Bridging Prayer: A critical evaluation of the psalm prayers in *Common Worship: Daily Prayer*

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance of support of my supervisors, Dr Alison Gray and Rev Dr Vicky Raymer: both have been generous and gracious in the giving of their time and wisdom. Dr Gray has a great gift for spotting ambiguity and other ways of seeing the problem. I have been regularly encouraged by BTh students reporting Dr Raymer's enthusiasm for my project. Both have spotted many errors, theological and grammatical; any errors that remain are mine alone.

I am also grateful to Rev Dr Philip Jenson for his interest in the project and access to his substantial library of commentaries. Canon Angela Tilby has been a helpful source of information about the composition process, as were Canon Simon Jones and Bishop David Stancliffe. My father was an eagle-eyed proof reader and spared me several infelicities.

Finally, my wife Katy has been a great help in supporting me in this work. I couldn't have made it this far without her.

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 The aims of this thesis

Common Worship: Daily Prayer (henceforth CW:DP)[1] offers a prayer at the end of each Psalm (occasionally within the Psalm, when the text is particularly long). We are told precious little about them within the CW:DP Psalter: the introduction just notes their presence, tells us that they "develop a theme from the text", confirms that their use is optional (and that they are intended as an alternative to '*Glory be…*' where used), and finally that they are "merely suggestions".[2]

This dissertation is primarily an attempt to critically analyse what these short prayers have to say. They are offered to us as a source for reflection and, for me, function as "bridging prayers" between ancient Israelite cult, theology and world-view and the Western Christian interests of today. The intention herein is to ask what kinds of bridges are made (either intentionally or unintentionally). Which themes emerge time and again? What kind of Christology emerges in these Christian readings of the Psalms? Which motifs are repeatedly underplayed or even ignored entirely? How do the prayers link to the liturgical use of the Psalms in different liturgical seasons? The primary intention is to recognise what is there and to consider the picture of the Psalms that emerges when the prayers are considered as their primary interpretative key.[3] Any points of criticism or observation of their shortcomings that emerge from this study are intended to contribute to a richer praying of the Psalms, that is, prayer that represents a fuller range of meaning which may have been restricted by the prayers as they are.

This kind of study could easily pull in a variety of directions. By nature, it will inevitably draw upon a range of resources and themes from various disciplines but it is *not* a piece of work about those resources. Firstly, therefore, this is not a dissertation about the Psalms. Clearly, the Psalms form the raw material for their respective prayers but detailed discussion of other interpretations of individual psalms is not my priority; while other interpreters may well provide a helpful counterpoint at times, the focus of the work remains on the prayers themselves. Secondly, given the focus on the prayers themselves, relatively little attention is given to the history of the psalm prayer as a liturgical form or how other psalm prayers function (although there may well be some interesting comparisons). Thirdly, this is a selective and suggestive discussion of particular themes that have emerged from my reading, rather than an exhaustive or systematic study. Finally, this study is about how *these specific prayers* function liturgically rather than focusing on liturgy or the function of the Psalms in the worship of the church in the abstract.

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[1] Church of England, *Common Worship: Daily Prayer.*

[2] *CW:DP,* p. 648.

[3] On an autobiographical note, I suspect that I am not alone in the Church of England in using the psalm prayers as my main hermeneutical lens for reading the Psalms within the Daily Offices.

1.2 Background to the psalm prayers

The Psalter has been used in Christian liturgy since the very earliest days. Psalm prayers (or something similar in form) are found from around the late 4th century,[4] and John Cassian (early 5th century) describes the practice of silent prayer following the reading of a Psalm which is concluded by a prayer from the superior (who is described as "qui orationem collecturus est" [he who is to collect the prayer]).[5]

There is a full collection of Collects from the 5th and 6th centuries, identified by Dom Andre Wilmart as coming from three separate sources (African, Roman and Spanish).[6] These early collections demonstrate a range of approaches from the theologically adventurous African set to the polished but dry Roman version.[7] For example, the "rugged, breathless and knotty"[8] African collects rhapsodise thus on Psalm 23:

> We pray that your rod, which flowered in Aaron's house and in the house of David bore fruit according to the flesh from Mary, ever-virgin, may comfort us, who are fed and made a new people by your teaching, and established near spiritual waters in the pastures of eternity.

