual theologies. Schreiter uses the term local theology for those which are 'done by and for a given geographical area – by local people for their area, rather than by outsiders', and reserves the term contextual theology for those theologies which show greater sensitivity to context' (Schreiter, 1985, p.5-6). Schreiter sees contextual theologies as beginning with local cultural

context, recognising that almost all cultures undergo continual social change, and recognising that cultures are subject to oppression, poverty and hunger (Schreiter, 1985, p.12-13). He divides these contextual theologies into two: ethnographic approaches which prioritize cultural identity and social change, and try to initiate a dialogue with Christian tradition which addresses those questions genuinely posed by the local circumstances, rather than only those the Christian tradition has treated in the past. Alternatively, liberation approaches prioritize oppression and social ills, and the dynamics of change in human societies. Are my participants' theologies local or contextual, and if they are contextual, are they ethnographic or liberative? In both sets of interviews, both before and after City of Culture 2017, my participants described Hull's context of pain, shared loss, a story not heard, an isolated geographical context, and economic deprivation. I argue that the theologies described in this thesis are utterly local to Hull. My participants all lived and ministered within the city. I estimate that at least five of my original participants were born in Hull, and over half had ministered in the city for over ten years. There were a few participants who had come to Hull more recently (participants 1, 3 and 13), but the questions I asked in the photo elicitation interviews, and the use of pictures of Hull, enabled their answers to be focussed on the city. All my participants were keenly aware of the particularities of Hull: participant 11 (not born in Hull) described this, saying:

> Hull is a very unique place with a very unique viewpoint of people. I've never been anywhere quite like it. I never felt that sense when I was brought up in Bingley, and Bradford. Never felt that sense of identity with the city in the way that I've felt Hull as, has an identity, and people have for better or worse, they very strongly identify with being from Hull.

Participant 12 was originally from the south coast, but came to Hull ten years ago. He felt called to Hull, and that it was a place which Jesus loved: 'I'd watched a Channel 4 programme of the worst places to live in the United Kingdom. Number two was Middlesbrough where I was living at the time, and number one was Hull, and that's why I moved to Hull, because I thought, one, it's not like that and two, I don't want it to have that reputation. And Jesus loved places with bad reputation, those were the people he hung around with'. Most of my participants strongly loved Hull: they knew the city, wanted to be there, and identified with its people.

I described above and in chapter 4 that my participants' how the theologies of culture from my first round of interviews felt tentative and abstract, coming from an intellectual position

rather than lived experience. Participant 12 was a rare exception when he described the way creativity could transform people's self-esteem: he had seen this happen through his church's art group. During my interviews, I often felt this was the first time many participants had thought about the relationship between God and culture, and their responses were therefore somewhat disarticulate, as they explored their theologies of culture with me. It was only during 2017 that my participants were able to see God working in and through Hull's culture. To that end, I argue that my participants' theologies of culture became contextual, in Schreiter's definition, over the City of Culture year.

6.5.2 Liberation or ethnographic theology?

I argued in section 5.2.2 that liberation theology is contextual theology 'committed to its context, to the local as the key to the global, to the concrete, and to the necessity of praxis' (Gorringe, 2002, p.21). I argued that contextual theology and liberation theology are intertwined, but not equivalent. Liberation theology, with its roots in Marx, critiques existing structures of power, and social and economic injustice. Do my participants express liberative theology, or is it more in line with the ethnographic approach to contextual theology as described by Schreiter? As explored above, Schreiter offers two alternative views of contextual theology: an ethnographic approach and a liberation approach. Schreiter sees ethnographic approaches to contextual theology as often evident in the final stages of colonization, giving the example of Black power in the USA as the need to reconstruct an identity which has been considered inferior (Schreiter, 1985, p.13). He describes ethnographic approaches as beginning with the needs of a people, and trying to initiate a dialogue with Christian tradition which addresses those questions genuinely posed by the local circumstances, rather than only those the Christian tradition has treated in the past (Schreiter, 1985, p.14). I do see this approach as present in my participants' responses, but nevertheless, this does not feel like a full description of the theology emerging from 2017. My participants did see that the people of Hull had been considered inferior to other people in the UK. Participant 8 saw Hull as an 'underdog', and felt that City of Culture 'allowed us to find our voice again and to… To do away with the crap! Because, when someone tells you, you are something for so long, you end up believing it! And I think that's what people did here'. My participants brought issues of concern from Hull to Christian tradition, as when participant 12's church ran an art group to help people with their self-esteem. He saw this in

line with the Bible, that these people could be lifted from the ashes and seats them with the princes (paraphrase of 1 Samuel 2:8), but the work began with the needs of the people.

My participants raised the ideas of good and bad culture, describing good culture as that which helped people flourish, particularly in community with others. Participant 4 described good culture as 'culture in which there is parity of esteem and everybody has a place which is valued', participant 10 as 'flourishing together', and participant 13 as creating 'good thoughts and good ways of living, and good ways of being a good fellow human being'. These participants saw bad culture as 'divisive, which will separate, which will have value judgements about people's worth' (participant 4), not allowing 'people to flourish, that represses and just deadens the soul' (participant 10), and producing 'hate and evil' (participant 13). These judgements of good and bad culture seem to be based on Gorringe's sense of injustice through cultural power, and divisions in race, class and gender (to which my participants add sexuality).

Some participants explicitly wanted City of Culture to bring more financial wealth to Hull, in line with the New Labour origins of the project explored in section 1.2. Participant 7 (Anglican) articulated the City of Culture's potential to transform Hull's economy: 'So, Hull has been on its knees, really, for, well, the whole time I've been here... It's designed to give a shitty place a chance to have some spotlight and for people to chuck some money at it. To become the focus of people's love and attention, and to get some visitors in, and to become a visitor attraction. That's what it's designed for'. Participant 15 rejoiced that Hull was becoming wealthier:

> Three things that have made me happy, good development in the city, City of Culture bid that we won. I came to church and we celebrated, I shouted, everybody jumped, wow! So, they asked me what are we going to get? I said, many people will come to this city. Investment will come to this city. Hotels will rise in this city. I remember when they head of the church came from Nigeria to visit us here, we couldn't get him a good hotel here. We took him to Scunthorpe. So, he complained it was far. So, with City of Culture I think it will change, but the grace of God. And I was happy with the wind turbine business is coming, you know, I was happy because City of Culture is going to change a lot. Look at the city centre now.

Participant 15's response shows the influence of the "prosperity gospel" and the equation of wealth with God's blessing. Jonathan Walton argues that there is a multiplicity of "prosperity gospels", and that prosperity theologies must be seen as contextual, not as a monolithic category. He argues that 'for some, prosperity has connoted community uplift and collective concern. For others prosperity refers to individual accomplishment and the accumulation of

material good on a personal level. And then there are others who reject the term "prosperity" altogether due to its negative connotations, yet embrace and model a lifestyle that signifies, if not glorifies, a divinely sanctioned life of luxury' (Walton, 2014, p.453). Participant 15's response suggests that prosperity for him means 'community uplift' rather than the 'accumulation of material good on a personal level', which does align with some of the aims of liberation theology. The only participant who explicitly expressed a liberation regard to economic injustice was participant 10, who felt people were prevented from flourishing by systemic structural injustices. He had recently been to a 'a national liberation theology gathering, where he and friends were exploring racism and 'English exceptionalism'. Apart from participant 10, however, my participants were not critiquing the financial and political structures of the UK, but instead hoping that Hull would get a chance to participate more fully in the UK's economy.

My participants did not critique the capitalist hegemony which informs the financial and political structures of the UK. Instead, they hoped that Hull would get a chance to participate more fully in the UK's economy. Despite the lack of critique of structures of power which characterise liberation theologies, as described above, I feel my participants did go beyond Schreiter's ethnographic approach to contextual theology, and did include elements of liberation theology. My participants were not satisfied with the lot of people in Hull, and wanted to see Hull reformed and rejuvenated, socially as well as economically. They wanted all people of Hull to have parity of esteem and a valued place, for Hull to have a more vibrant economy, and for churches to be rejuvenated. They believed that this was the will of God to enable people to flourish in their city.

6.5.3 Urban theology

In section 5.2.5 I explored the spatial turn in theology, and the tradition of urban theology in the UK stemming from the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas report, the 1985 report *Faith in the City*. The theology my participants expressed was profoundly urban, rooted in the history and geography of Hull, of the pain and grief coming from the Blitz, the loss of the fishing industry, and the post-war slum clearances (section 4.2.1) and the geographical flatness and isolation of the city (section 4.2.2). One aspect of Hull's history which particularly stood out for me in the interviews was the sense of dislocation experienced in the Blitz and the dispersal of the fishing community to estates.