The shepherd's rod is neatly linked with Aaron's rod (with a fun little play on rod (*virga*) and virgin (*virgo*)). Nichols suggests that this Collect was used in a baptismal context and so links the budding of Aaron's rod (Numbers 17) with the regeneration of baptism candidates who are established "near spiritual waters".

Within Western Christianity the use of psalm prayers diminished over time and, at some point, ceased use even in monasteries other than in private prayer. The prayers survived in manuscript form because, as Brou notes, "the black monks were not revolutionaries and when they had to copy the Book of Psalms for their own use, they copied exactly the model in front of them".[9]

In the Church of England the use of psalm prayers began to emerge again with the publication of *Celebrating Common Prayer* (CCP).[10] Although CCP was not part of formal Church of England liturgy it was received as a "welcome proposal" in the foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury.[11] No comment is made on the presence of Psalm prayers other than the Psalter is printed "together with appropriate psalm prayers".[12] Each prayer is credited to its writer,

[4] Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, pp. 123-5.
[5] See Regan, 'The Collect in Context', p. 92.
[6] See Brou, *Psalter Collects* for example translations.
[7] Nichols, *Psalter Collects* (p. 3, although the pages are unnumbered).
[8] Verbraken, *Oraisons sur les cent cinquante psaumes*, p. 11 (cited in Nichols, 'Instruction, Improvisation and Imagination', p. 34).
[9] See Brou, *Psalter Collects,* p. 15 (as translated by Bridget Nichols, 'Instruction, Improvisation and Imagination', p. 33).
[10] Society of St Francis, *Celebrating Common Prayer.*
[11] *CCP*, p. vii.
[12] *CCP*, p. 498.

with very many coming from the SSF itself, but also attributing a number to Michael Perham, Michael Vasey, Chris Irvine and Charles MacDonnell.[13]

Psalm prayers formally enter the liturgy (of the Church of England[14]) with the publication of *Common Worship: Daily Prayer (Preliminary Edition)* (CW:DP[PE]).[15] This publication lifted many of the psalm prayers wholesale from CCP and commissioned others from within the Liturgical Commission. The final edition of *Daily Prayer* included some substantial modification to the preliminary edition for reasons that are not entirely clear.[16] Angela Tilby, who played a significant part in drafting and re-drafting the prayers said that the primary driver behind the revisions was the desire to avoid too much variety of style: "the reasons for the changes were mixed, but mostly to do with trying to find a common style or register with some concern for interpretation as well" (a view shared by David Stancliffe).[17] The hope was to emulate something of the "freshness" of Michael Vasey's style with prayers that were "brief and pointed and spacious".

Little comment is made regarding the prayers in the *CW:DP* rubric. The most detail published is found in the *Companion to Common Worship* (volume 2), which notes simply that the prayers follow the early Christian pattern and are intended to be both Christological and doxological in nature (to be used instead of the *Gloria*).[18]

1.2.1 An excursus on the nature of the psalm prayers

To analyse the prayers properly some account needs to be taken of their form and structure. *CW:DP* itself refers to the "optional short prayer",[19] whereas the *Companion* refers to them as both "psalm prayers" and "psalm collects".[20] There are some arguments to suggest that both terms are appropriate. The "collect" is defined both in terms of form and purpose. From relatively early on the latter has been considered in terms of "collecting" the prayers of the people. In the first half of the 9th Century Walafrid Strabo, abbot of Reichenau, explains that collects are so called because we "collect, that is, conclude their necessary petitions with compendious brevity". The collect is a prayer of petition, "not praise, thanksgiving or lament", it is succinct and it concludes. "As the word itself suggests, it 'collects', that is, gathers together and sums up in one compact, carefully crafted formula, the range of sentiments, needs, desires and aspirations of all present".[21] Alternatively, as Michael Perham explains: "However

[13] See the numerical attribution system on p. 710.
[14] To my knowledge the Anglican Church of Canada and the Scottish Episcopal Church are the only other English-speaking part of the Anglican Communion to provide psalm prayers in their service book. See Anglican Church of Canada, *The Book of Alternative Services* for examples.
[15] Church of England, *Common Worship: Daily Prayer (Preliminary Edition).*
[16] Liturgical Commission discussions are restricted for 30 years after the fact for reasons of confidentiality. In private correspondence Simon Jones, who was on the Commission at the time, reported nothing of significance on the matter in his copy of the relevant minutes.
[17] This emerged in private correspondence between Angela and me.
[18] Bradshaw and Jones, 'Daily Prayer', p. 30.
[19] *CW:DP*, p. 648.
[20] Bradshaw and Jones, 'Daily Prayer', p. 30.
[21] See Regan, 'The Collect in Context', p. 91.

brief a collect is, it has to draw together the prayers of the Church for the Church, for the whole company of those united by prayer".[22]

The form of a collect is also well-defined. The established Latin structure was largely imported into English by Cranmer and usually takes the five-fold form of (i) Invocation or Address, (ii) Acknowledgement, (iii) Petition, (iv) Aspiration and (v) Pleading.[23] Invocation addresses God the Father directly (eg. Almighty God); acknowledgement forms the basis of doctrine upon which the petition will be based and usually calls to mind some aspect of God's character (this clause often begins "who…"); the Petition is the actual request to God, usually followed by an Aspiration (indicated by "so that…") which gives a higher purpose to the Petition. Finally, the Pleading is the appeal on which the prayer rests (usually "Through Christ our Lord").[24]

When applied to the prayers found in *CW:DP* it quickly becomes clear that they are almost always "collects in purpose" but are significantly less easily defined as "collects in form". All take a single-sentence form and draw upon a theme (or two) from the Psalm for the purpose of gathering up the prayers of many into a succinct petition. However, while most contain many elements of the collect form, relatively few hold fully to the entire structure.

Consider the prayer for Psalm 79:

> When faith is scorned
> and love grows cold,
> then, God of hosts, rebuild your Church
> on lives of thankfulness and patient prayer;
> through Christ your eternal Son.

The opening two lines could be considered as an Acknowledgement,[25] leading to the Invocation "God of hosts" on line 3, followed by a Petition (3b-4), before the Pleading (5). The psalm prayers regularly push the boundaries of the collect form.

Examples of the classic form are the prayers for Psalm 23 and 150:

> (i) O God, our sovereign and shepherd,
> (ii) who brought again your Son Jesus Christ
> from the valley of death,
> (iii) comfort us with your protecting presence and your angels of goodness and love,
> (iv) that we also may come home
> and dwell with him in your house for ever.
>
> (i) God of life and love,
> (ii) whose Son was victorious over sin and death,
> (iii) make us alive with his life,
> (iv) that the whole world may resound with your praise;
> (v) through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[22] Cited by Nichols in the Introduction to *The Collect in the Churches of the Reformation*, p. 2.
[23] Gray, 'The Anglican Collect', p. 51.
[24] See Barbee and Zahl, *The Collects of Thomas Cranmer*, pp. x-xi.
[25] While acknowledgements usually refer to God's character they can, on occasion, recall human frailty or weakness (see Barbee and Zahl, *The Collects of Thomas Cranmer*, p. xi). The Psalm prayers use this device regularly.

While it appears that the writers of the prayers value the elements of the collect form it seems clear that they did not feel any need to stick to it. Indeed, for some prayers (eg. Psalm 116) it is difficult even to discern a petitionary element:

> As we walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
> may we call upon your name, raise the cup of salvation,
> and so proclaim your death, O Lord, until you come in glory.

One might just about consider the clause "may we call upon your name" to be petitionary, but it is rather a stretch.

1.3 Approach and method

To my knowledge nothing has been written about these psalm prayers and thus, to some extent, this work begins with a *tabula rasa*. As a result, the first task was simply to read and digest a good number of the Psalms and their prayers so to observe the themes that naturally arise as they are intentionally read. This process involved considering both the themes and forms of language that seem to make repeated appearances, as well as noting the language and subject matter of the Psalms that are habitually left untouched by the prayers.

As different themes arose they coalesced into the chapters of this dissertation. Each takes an aspect of the prayers and uses a range of suitable examples to highlight what seems to be going on. This thesis begins by exploring the genre of lament in the psalms and considers the way in which lament is appropriated (or not), and whether the lack of lament in the prayers is a help or hindrance.

Next, it looks at the way in which the Psalms are interpreted Christologically (taking Augustine's expositions as a template), looking in more depth at themes of Christ as King and Christ as Saviour.