Participant 4 described this as ‘under the surface in Hull culture, because it was blitzed to bits, and there was all this sort of dislocation going on under the surface’, and participant 19 described the loss of the fishing industry, saying: ‘it undermined things a lot, really, in the city’. This has strong resonances for me in Andrew Davey’s experiences in Peckham. Davey was talking about congregation members who had roots in the Caribbean and Africa when he described how ‘social and geographical dislocation is a common experience in Peckham’ (Davey, 1998, p.9). However, many of Hull’s fishing community experienced the same dislocation within their own city, dispersed to new estates like Bransholme, away from their old homes. Davey reflects that ‘space becomes place only when there are stories and hopes lodged there. The experience of exile and captivity is the experience of coerced space in contrast with trusted place’ (Davey, 1998, p.9). This resonates with my participants’ testimonies: participant 14, leading a church in an estate where fishing families were relocated to remarked on its parochial nature and lack of community space. In contrast, participant 9, who was minister of the traditional “fishermen’s church” noted that many of the old fishing families came back to the Hessle Road area to do their shopping, and wanted funerals in his church.

I argued in chapter 5 that my research adds to the literature on urban theology by specifically examining the relationship between God and culture in the city: the research that Graham and Lowe call for in *What Makes A Good City*, into ‘“culture” and its role in the building of the good city’ (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.111). Graham and Lowe specifically examine the Cities of Culture project, asking whether churches have a role to play in challenging ‘top-down’ regeneration strategies which ‘rely on cultural and creative industries as key drivers of economic revival and growth’ and which emphasise ‘high-profile and prestigious developments at the expense of long-term sustainability or provision for the many’ (Graham and Lowe, 2009, pp.100-102). They call for churches to champion the ‘experiences and aspirations of ordinary people,’ and although it is ‘not necessarily the task of Christian theology to oppose all attempts to boost a city’s pride, let alone its economic well-being, through cultural renaissance,’ there needs to be ‘some thinking about “culture” and its role in the building of the good city’ (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.111). They ask whether culture points towards ‘a city of inclusivity and dignity; is it honest about the human condition; is it realistic about the long-term sustainability of ‘signature’ events and developments?’ (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.113).

Graham and Lowe call for churches to engage critically and constructively with Cities of Culture initiatives. They encourage churches to 'nurture effective discipleship… to foster individuals' pride in their own stories and experiences as worthy of inclusion in a wider narrative of identity and aspiration'; to strengthen common bonds and social capital; to 'build up congregations to contribute actively to a cultural renaissance, by hosting cultural events or fostering the collective memory of a neighbourhood'; to enable communities 'to articulate questions about what makes a good city'; to 'speak to the wider population of the things that make us human: to celebrate our own creativity but to be wary of versions of culture that are ideological, exploitative or unsustainable' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.113-14).

I would be surprised if any of my participants had read *What Makes A Good City*. Nevertheless, many of my participants engaged with the City of Culture in the way Graham and Lowe recommended. The areas in which they engaged were principally by strengthening common bonds and social capital, building up congregations to contribute actively to a cultural renaissance, championing the experiences of normal people, and fostering individuals' pride in their own stories. My participants championed and valued the sense of community explored in City of Culture events such as Made in Hull, the Blade and the poppies. They also enabled community bonding to emerge with their own events: participant 5, talking about the Noah plays, commented that 'you would stand there watching it and people would get chatting and... and a sense of community'. Participant 9's church tried to contribute to a 'cultural renaissance', and champion the experiences of 'normal people'. The church, located in an area not always associated with the arts, made sure a choir performed as part of their City of Culture activities. The church also held events looking at Hull's fishing industry, including an art exhibition on the industry, a photographic exhibition by Alec Gill of Hessle Road in its heyday, and work with schools.

However, my participants did not do all of the things that Graham and Lowe called for. Graham and Lowe call for churched to engage critically and constructively with Cities of Culture initiatives: overall, my participants engaged constructively rather than critically. They tended not to challenge what Graham and Lowe argue are the top-down strategies of City of Culture. Participant 9's Fishing Heritage Art Exhibition had been 'chosen as one of the partners for the City of Culture. The thing that they liked about it was that we are actually celebrating our local culture in a place that couldn't be bettered'. Participant 5 was also working with the City of Culture team to produce the Wagon Play of the story of Noah, and

participant 15 offered his church as a meeting place for the City of Culture team. Instead of being critical of the City of Culture initiative, my participants wanted to get involved, and have the church play a part in the initiative. Participant 2 summed up the feelings of several participants when he said 'you have to work incredibly hard to get any issue of faith onto the City of Culture committee'. Participant 5 was critical of some of the churches who had not worked harder to engage with the City of Culture team: 'I think in fairness we have tried to understand and speak their [the City of Culture team's] language. And you know, I could offer a slight critique to churches, it's no use us complaining that faith isn't being done in City of Culture and then us not actually taking any initiative ourselves to say "who in our community could we partner with to do something?"'.

The exception to the lack of critical engagement was participant 10, who argued that the City of Culture should not have accepted BP as a sponsor: 'we attended almost every directly BP sponsored event. Often just asking a question about whether the arts should be accepting money from big oil. On one occasion we occupied a stage and led a sort of small, essentially a moments silence in solidarity with West Papua which is one of the countries which BP have links with. They have links with a regime which is not allowing West Papua to have their freedom'. He was also involved in creating fringe or alternative City of Culture events, including an event celebrating people experiencing mental ill health called Mad Pride, and Caravan of Love which challenged

> a celeb-based culture where a few people make millions and everybody else doesn't and where a few people are seen being recognised as creative and everybody else isn't. And where stuff is delivered from the front and certain people decide what is quality and what is not quality, that, that is all bullshit. Actually, this kind of culture that is going to transform peoples' lives genuinely, is going to be grassroots, bottom-up stuff which is infused with a different set of values. So, that was what the Caravan of Love was trying to say.

Participant 10, a Quaker, was part of the churches' City of Culture group, Believe in Hull, but his ideas seem to have been on the margin and not held by most churches, or explicitly enacted by the Believe in Hull group.

Overall, my participants tended not to enable communities 'to articulate questions about what makes a good city,' or 'be wary of versions of culture that are ideological, exploitative or unsustainable' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.113-14). I argued in chapters 3 and 4 that my participants had not received teaching or training on the conception of culture or in theologies of culture. This lack of understanding of culture, either in secular or theological terms, has led

to a lack of confidence in challenging the City of Culture initiative. I argue that my participants would benefit from a theological language, beginning with the power of God, which would help them discuss the 'bad culture' which holds people back and prevents them from flourishing. I will explore this further in the next chapter.

6.5.4 Reimagining the city

In *A Theology of the Built Environment*, Gorringe argues that cities are places pregnant with possibilities. He calls for churches to reimagine the built environment, guided by a Trinitarian vision of sustainability, justice, empowerment, situatedness, diversity and enchantment (Gorringe, 2002, p.249-50). I described how my participants had strong, if implicit, Trinitarian theologies of culture, of creation, reconciliation, and redemption in Hull. Their vision for the city encompasses situatedness, diversity and enchantedness, and although it is broadly supportive of sustainability, justice and empowerment, struggles to explicitly articulate how these things might come about. My participants were situated in the city of Hull: as explored in chapter 4, they had a deep understanding of Hull's historical, economic and social context, and were firmly rooted in the city. They were passionate about the idea of diversity within community: participant 12 described the Tower of Babel as a good thing, and felt that 'for Hull, God loves different cultures of different regions'.

My participants also had a strong sense of enchantedness, wonder and joy as being needed in the city. Participant 11 sensed a lack of wonder in Hull prior to 2017, saying:

> there is something about a sense of wonder that, it feels to me like it's that emotion, that expression of ourselves that is closest to where heaven meets earth. Its where the two are so close that all it takes is one step from where I am today, in this life, and when you look around you and feel a sense of wonder, you're already there with God… God wants you to feel special, wants you to know you're loved, he wants you to know that he is the God of laughter and joy, and it says who God is, without us saying who God is.

Participant 12 discovered a sense of joy in the City of Culture events which he felt God wanted for the city (explored in section 4.4.6). However, I argue that although my participants were broadly supportive of sustainability, justice and empowerment in the city, they struggled to articulate how these things might come about. I described above how my participants held a broadly left-wing view of society, and wanted the people of Hull to flourish in community, with no-one being held down or oppressed by others. However, with the exception of participant 10, they struggled to articulate the idea of systems which held

people down and prevented them from flourishing. They wanted to see justice and empowerment, but did not show a clear understanding of how this might come about.

6.5.5 Summary

I argue that, in line with Schreiter, over the period of 2017 my participants' theologies became not just local, but deeply contextual. My participants' theologies at the beginning of 2017 took into account the geographical, historical, economic and social particularities of Hull, but that they became deeply contextual over 2017, as they saw God working in and through Hull's culture. They stopped talking about the relationship between God and culture in an abstract way, and instead were able to articulate this in a way that shows great sensitivity to context. My participants' theologies were, in line with Schreiter, more than ethnographical, and were approaching liberation theologies. My participants critiqued structures of what Gorringe identifies as cultural power: divisions in race, class and gender (to which my participants add sexuality). However, they did not use his vocabulary of ideology or hegemony to critique the power structures that prevent all people from flourishing.

My participants' theologies are deeply urban, and fit into the pattern of urban theology in Britain post-*Faith in the City*. Their responses add to urban theology by specifically examining the relationship between God and culture in the city: the research that Graham and Lowe call for in What Makes A Good City, into "'culture' and its role in the building of the good city" (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.111). My participants and their churches did many of the things that Graham and Loew call for: strengthening common bonds and social capital, building up congregations to contribute actively to a cultural renaissance, championing the experiences of normal people, and fostering individuals' pride in their own stories. However, they tended not to engage critically with City of Culture, enable communities 'to articulate questions about what makes a good city', or 'be wary of versions of culture that are ideological, exploitative or unsustainable' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.113-14). This could be due to their lack of teaching or training on the conception of culture, or on theologies of culture. I argue this lack of understanding of culture, either in secular or theological terms, has led to a lack of confidence in challenging the City of Culture initiative.

Graham and Lowe's calls for churches to challenge the City of Culture initiative pre-suppose that the churches, their leaders and congregations have the knowledge, confidence and power to be able to challenge 'versions of culture that are ideological, exploitative or unsustainable' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.114). My research argues that Hull's church leaders have received little or no training or teaching about the concept of culture, which could mean they do not recognise or do not feel able to be able to challenge exploitative elements of the City of Culture initiative. I also posit that my participants and their churches do not feel they have the public or social capital to challenge City of Culture in Hull: they struggled to be considered as equals by the City of Culture team and worthy of inclusion in the plans for 2017. This suggests that the churches of Hull reflect and are influenced by the city they serve: a city which has been ignored and despised for decades, left powerless and lacking in self-confidence. Such a city, and such churches may have felt less social capital and power compared to the City of Culture team, hailing from London, with experience of international events such as the 2012 London Olympics.

6.6 Conclusion

By weaving my participants' responses in with the work of Tim Gorringe, I have created a fresh picture of theology emerging from Hull in 2017. I have shown how God was present in Hull, City of Culture 2017, working in and through the city's culture to bring healing, renewal, reconciliation, self-confidence, joy and resurrection to this despised and forgotten city. My participants, despite their denominational or geographical differences, saw God using human culture to allow people to flourish. They expressed an unconsciously Trinitarian theology of culture of creation, redemption and reconciliation, unknowingly mirroring the work of Tim Gorringe in *Discerning Spirit*, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, and *Furthering Humanity*. My participants agreed with Gorringe in *Furthering Humanity* that God works in and through human culture to enable people to flourish, and live life in all its fullness.

During the City of Culture year, my participants' theologies became deeply contextual, in line with Schreiter's descriptions of local and contextual theology. They showed great sensitivity to their local context, were able to articulate the changes happening in Hull, and were aware of the marginalisation and poverty still experienced by people in 2017 (Schreiter, 1985, p.12-13). However, they did not express this in classically Marxist terms, critiquing

structures of power. This is where I argue a fresh theological vocabulary needs to be introduced: the understanding of the Spirit acting in power through human culture. This power should not be seen as force or violence, but as freedom and grace. It is a power that leads not to destruction, but through community to create, redeem and restore. I argue that my participants need to understand the power dynamics inherent in the concept of culture, I will explore this further in chapter 7.

Despite not using the language of inculturation, I argue that my participants are starting to engage in inculturation. I argue that as described by Arbuckle, my participants certainly engaged with Hull's cultures, and were changed by God through that engagement. Using Schreiter, I argue that if my participants wanted to engage with inculturation in Hull, there would be a case to strongly identify with the city's culture for cultural reconstruction, and a case to strongly identify with faith because the city faces challenges it does not have the resources to meet. I argue that just as City of Culture raised Hull's aspirations as a city, it has also raised my participants' eyes above the horizon to see what is possible in Hull. My participants have begun to articulate a fresh theological vocabulary for Hull: a theology of a God in love with Hull and its culture, a God who changes all parties in the city – Christian and non-Christian – and brings them joy, builds their self-esteem, and helps them flourish. In my final chapter, I will turn to the impact of my research, and its implications for the churches of Hull, and examine how this fresh theological vocabulary could start to be realised in the city.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

7.1 A new contextual theology

In the introduction to this thesis I explained how my research arose from working with Believe in Hull, the ecumenical group exploring how Hull's churches might engage with City of Culture 2017. I sensed emerging theologies from that group even at an early point of its planning: the importance of community, the role of evangelism, and the desire for the most deprived and excluded people in Hull to be engaged and involved. I explored how this was set against the context of the European and UK City of Culture project, which took the Arnoldian idea of culture as the brightest and best of human endeavour, and commercialised this to create wealth and urban regeneration. I also noted, both in my introductory chapter and in chapter 5, that my research arose from an academic theological context which did not explore the issues arising from the above situation: namely, what are the theologies of culture that might emerge from a marginalised and deprived UK city in the early 21st century? How might the Christian leaders of this city frame their understandings of culture and theologies of culture? How might we expect God to work in Hull in 2017? The existing theological literature does not explore the practical or outworked theologies of culture in a UK context, or substantially investigate the theologies emerging from a context of deprivation in the UK. My research is pioneering contextual theology which adds to the Christian understanding of God: how God reveals God's self in a marginalised and deprived UK context in the early 21st century.

In chapter 5, I explored the lack of contextual research into theologies of culture in the UK. The field is dominated by the use of models which give a false sense of contextuality. It would have been possible to research Hull, City of Culture 2017 through the lens of Niebuhr or Bevans' models, and plot my participants' responses against these models. But the risk in this approach is that it misses out on true contextuality by allowing research participants to generate and shape their own theologies. These theologies might not fit into a particular model, or might generate new theology and concepts which are not covered by existing models. Instead, I chose to take up Timothy Gorringe's call for a complex contextual theology (Gorringe, 2004) by using grounded theory method and allowing my participants' responses to take priority. In doing so, I discovered my participants had an approach to liberation theology, Trinitarian theology and inculturation which fitted in most closely with Gorringe's own theories.

My research brings a fresh angle to urban theology by looking specifically at the relationship between God and culture in the city. British urban theology since *Faith in the City* has been concerned with marginalised and deprived urban areas, but there is little in this literature that looks at the concept of culture in the city. In *What Makes A Good City*, Graham and Lowe examine the role of churches and the City of Culture initiative. They call for research on '"culture" and its role in the building of the good city' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.111). My research does this, adding the particularities of Hull, this geographically and socially marginalised, stunningly beautiful, ex-fishing port city, to the theological sphere.

However, it is vital that this research be able to influence theological study in its widest setting, not just within the fields of urban or contextual theology. I argue, with Bevans, that all theology is contextual theology (Bevans, 2002, p.4). Therefore, the theology, the knowledge of God, emerging from Hull in 2017 needs to be able to inform the wider sphere of systematic theology. For example, if a scholar was looking at reconciliation, they would learn more about its relevance by understanding how God was reconciling people to each other, people to their pasts, and indeed a whole city to the rest of the UK, in Hull in 2017. A scholar studying resurrection would discover how a city could be resurrected by building people's self-esteem, community and creativity. A scholar studying the nature of the Trinity could learn from my participant's unconscious understandings of God working through creation, redemption and reconciliation. There are, of course, limits to this research. This thesis is not and cannot be a full exploration of Trinitarian theology, liberation theology, or the power of God's reconciliation. It cannot encompass the breadth of philosophical or systematic theology in these areas, or explore them from the point of view of Biblical studies. However, I hope it is able to inform these areas, and speak to wider systematic theology. I cannot claim that this research tells us all about God's work in marginalised and deprived UK cities, or in UK liberation theology, or all about the power of resurrection and reconciliation. It can, however, add to our knowledge of these things. Contextual theology must not be a small sub-set of practical theology, but be allowed to inform and influence the whole theological field.

7.2 A vital methodology

If theology as a wider discipline is to embrace the study of the revelation of God in the present context, it must embrace methods which allow the generation of such theology. My research adds to the knowledge of who God is, how God was at work in Hull in 2017, and the theologies of culture held by the Christian leaders in Hull. This theology was only able to emerge due to the grounded theory method and visual research methods I used. In section 2.2.1 I discussed Stevens' criticism that the theological usage of grounded theory method has been 'exploratory and largely descriptive' (Stevens, 2017, p.204). He calls for qualitative research to 'do more than provide a "thick description"', and instead to go beyond being descriptive to being generative, in line with the original designs of grounded theory. I agree with Stevens that grounded theory can be used to create theological concepts and applied insights, and indeed, should be used to do so. Grounded theory, when applied to theology, allows the researcher to focus intently on how God might be at work in the context of study. It ensures that the researcher is prioritising their participants' experiences and the revelation of God in those experiences. It is a perfect match for a contextual theology which understands the context will reveal more of the knowledge of God if we can but listen and learn.

Similarly, I feel that the use of visual research methods was integral in the generation of the contextual theology emerging from my research. In section 2.3.2, I wondered whether my choice of photographs for the first photo elicitation interview were so implicit with my understandings of culture and of God that they might curtail my participants' discussions on culture and their theologies of culture. In practice, however, I found my participants used the photographs in varied ways, and in ways I was not intending. The use of images, both those provided by me and those taken by my participants, did indeed 'break the frame' of my references (Harper, 2002, p.21).

A good example of this is picture 9 from photo elicitation interview 1: the photograph of The Mission pub. Using an image of a pub in discussions about God proved surprisingly fruitful.

Image xxxv: Photo elicitation image 9 – The Mission Pub

Participant 7 (Anglican) used this picture to say that God wants people to have fun, and participant 13 (Danish Lutheran) thought that the pub used to be a church, and used the image to discuss the nature of church and community. He was from Denmark, and compared English communal pub culture with the Danish idea of hygge. Other participants focussed on the name of the pub: The Mission. Participant 17 (Pentecostal) said it reminded her of her church building because 'it has the stained-glass windows, same as ours. But even the word, The Mission, sort of made me think about our church. And our sort of, what would be our culture, I suppose, and our ethos'. Participant 18 (Roman Catholic) also talked about the name of the pub, and how it reminded him of the ecumenical work in Hull because the differing churches all had the 'same common faith, that same mission, and to come together but also evangelise others.' This one image generated discussion about God's desire for people to have fun, about the nature of church, community and socialising, and about mission, evangelism and ecumenism. The data it generated was rich and deep.

The photographs taken by my participants and discussed in the second interviews also broke my frames of reference. My participants' photographs revealed concepts I had not considered crucial to the relationship between faith and culture. One example was participant 9 (Anglican), who brought the concept of reconciliation to my attention. His church had held

services and events to mark the role of fishing in Hull's history as part of the City of Culture. He showed me a picture of the Bishop of Hull, the Rt Revd Alison White, and a plaque marking the 50th anniversary of the triple trawler disaster, which was blessed at the 2017 Sea Sunday service (image xxxvi).

Image xxxvi: Photograph of Bishop Alison and 50th anniversary plaque, taken by participant 9 (permission to use image given by subject)

Talking about the picture, he started talking about reconciliation between two previously antagonist fishing heritage groups, which he described as being 'a bit like the People's Front of Judea and the Judean's People Front' from Monty Python's *Life of Brian*. He felt his church, in its role as the 'Fishermen's church', allowed these groups to come together, and God to bring some reconciliation. Without my participant's photograph, I would not have understood that reconciliation was a crucial element for the churches in Hull, City of Culture 2017. This picture, I might have initially read as just a Bishop and a plaque, became a vehicle for breaking my frames of reference about God and culture in Hull 2017.

This visual research did indeed generate rich and deep data, and was ideally suited to research in contextual theology in a marginalised and deprived urban community. It allowed my participants to be the "experts" in our conversations, and enable them to speak fluently about abstract concepts such as culture. If theologians want to understand how people comprehend

God and their contexts, if they want to understand the revelation of God in the present day, they need to use approaches as sensitive and surprising as visual research methods.

7.3 Aims and objectives

I began my research with a sense that Hull, City of Culture 2017 would be a rich field of contextual theological research into the relationship between God and culture: I conclude it convinced that was the case. My aims were to discover the theologies of culture emerging from Hull in 2017, to understand the theologies of culture held by the Christian leaders of the culture, and to understand the revelation of God in Hull 2017. As discussed in section 1.4, I formulated four research questions to help focus my research and achieve my aims:

1. What are Hull Christian leaders' understandings of culture, and how and why do these change over the City of Culture year?
2. What are Hull Christian leaders' theological understandings of culture, and how do they change over 2017?
3. How do Hull Christian leaders' theologies of culture relate to their engagement with City of Culture 2017?
4. How do Hull Christian leaders' understandings of culture relate to their theologies of culture?

When asked about culture, my participants' first thoughts turned to aspects of "high" art and "high" culture. Their secondary thoughts were of culture as a lived experience, of popular culture, of culture as "other", and culture as transformative or improving. They felt Hull did not have high culture, and there was a sense that if Hull did not have high culture, it did not have any culture at all. After City of Culture had taken place, overall my participants indicated that 2017 had not changed their understandings of culture. Those who felt their thoughts had changed, said that they had widened to seeing culture as including different types of art. However, their responses suggested that their understandings of culture had indeed changed. There had been a shift to incorporating 'lower' or more popular forms of art in their concept of culture, and they felt the City of Culture experience democratised culture and allowed it to be enjoyed by people throughout the city of Hull. Most participants did not raise the idea of power in relation to the concept of culture. However, their understanding of culture as high culture shows an underlying sense that culture is a form of power. They felt that because Hull did not possess high culture, it lacked culture itself: the city was

marginalised, deprived and therefore powerless. I see this approach also reflected in the approach of the City of Culture bid: culture needs to be brought to Hull, to increase the city's social standing and cultural capital. This research on my participants' understandings of culture is original, and contributes to both theology and the fields of cultural studies and sociology of culture, where little research has been done on how non-scholars understand the concept of culture.

My participants' theological understandings of culture were initially somewhat abstract and tentative, coming from an intellectual position rather than lived experience. I saw the following theology of culture emerge from the first round of interviews: that God has given people culture and creativity and speaks to people through culture and creativity. Culture binds people together, creates community. God has also created people to be creative, and creativity is central to the idea of culture. Culture and creativity build up people's self-esteem so they might be able to hope for something else in life. God wants people to be together: not all the same, God likes these differences between people, but in unity, loving each other, respecting each other, and helping each other flourish. God wants people to flourish and to live life to the full. These theologies of culture did indeed change in 2017, as my participants saw God working in and through Hull's culture. They saw God working a cathartic resurrection in the city, reconciling Hull to its past, and Hull to the rest of the UK. They saw God working through this cathartic resurrection to build up self-esteem, joy, community and creativity in the city, to allow the people of Hull to flourish. My participants felt strongly that God was positive about human culture despite their denominational or geographical differences: indeed, I believe their responses were strongly similar to each other, and represent a significant sense of unity in the city's churches.

My participants expressed an unconsciously Trinitarian theology of culture of creation, redemption and reconciliation, of the communal God working to meet and change people in community, which mirrors the work of Tim Gorringe in *Discerning Spirit*, *A Theology of the Built Environment*, and *Furthering Humanity*. His description of culture as process, of folk culture, popular culture and high culture strongly resonated with my participants' responses. My participants saw God working in and through human culture to enable people to flourish, and live life in all its fullness: the very thesis of Gorringe in *Furthering Humanity*. My participants' engagement with City of Culture seemed to stem from the theologies of culture described in my first interviews, not the theologies of culture seen in my second interviews.

The themes of resurrection, reconciliation, redemption, rebirth, seem not to have been explicitly explored, or built into the events described above, but instead emerged during 2017. This is entirely in keeping with the concept of contextual theology: these theologies have emerged from the context of City of Culture.

In order to answer how my participants' understandings of culture relate to their theologies of culture, I turned to the concept of power. When thinking about culture in the abstract, my participants tended to see it as a form of power, rather than a site of power relations. My participants were very aware of what Gorringe refers to as cultural power: imbalances of race, class, and to a lesser extent, gender. Some participants became more aware of sexual equality in 2017, and this should be added to Gorringe's descriptions of cultural power. Despite their concern for 'parity of esteem' and 'flourishing together', most participants did not discuss the elements of power, hegemony or ideology which are crucial to Gorringe's thesis. However, when my participants expressed their theologies of culture and descriptions of City of Culture 2017, they described culture as a site where God's power was expressed. I argue that this is where a fresh theological vocabulary needs to be introduced: the understanding of the Spirit acting in power through human culture. My participants need to understand the power dynamics inherent in the concept of culture, and an exploration of these two approaches (taking into account the transformative power of the Spirit of God) may help them.

7.4 Impact and outcomes

As well as adding to the theological academy, I believe my research has impact and outcomes for the churches in Hull, and the wider church. In section 3.2.2 I described how my participants had not received any teaching about culture, either as part of their ministerial training or in secular education. They sometimes struggled to articulate what they understood by culture: they needed the photo elicitation process to prompt thoughts about culture and be able to describe it. They sometimes lacked the language to describe culture. In chapter 4, I discussed how my participants' theologies of culture changed over 2017. Before City of Culture, their descriptions of the relationship between God and culture were somewhat abstract and tentative, coming from an intellectual position rather than lived experience. It was only during 2017 that my participants were able to see God working in and through Hull's culture, and they became much more articulate in the second interview.

I argue that my research shows a gap in traditional ministerial education, and that clergy need to be able to articulate what culture is, and how God relates to the concept of culture. This lack in understanding of what culture is, and how God might relate to culture meant that my participants struggled to challenge negative elements of the City of Culture initiative: they were left making bricks without straw. Graham and Lowe call for churches to challenge the model of urban regeneration inherent in the City of Culture project, and to champion the 'experiences and aspirations of ordinary people' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.111). They challenge urban churches to hold in balance the roles of 'celebrating the best of culture as pointing towards human self-transcendence and to the divine origin of all beauty', and the role of 'social justice and a preferential option for the poor' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.112-3). They call for churches to engage critically and constructively with Cities of Culture initiatives. They encourage churches to 'nurture effective discipleship… to foster individuals' pride in their own stories and experiences as worthy of inclusion in a wider narrative of identity and aspiration'; to strengthen common bonds and social capital; to 'build up congregations to contribute actively to a cultural renaissance, by hosting cultural events or fostering the collective memory of a neighbourhood'; to enable communities 'to articulate questions about what makes a good city'; to 'speak to the wider population of the things that make us human: to celebrate our own creativity but to be wary of versions of culture that are ideological, exploitative or unsustainable' (Graham and Lowe, 2009, p.113-14). These tensions were the ones I recognised in the very early days of work with the Believe in Hull group, and were mirrored in the churches across Hull. I believe my participants wanted, or did indeed try to do these things, but that they had not been equipped to do so. They lacked an understanding of culture, both in secular or theological terms, which led to a lack of confidence in challenging the City of Culture initiative and sharing a theology of human flourishing.

I believe that clergy training also needs to explicitly encompass inculturation and contextual and liberation theologies, because I see these theologies as already being unknowingly expressed in the context of Hull. I argue that, in line with Schreiter, over the period of 2017 my participants' theologies became not just local, but deeply contextual. My participants' theologies were, per Schreiter, more than ethnographical: they were gently liberative. Most did not take the classically Marxist line of liberation theology, critiquing structures of power, which leads me to think that a more theological, less political line of thought about power and

flourishing might speak more to Hull's situation. Despite not using the language of inculturation, my participants are starting to engage in inculturation. As described by Arbuckle, my participants certainly engaged with Hull's cultures, and were changed by God through that engagement. Using Schreiter, I argue that if my participants wanted to engage with inculturation in Hull, there would be a case to strongly identify with the city's culture for cultural reconstruction, and a case to strongly identify with faith because the city faces challenges it does not have the resources to meet. Just as City of Culture raised Hull's aspirations as a city, it has also raised my participants' eyes above the horizon to see what is possible in Hull. My participants have begun to articulate a fresh theological vocabulary for Hull: a theology of a God in love with Hull and its culture, a God who changes all parties in the city – Christian and non-Christian – and brings them joy, builds their self-esteem, and helps them flourish.

I want to be able to hold a mirror up to my participants and the churches of Hull and show them the deep and rich theologies which emerged from Hull in 2017, and how God was working in the city. I believe many of my participants and their wider church communities would not be able to articulate these theologies on their own: it is through the process of my research that they have coalesced and come to light. I recognise that urban ministry is fast paced, full of the needs and demands of congregations and communities, and that life moves on quickly. I fear there is a risk that my participants will move on from City of Culture, and that its stories and emerging theologies may be lost. I want to show my participants how they engaged, with God, in this wonderful year, and how they themselves were changed by it. I want them to hear from the outliers in the group, such as participants 10 and 20, and be challenged by their call that City of Culture did not do enough for the poorest and most isolated in the city. I want to show my participants that they are missionaries, joining in with the *Missio Dei* in Hull. I want to show them that they have more in common with each other than they might recognise: that their denominational differences count for little, and that they share a deep love for their city. I want them to see that they share much in common with missional theologians such as Gorringe, Bevans, Sanneh, Schreiter, Kim and Shorter, who see culture as hugely positive, and that God's love is expressed in and through the culture of different locales.

7.5 A fresh theological vocabulary about God and culture

In order to do the above, I argue that a new theological vocabulary needs to be articulated. Such a vocabulary would have impact not just for Hull: what is happening in Hull may well resonate with other marginalised and deprived UK cities. So, what could this new theological vocabulary look like?

I believe that this vocabulary should start with the Trinitarian nature of God. When understanding the relationship between God and culture, we need to understand God as community. The Trinitarian God is community, and reveals God's self to us in community. We only encounter God in community, and in encounter with the "other". We see this in the City of Culture, when Hull was brought into contact with the rest of the country, and dispersed and hurt communities were brought together. It was in this coming together as a community that Hull could rediscover itself, be renewed, and gain self-confidence and self-esteem. In this expression of community, the communal, Trinitarian God brought healing and rebirth to Hull. This vocabulary also needs to be deeply pneumatological. I believe that the Lutheran approach to the Holy Spirit expressed by participant 13, the Danish Lutheran minister, could lead the way here. When we spoke about the Holy Spirit, participant 13 remarked that churches in England did not focus on the Holy Spirit as much as churches in Denmark. He saw the Holy Spirit as being the spark of life and creativity. Talking about Adam and Eve and creativity, participant 13 said God 'inspired his spirit into their lives, into their nose… That's inspiring. That's what you don't celebrate over here, we do a bit more in Denmark, Whitsun…. The Whitsun happening in Jerusalem, is a big demonstration of God's inspiration. This could be something like the temple in a square in Jerusalem'. He saw creation and Pentecost as the cornerstones of God's creativity and power: in my research, I saw how Hull was a similar locale of creativity and power in the Holy Spirit.

This theological vocabulary would also need to encompass the eschaton as a movement of promise. My participants were explicit about the direction and goal they hoped for in Hull: they described a vision of a city where people were living life in all its fullness, full of self-esteem and joy, reconciled to Hull's past and the rest of the country, full of community, difference in unity, and creativity. I see this strongly echoing Gorringe's argument that the destiny of culture goes from bondage to freedom: in Hull, my participants saw City of Culture helping Hull go from the bondage of the past to a joyful and fulfilled future. I believe my participants would benefit from realising the eschatological implication of these hopes, and seeing themselves as

working together with the Spirit, in freedom and cooperation and the power of God, to help bring about the Kingdom of God in Hull.

I argue that this theological vocabulary also needs a fresh hermeneutic horizon: the socio-critical approach recommended by Thiselton which enables people to challenge the ways that the Bible has been used to prevent all people from flourishing, and with an approach that is appropriate for a post-industrial, newly diverse, deprived Western city. The socio-critical hermeneutics of Latin America or Black theology are unlikely to fit the context of Hull. This is where Gorringe's idea of a hermeneutical spiral could be of use. If, as with a spiral of praxis, church leaders could begin with their own experience (which my research shows to be already deeply contextual), explore the social analysis of their context (which they already understand very well), and then allow this to come into dialogue with how they read the Bible, their future experience and practice might be changed. Inspiration here could come from postcolonial theologies: Michael Jaggesar uses the Afro-Caribbean trickster figure of Anansi to interrogate Biblical texts and traditions, to subvert them and rebuild them through modern Black British experiences (Jagessar, 2007). What might the Bible look like when read through the eyes of Lil Bilocca, children on the Longhill estate, or participant 10's woman in the shop crying because she did not have enough money to buy bread and milk?

Finally, this fresh theological vocabulary, from Hull and for Hull, should speak about the relationship between God, culture and power. Without the aspect of power, culture cannot fully be understood, both from a secular and theological perspective. The Marxism of liberation theology and Gorringe is simply not being expressed in Hull: instead, what comes through is a sense of the deep and gentle power of God's transformation in the city, the Spirit of God acting in power through human culture. It is a power that leads not to destruction, but through community to create, redeem and restore, and that leads to flourishing for all people. This is the sense of power expressed by Arendt 'an end in itself' (Arendt, 1970, p.51), and Lukes (after Spinoza) as *potentia* rather than potestas: the power of things in nature, including humans, to exist and act, rather than being in the power of another (Lukes, 2004, p.73). The power of the Holy Spirit is *potentia* rather than *potestas*. The Spirit does not act in violence or coercion, but in reconciliation, resurrection, creativity and community, to enable people to flourish. It is this power which was seen in Hull in 2017, acting in and through the City of Culture. It is this power which my participants saw at work, and which could enable them to understand culture not as a form of power in its own right, but as a site of power

relations. Culture can then become a place where human flourishing is worked out, and where the power, the *potentia* of the Holy Spirit can enable people to become truly human.

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Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Religion and culture: exploring the factors in Hull churches' engagement with the City of Culture 2017.

You are being invited to take part in two semi-structured interview as part of a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the study?
The researcher is investigating the factors in Hull churches' engagement with the City of Culture 2017. The study aims to discover how the histories, identities, and understandings of culture determine how different churches engage with 2017. A written report will be produced at the end of the project, which will form the researcher's PhD thesis. This thesis may be used in talks and journals after publishing.

Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen because you are a member of a church who is interested in Hull's place as the UK's City of Culture in 2017.

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part in the semi-structured interviews?
If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent form. This will give your consent for a researcher from the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Leeds Trinity conduct a one-to-one interview at the end of 2016. A second interview will be arranged for the end of 2017 or beginning of 2018.

At the first interview, you will be asked to look at different pictures representing aspects of church identity and culture, and talk about your thoughts and experiences of church and culture. The interview is called semi-structured because the researcher will ask you some set questions, but the interview does not to stick rigidly to those questions – it may feel more like a conversation than a formal interview. You will have the opportunity to raise and discuss your views and experiences relating to the topic above.

The researcher will invite you to take photographs in 2017, which might reflect your thoughts about God and culture in Hull in 2017. The second interview will involve discussing these images, in the same way as the first interview. If you are unable to take photographs in 2017, the second interview will involve looking at pictures the researcher has provided.

The interviews will last for no more than 90 minutes, and will be audio taped.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
There are no disadvantages or risks foreseen in taking part in the study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
As a member of a church who is interested in Hull's place as the UK's City of Culture in 2017 it is possible that you may welcome the opportunity to share and discuss your views and experiences with the researcher. It is hoped the research will benefit churches of different denominations in their understandings of religion and culture, and benefit churches in cities which will be City of Culture in the future.

What if something goes wrong?
If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please contact:

Professor Graham Roberts
Postgraduate Research Tutor
Leeds Trinity University
Horsforth
Leeds
LS18 5HD
0113 283 7100
g.roberts@leedstrinity.ac.uk

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?
All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential so that only the researcher carrying out the research will have access to such information.

If you hold public office (for example as the minister of a church) it may be necessary to identify your role in the research. If this is the case, you will be shown the excerpts of the interview the researcher plans to use, and you will have the power of veto over the use of this information.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
The results will be written up into the researcher's PhD thesis. It will be printed and made available online, and the researcher may use its material in future for future talks and publications. It is hoped that the findings will be of use to churches of different denominations in their understandings of religion and culture, and benefit churches in cities which will be City of Culture in the future. The data from the interviews (anonymised where possible) will be made available to other researchers via an online source.

Who is organising and funding the research?
The research is funded by Leeds Trinity University. The Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Leeds Trinity University will be involved in organising and carrying out the study.

Who may I contact for further information?
If you would like more information about the research before you decide whether or not you would be willing to take part, please contact:
Eleanor Course
Leeds Trinity University
Horsforth
Leeds
LS18 5HD

1508197@leedstrinity.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest in this research.

Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Title of Project: PhD Thesis for Leeds Trinity University - Religion and culture: exploring the factors in Hull churches' engagement with the City of Culture 2017.

Name of Researcher: Eleanor Course

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet, dated ……., for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without my care or legal rights being affected. ☐

3. I confirm that any photograph I take in 2017 and sent to or developed by the researcher, can be used in the researcher's thesis, in further publication, and in exhibitions. I will retain the copyright of the image. ☐

4. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix 3: Descriptions of photographs used in photo-elicitation interview 1

Picture no.	Subject	Location picture taken	Date taken
1	Humber Bridge and telescope	Hessle foreshore	18/08/16
2	White telephone box	Cottingham Road	18/08/16
3	Hull Community Church	Newland Avenue	18/08/16
4	Trinity Methodist Church	Newland Avenue	18/08/16
5	Street art on telephone exchange box	Ventnor Street	18/08/16
6	Flowering plants behind fence	Ventnor Street	18/08/16
7	Flowering plant	Ventnor Street	18/08/16
8	Spurn Lightship	Humber Dock Marina	18/08/16
9	The Mission Pub	Posterngate	18/08/16
10	Street art on building	Posterngate	18/08/16
11	Holy Trinity Church	Church Side	18/08/16
12	Roadworks and people on Whitefriargate	Whitefriargate	18/08/16
13	Ferens Art Gallery	Queen Victoria Square	18/08/16
14	Duke of Edinburgh pub	Great Union Street	18/08/16
15	Statue of Philip Larkin (with flowers left on his spectacles)	Hull Station	18/08/16
16	Hull Truck Theatre	Ferensway	18/08/16
17	The Albermarle Music Centre	Ferensway	18/08/16
18	Orchard Park shops	Orchard Park	18/08/16
19	Padstow House	Bransholme Estate	18/08/16
20	Roebank Shopping Arcade	Padstowe Close	18/08/16
21	KCOM Stadium	West Park	Unknown
22	Fibre-glass Larkin toad sculpture	Chapel Lane Staith	16/09/16
23	Arctic Corsair sign	River Hull	16/09/16

24	Fish sculpture	By River Hull	16/09/16
25	Scale Lane bridge and Myton Bridge tidal barrier	Scale Lane	16/09/16
26	Hull Mosque	Berkeley Street	Unknown
27	Crowd at Hull Freedom Festival		Sept 2010 (Sourced from https://www.flickr.com/photos/hullcitycouncil)
28	Crowd at Homecoming welcome for Olympic Medallist Luke Campbell and finalist Hammer thrower Alex Smith	Queen Victoria Square	14/08/12 (Sourced from https://www.flickr.com/photos/hullcitycouncil)
29	Band at Hull Freedom Festival	Unknown	Sept 2010 (Sourced from https://www.flickr.com/photos/hullcitycouncil)

Appendix 4: Focussed codes emerging from interviews 1

Participant no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Denomination	**URC**	**Baptist**	**Anglican**	**Methodist**	**Anglican**	**Roman Catholic**	**Anglican**	**Anglican**	**Anglican**	**Quaker**	**Independent**	**Independent**	**Lutheran**	**Anglican**	**Pentecostal**	**Anglican**	**Pentecostal**	**Roman Catholic**	**Roman Catholic**	**Independent**
Focussed Coding Category																				
Believe in Hull	X	X	X	X					X							X	X	X	X	X
Memory				X																
Tension/ grief at change				X										X		X	X			
Baggage of the established church								X												
Safety and habit								X								X				
Church focussed on culture								X												
Church independence						X														
Church retreating from community/ context	X			X			X		X											
Church needing to respond to contemporary culture	X										X					X				X
Church giving culture to the world		X		X	X															
Church decline		X		X						X				X					X	
Focussing on local community			X						X		X	X			X	X	X			
Church distanced							X			X										

from Hull culture																			
Indigenous church							X												
Church going into culture												X							
Church buildings					X											X			
Church and socialising					X								X						
Reformed church		X	X																
Being an outsider	X									X							X		
Church full of old people	X									X								X	
Church struggling to connect with people											X				X				X
Getting out of the church								X							X	X			
Multicultural church		X	X													X		X	
Church in transformation	X	X	X	X	X			X			X	X		X		X			
City of Culture			X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Focus on the city centre										X	X								
Cost and accessibility of culture					X			X				X							
God granting the 2017 bid															X				
Class				X		X		X				X							X
Church and class		X					X			X									X
Creativity					X		X				X					X			X
Difference and unity											X	X			X		X	X	
Fishing industry		X	X	X			X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Blitz, war		X					X	X	X										
Role of Women									X			X		X					

Pain in forced change, shared loss				X					X					X						
Memory				X					X											
Flourishing				X					X	X								X		
God speaking through, or at work in culture	X								X		X			X		X	X			
God in culture		X		X	X				X							X				
We cannot know what God thinks about culture						X													X	
Holy Spirit	X										X					X		X		
Culture a gift from God		X	X				X													
God rejoicing in culture			X					X												X
God feeling joy and sadness about culture										X		X								
Excluding God from culture			X													X		X		
Gospel rooted in culture				X																X
Exodus 31		X																		X
Kingdom culture																X				
Joy and celebration					X		X					X				X	X		X	
Hospitality					X							X							X	
Freedom and redemption					X										X					
Culture needing to be redeemed												X								X
Culture helping					X	X			X										X	

people grow in faith																			
Evangelism and mission											X					X	X		X
Culture lifting people's spirits																		X	X
Church is a link between God and culture																			X
Faith and art about the meaning of life																			X
No link between faith and culture																		X	
God about stories								X											
God as creator			X		X		X		X		X	X					X	X	X	X
Good and bad culture	X	X		X						X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Hull not vibrant	X						X					X								X
Hull introverted, feeling negative about itself			X				X	X								X				
Literacy		X	X																	X
Politics									X											
Hull cynical, apathetic, suspicious, isolating itself, lack of aspiration											X	X		X	X	X		X		X
Hull unengaged with the arts							X						X							
Hull deprived							X		X				X		X	X		X	X	X

Bad reputation of Hull							X	X				X	X				X	X		
Future, potential							X	X	X		X				X	X				
Hull becoming more creative												X	X							
Estate culture								X						X		X				X
Wind turbine						X									X	X			X	
Hull as underdog								X												X
Jesus loving places with bad reputations												X								
Hull in transformation	X		X					X			X	X	X		X	X		X		X
Hull unique											X									X
Slavery				X														X		
Hull proud, independent, rebellious						X		X			X					X		X		
Low church attendance							X													X
Hull's military roots																				X
Hull's geography		X			X	X	X	X			X	X				X		X		X
International community, multi-culturalism			X								X	X			X	X		X		
Lived experience		X	X		X		X	X	X	X			X							
Made up of subcultures, multi-faceted, difference		X			X			X			X	X	X	X	X					

High culture vs low culture		X			X								X	X						
Art and culture		X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X		X			X	X	X	X
Culture as local			X	X			X								X	X				X
Culture as history																	X			
Culture always changing			X													X				
Network of stories				X				X	X											
Culture a cluster of values				X							X						X			X
Celebration				X				X												
Identity								X			X									
Culture as everything									X							X				
Communication											X			X			X			
Comedy												X								
Play, joy, happiness											X		X					X		
Food					X							X				X	X			
Culture giving purpose					X							X				X	X			
Mass culture, capitalism										X									X	
Sport				X		X	X		X			X	X	X				X	X	X
Creativity		X		X							X	X					X		X	
Beer and pubs									X				X			X				X
Connecting people, community	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X					X		
God wanting community		X							X		X	X			X					
When two of three people are gathered together																		X		
Incarnation				X																X

West Hull vs East Hull									X						X	X	X			
Wonder											X									
2017 as a thin time							X													
Believe in Hull	X	X	X	X					X							X	X	X	X	X
Memory				X																
Tension/ grief at change				X										X		X	X			

Appendix 5: Memo themes emerging from interview 1

Memos	***Focussed coding categories included in memo***
City of Culture	2017 has potential for transformation
	2017 bringing excitement
	2017 has potential to transform both Hull's economy and identity
	2017 could transform its bad reputation
	2017 gift from God
	2017 giving sense of unity
	2017 causing cynicism and fear
	2017 coming from Hull people, or being done to Hull
	telling their own story in 2017
	City of Culture team for not being open
	City of Culture team were not working with churches
	churches that were working more closely with the City of Culture team
	access to culture in 2017
	access events in 2017 due to the cost
	wanted more to be happening on the estates in 2017
	events would be happening in the city centre in 2017
Nature of culture	culture was synonymous with art
	culture as a lived experience
	culture as a lived experience focused on a specific locality
	culture as a cluster of values
	culture as giving purpose to life
	'high' or 'low' culture
	sport
	pubs and beer
	creativity
	culture about celebration, play, joy, or happiness
	culture as a communal concept

Good and bad culture	good and bad culture
	good culture helps people flourish
	good culture helps people live in community with others
	bad culture belittles people
	bad culture creates division in community.
	bad culture includes offensive behaviour, drugs, alcohol, swearing and sex
God and culture	God is creator of all things
	culture as a gift from God
	God is in culture
	God speaking through culture
	God as being excluded from culture
	God might find joy and sadness in culture
	God felt positively about culture
	God rejoices in culture.
	culture needs redeeming
	people cannot know what God thinks about culture
	Holy Spirit
	Incarnation
	Gospel being rooted in culture
	church as a link between God and culture
	hospitality
	mission and evangelism
	God is already in the community
	God wants people to be in community
	difference and unity
	Hull becoming more multicultural
Creativity and flourishing	people created in God's image
	people are creative whether they knew that gift was from God or not
	creativity was a gift from God so that people would come to know God
	Exodus 31
	creativity as building and sustaining community
	difference and unity
	creativity builds up people's confidence and self-worth
	lifting the needy and seating them with princes
	God wants people to flourish and live life to the full
	creativity enables play and fun
Transformation	culture as something that needed to be transformed by God
	church as having to be embedded in a community or culture in order to transform it
	transformation was the central business of the church, and shown in Jesus' resurrection
	linking Hull's transformation with the Resurrection
	culture itself as transformational
	churches were in a period of transformation
	declining church numbers

	culture of the church has stagnated and was not keeping track with contemporary culture
	churches wanting more people to come to church
	churches doing new cultural activities
	culture is transformational
	God speaks through culture.
	Hull in transformation
	City of Culture would bring transformation to Hull
	God allowing Hull to win the City of Culture bid
	Hull's growing multi-culturalism
	Hull was no longer a deprived city
Hull	Hull unengaged with the arts, not vibrant
	Hull is deprived
	Hull not literate
	Hull becoming a more creative place
	potential for Hull
	growth of the wind turbine construction plants.
	class
	unique place with a strong identity
	Hull people are consciously different
	Hull people independent
	independence linked with Hull's roots in the Civil War
	Hull's origins as a military city
	church-going was not in Hull's DNA
	Hull feeling negative about itself, introverted, isolating itself, suspicious, cynical, apathetic, lack of aspiration
	economic and social struggles
	other people's negative feelings about Hull, or its forgottenness, as creating these negative thoughts
	geographical isolation as contributing to this isolation, suspicion and cynicism:
	cynicism and suspicion contributing to the lack of church attendance
	Hull's bad reputation
	Hull's bad reputation replicated in the media
	Hull as an underdog
	Jesus loves places with bad reputations
Fishing, Grief and Memory	fishing industry
	loss
	shared grief
	dispersal of the fishing community to new estates
	continuity of community in the face of dispersal
	culture of the estates
	self-contained, and isolated
	estates parochial
	drawing in of horizons
	indifference
	Blitz
	Dislocation
	undermined
	story that had not been heard

	memory
	churches as custodians of memory
	the role the church could have in allow people to share their stories
	folk memory of going to church among a younger generation
	continuity of community has led to a stronger link to the church
Hull's geography	isolation
	flatness
	isolation leading to a lack of cultural influences from outside Hull
	suspicion and cynicism
	people did not leave Hull, or come into Hull from outside
	taking people out of Hull, and bringing them back
	receive culture from other places, see Hull is not too different from other places, and have more pride in their home.
	geographical flatness linked with an emotional or spiritual flatness
	narrowing of horizons
	people in Hull tend to look down
	link between looking up in the city and looking up to God
	flatness linked to a lack of change or possibility
	engagement with the arts would change that lack of possibility and narrow horizons
	open up the possibility of God
	thin time
	wonder allowing people to connect to God
	wonder could be generated by creativity and engagement with the arts

Appendix 6: Focussed codes emerging from interview 2

Participant no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Denomination	**URC**	**Baptist**	**Anglican**	**Methodist**	**Anglican**	**Roman Catholic**	**Anglican**	**Anglican**	**Anglican**	**Quaker**	**Independent**	**Independent**	**Lutheran**	**Anglican**	**Pentecostal**	**Anglican**	**Pentecostal**	**Roman Catholic**	**Roman Catholic**	**Independent**
Focussed Coding Category																				
Blade			X	X	X			X			X	X			X			X	X	
Poppies and daffodils																	X			
Made in Hull		X			X			X			X	X			X	X	X		X	
Sea of Hull											X	X								
Turner art prize			X	X														X		
Calvinism x 2													X							X
Changing understanding of culture within evangelicalism												X								
Christianity and power																				X
Conservatism and culture											X									
Puritanism and art		X																		
Culture shared by osmosis		X																		
Learning about God and culture										X										X
Not taught about culture at theological college x 6		X						X								X	X		X	X
Understanding of culture changing x 3			X		X				X			X			X					

Understanding of culture widened			X									X								
Understanding of God and culture not changing		X		X				X		X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X
View of art and the world changing			X	X																
Pride x 5				X	X			X			X							X		
Culture and the other																X	X		X	
Race x 6		X			X					X		X			X		X		X	
Being called to Hull		X																		
Capitalism										X										
Celebrity culture										X										
Class x 6		X	X					X		X						X	X			X
Class/ culture gap/ 'normality'/ estate life			X																	
CoC for the few, not the many																	X			
CoC in estates										X										
CoC not enabling change										X										
Education																				X
Estates insular			X																	
Estates not 'cultural' or arty			X																	
Gap between high and low culture narrowing													X							
Insider/outsider												X					X			
Marginalised people also distant from arts and culture					X															
People controlled																				X

by their culture																				
Poverty																X				
Social justice x 2		X																		X
Culture as an expression of human civilisations		X																		
Culture as arts, high culture		X		X					X							X	X		X	X
Culture as community and shared activity		X		X											X	X				
Culture as everyday life		X		X						X						X				X
Culture as everything									X											
Culture as part of church culture		X			X															
Culture as soulless										X										
Culture as values				X						X										
Culture being oppressive										X										
Culture facilitating people's engagement with God				X																
Culture in Hull			X														X			
Culture local			X														X			
Culture making people think beyond themselves													X							
Culture structural										X			X							
Culture way of expressing identity and community									X											

Nature and man-made structures																		X	
Nature x 2														X				X	
Needing space and time to enjoy culture					X														
Culture and the other															X	X		X	
Church big enough to bring people together									X										
CoC crazy												X							
Cultural events facilitating community				X															
Effects of CoC x 13		X	X	X	X			X	X			X	X		X	X		X	X	X
Empowering others			X																
Free gifts x 3					X												X	X	
Importance of food				X															
Importance of shared activities x 7		X	X	X	X				X					X			X		
More people engaged with culture													X						
National recognition of Hull – reconciliation																	X		
National recognition of Hull x 3																	X	X	
Positivity about church events				X															
Publicity/ media																	X		
Reconciliation									X										
Redemption															X				

Resurrection x 3								X	X									X	
Scale of event				X															
Shared loss x 3									X			X					X		
Talking to strangers												X						X	
Transformation				X															
Volunteers				X	X				X			X			X	X		X	X	
CoC city centric		X	X	X	X			X			X					X	X	X		X
CoC in estates										X										
CoC for the few, not the many																	X			
CoC in estates										X										
CoC not enabling change										X										
Gap between high and low culture narrowing													X							
Insider/outsider												X					X			
Marginalised people also distant from arts and culture					X															
Being outside of church x 6		X		X	X				X							X				
Believe in Hull x 2				X						X								X	X	
Church doing nothing for CoC										X										
Churches and CoC team x 3					X										X			X		
Churches challenged by CoC/ Challenging the church				X																
Churches engaging more																	X			

people than CoC?																				
Churches missing opportunities x 2								X	X											
Churches working together x 2			X	X																
Difficulty accessing CoC events			X								X									X
Engaging with art x 2				X																
Engaging with CoC				X																
Environmental activism										X										
Focussing on church plans																				X
Getting involved with BiH events											X									
Heritage Open Days x 2												X							X	
Holding events despite CoC x 8		X						X	X		X	X	X			X	X			X
Holding events despite CoC; Other anniversaries in 2017		X											X							X
Holding events x 10		X	X		X				X		X	X	X		X	X	X			
Hosting events x 5		X			X				X			X	X						X	
Hosting visitors x 3									X				X						X	
Not engaging with CoC x 2															X					X
Not holding events																			X	
Not involved with CoC x 2																			X	X

Not putting on extra events												X							
Not wanting to compete with CoC																			X
Opening church, Opening the building up more												X				X				
Outreach and evangelism			X													X			
Piggybacking on CoC																	X		
Publicising CoC events																			X
Reordering church x 5					X				X			X					X	X	
Seeing separation of church and non-church in CoC			X																
Using CoC to raise profile of church and God		X																	
Wanting people to come to church x 4			X		X				X			X							
Wanting people to come to faith			X																
Beauty x 2										X								X	
Celebrating creativity					X														
Celebrating God's presence									X										
Challenging contemporary culture		X																	
Church distanced from context																			X
Churches positive				X															

about Hull's culture																				
CoC had spiritual dimension where the church was																X				
Creativity and community					X															
Creativity and life, action													X							
Creativity and the Holy Spirit													X							
Creativity x 9		X	X					X					X		X		X		X	
Culture facilitating people's engagement with God				X																
Evangelism			X														X				
God and CoC																		X			
God as the drive towards the qualities that make people more human										X										
God at work in people's lives			X																	
God communicating on communal or individual level																X				
God created humans, humans created culture		X																		
God focussing on people																		X		
God glad people																		X		

enjoying themselves																			
God in CoC x 2					X			X											
God in context x 4															X	X	X		X
God in culture									X										
God in culture and context					X														X
God inspires culture												X							
God intervening in the world																			X
God is culture												X							
God loving the craziness											X								
God not caring about events and art																X			
God pleased with Hull														X					
God speaking through CoC															X				
God transformin g culture															X				
God wanting people to be drawn to God																X			
God with us in prayer														X					
God's culture																			X
Good and bad culture x 6		X			X					X		X			X				X
Gospel as classless, timeless															X				
Holy Spirit working through people who					X														

are not Christians																				
Holy Spirit x 3									X				X			X				
Hoping people saw God in CoC			X																	
Inculturation x 2																			X	X
Jesus				X																
Man-made structure																			X	
Nature of God															X					
Seeing God in church events			X																	
Seeing God in cultural events				X																
Seeing God in history and present									X											
Seeing God in people coming together				X																
Seeing God in people's stories									X											
Serendipity in church					X															
Spiritual dimension to CoC															X					
Blade			X	X	X			X			X	X			X			X	X	

Appendix 7: Memo themes emerging from interview 2

Memos	***Focussed coding categories included***
Calvinism and power	Calvinism x 2
	Challenging church culture x 2
	Changing understanding of culture within evangelicalism
	Christianity and power
	Conservatism and culture
	Puritanism and art
Change in understanding of culture, learning about culture	Learning about God and culture
	Not sure if understanding of God and culture has changed
	Not taught about culture at theological college x 6
	Reading about culture
	Thinking about culture
	Understanding of culture changing x 3
	Understanding of culture widened
	Understanding of God and culture not changing x 3
	View of art and the world changing
	Pride x 5
	Culture as an expression of human civilisations
	Culture as arts, high culture
	Culture as community and shared activity
	Culture as part of church culture
	Culture as soulless
	Culture being oppressive
	Culture facilitating people's engagement with God
	Culture in Hull
	Culture making people think beyond themselves
	Culture shared by osmosis
	Culture way of expressing identity and community
	Nature and man-made structures
	Nature of culture x 12
	Nature x 2
	Needing space and time to enjoy culture
	Culture and the other
	Globalism
	Hull becoming inclusive
	Race and globalism
	Race x 6

	Race; Globalism
	Teaching on culture in relation to the 'other'
Effects of CoC	Church big enough to bring people together
	CoC crazy
	CoC Volunteers
	Conversations with strangers
	Cultural events facilitating community
	Effects of CoC x 13
	Empowering others
	Free gifts x 3
	Importance of community
	Importance of food
	Importance of shared activities x 7
	More people engaged with culture
	National recognition of Hull – reconciliation
	National recognition of Hull x 3
	Positivity about church events
	Publicity/ media
	Reconciliation
	Redemption
	Regeneration
	Resurrection x 3
	Scale of event
	Shared loss x 3
	Talking to strangers
	Transformation
	Volunteering
	Volunteers x 6
	Capitalism
	Celebrity culture
	CoC events based
	CoC for the few, not the many
	CoC in estates
	CoC not enabling change
	Education
	Estates insular
	Estates not ‘cultural’ or arty
	Gap between high and low culture narrowing
	Insider/outsider
	Marginalised people also distant from arts and culture
Engagement with CoC	Attending events
	Being outside of church x 6
	Believe in Hull x 2
	Church doing nothing for CoC
	Churches and CoC team x 3
	Churches challenged by CoC/ Challenging the church

	Churches engaging more people than CoC?
	Churches missing opportunities x 2
	Churches working together x 2
	Difficulty accessing CoC events
	Engaging with art x 2
	Engaging with CoC
	Environmental activism
	Focussing on church plans
	Getting involved with BiH events
	Going to events
	Heritage
	Heritage Open Days x 2
	Holding CoC events x 2
	Holding events despite CoC x 8
	Holding events despite CoC; Other anniversaries in 2017
	Holding events x 7
	Hosting CoC events
	Hosting events x 5
	Hosting visitors x 3
	Not engaging with CoC x 2
	Not enjoying arts, but understanding why others would
	Not holding events
	Not involved with CoC x 2
	Not putting on extra events
	Not wanting to compete with CoC
	Opening church
	Opening the building up more
	Other anniversaries x 2
	Outreach and evangelism
	People engaging/not engaging with CoC
	People visiting the church
	Piggybacking on CoC
	Publicising CoC events
	Reordering church x 5
	Seeing separation of church and non-church in CoC
	Sustainability of events
	Using CoC to raise profile of church and God
	Visiting events x 3
	Wanting people to come to church x 4
	Wanting people to come to faith
	Blade
	Poppies and daffodils
	Made in Hull
	Sea of Hull
	Turner art prize
God and culture	Beauty x 2

	Celebrating creativity
	Celebrating God's presence
	Challenging contemporary culture
	Church distanced from context
	Churches positive about Hull's culture
	CoC had spiritual dimension where the church was
	Creativity and community
	Creativity and life, action
	Creativity and the Holy Spirit
	Creativity x 9
	Culture facilitating people's engagement with God
	Evangelism
	God and CoC
	God as the drive towards the qualities that make people more human
	God at work in people's lives
	God communicating on communal or individual level
	God created humans, humans created culture
	God focussing on people
	God glad people enjoying themselves
	God in CoC x 2
	God in context x 4
	God in culture
	God in culture and context
	God inspires culture
	God intervening in the world
	God is culture
	God loving the craziness
	God not caring about events and art
	God pleased with Hull
	God speaking through CoC
	God speaking to church
	God transforming culture
	God wanting people to be drawn to God
	God with us in prayer
	God's culture
	Good and bad culture x 6
	Gospel as classless, timeless
	Holy Spirit working through people who are not Christians
	Holy Spirit x 3
	Hoping people saw God in CoC
	Inculturation x 2
	Jesus
	Man-made structure
	Nature of God
	Seeing God in church events

	Seeing God in cultural events
	Seeing God in history and present
	Seeing God in people coming together
	Seeing God in people's stories
	Serendipity in church
	Spiritual dimension to CoC

Appendix 8: Pictures chosen by participants to describe culture in interview 1

	Participant no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Denomination	**URC**	**Baptist**	**Anglican**	**Methodist**	**Anglican**	**Roman Catholic**	**Anglican**	**Anglican**	**Anglican**	**Quaker**	**Independent**	**Independent**	**Lutheran**	**Anglican**	**Pentecostal**	**Anglican**	**Pentecostal**	**Roman Catholic**	**Roman Catholic**	**Independent**
	Picture Subject																				
1	**Humber Bridge and telescope**																				
2	**White telephone box**																X	X			
3	**Hull Community Church**									X											
4	**Trinity Methodist Church**																				
5	**Street art on telephone exchange box**																				
6	**Flowering plants behind fence**		X											X				X			
7	**Flowering plant**																				
8	**Spurn Lightship**																				
9	**The Mission Pub**																	X			
10	**Street art on building**																				
11	**Holy Trinity Church**			X	X								X					X	X		
12	**Roadworks and**									X											

	people on Whitefriargate																			
13	**Ferens Art Gallery**																			
14	**Duke of Edinburgh pub**			X														X		
15	**Statue of Philip Larkin**																			
16	**Hull Truck Theatre**													X					X	
17	**The Albermarle Music Centre**						X			X				X						X
18	**Orchard Park shops**												X						X	
19	**Padstow House**										X		X							
20	**Roebank Shopping Arcade**																			
21	**KCOM Stadium**							X												X
22	**Fibre-glass Larkin toad sculpture**									X			X							
23	**Arctic Corsair sign**							X												
24	**Fish sculpture**				X				X	X							X			
25	**Scale Lane bridge and Myton Bridge tidal barrier**	X			X															
26	**Hull Mosque**																			
27	**Crowd at Hull**																			

	Freedom Festival																			
28	**Crowd at Olympics Homecoming welcome**					X			X		X	X			X				X		
29	**Band at Hull Freedom Festival**								X							X					