There is a short section on the use of the Psalms in seasonal worship in an attempt to establish the extent to which seasonal use has brought particular features to the fore in the psalm prayers attached.

The final section in some ways draws all of this together in considering the bigger question of an "inward turn" in the prayers. It considers the evidence that the psalm prayers make a consistent (even deliberate) attempt to avoid language of external enemies (instead replacing them with internalised concerns). The broader questions then emerge about the extent to which our praying of the Psalms ought to reflect our contemporary setting or challenge it. How should we balance attention to the 'original meaning' of the text with the desire to let the text speak freely to the concerns of today? Can a single, short prayer "collect" the prayers of the people satisfactorily or does the attempt to do this actually diminish our prayer?

In conclusion, this thesis offers a possible way forward for answering some of the critiques raised earlier in the text.

1.4 An autobiographical footnote

This dissertation arises out of an appreciation for the psalm prayers given in *CW:*DP. My upbringing in churches of a broadly Evangelical tradition did not, I fear, give the Psalms the honour they deserve and so when I found myself faced with a daily rhythm of prayer in which the Psalms feature heavily I found myself out of my depth. Gratefully, when confronted by the strange language of enemies surrounding me, lament and distress, I was saved by the psalm prayers and their ability to take a theme from the Psalms and translate it into the language of my own experience. I too could “pray the Psalms”.

2 Lament in the psalm prayers

One of the most common "forms" in the Psalter is the psalm of lament. Forty-two of the psalms are identified as "individual lament", with a further sixteen counted as "communal lament".[26] Given such a common subject-matter, which is clearly "not something marginal or unusual but rather central to the life of faith",[27] one might expect to find the form reflected in the prayers that take psalms of lament as their source material. This chapter considers the way in which Psalm prayers engage with some of the lament psalms and the extent to which these prayers form a bridge to enable 21st century praying of lament.

2.1 The Form of Lament

Part of the reason for making this the subject for an opening chapter is to highlight some issues of form and structure. "Lament" has a particular form in the psalms and, as we have already seen, there is some degree to which the psalm prayers are congruent with collect form. Any discussion about prayers for psalms of lament needs to be sensitive to the challenge of bridging between the forms.

As with the "collect", the lament takes shape in two different senses: in this case form and language. The literary "form" of lament includes the presence of three particular subjects in relationship: God (addressed as "you") the complainant ("I/we") and the enemy (often "they").[28] There is often a broad literary structure, but this isn't rigidly adhered to and not all elements are always present:[29]

- Address (and introductory petition)
- Lament
- Turning to God (confession of trust)
- Petition
- Vow of praise

What is perhaps more characteristic of the lament psalm is the kind of language used. In simple terms the lament uses language of an "intense – even violent – form of embodied prayer".[30] Frequently an accusatory question emerges: "Why…?", "How long?". Westermann even goes so far as to say that such complaint is at the heart of communal lament, "indeed the phenomenon of lamentation is concentrated in this one motif".[31] The same kind of language is found in the individual lament, although it is often less direct.[32] We often find "motivational" language in which the psalmist "urges God or seeks to persuade God to act for

[26] Waltke *et al*, *The Psalms as Christian Lament*, p. 1.
[27] Moberly, 'Lament', p. 879.
[28] Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, p. 169.
[29] Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, p. 170. Gunkel focuses on the three main aspects of lament, entreaty and conclusion which affirms the certainty of hearing. He notes that the psalmist is often quite happy to cajole and provoke God's response to complaint, putting forward all kinds of argument about why God ought to act in a certain way (see Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-critical introduction*, pp. 32-5).
[30] Waltke *et al*, *The Psalms as Christian Lament*, p. 1.
[31] Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, p. 177-8.
[32] Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, p. 184.

him/her".[33] The insistent protest at the situation in which the protagonists find themselves is directed to God embodying "a level of trust and expectation" about how God should respond.[34]

Furthermore, there is a certain urgency to the language that exposes powerful emotional undercurrents. For example, Ps. 6:3 includes the phrase "You… O Lord… How long?", described as an "emotional ejaculation rather than a complete sentence".[35] Similarly, we find in Psalm 44 a scorching critique of God's inaction and (as Brueggemann and Bellinger brazenly put it): "Israel ponders why the God of all fidelity should have been so fickle... Israel's hope in YHWH is as strong and vigorous as Israel's accusation against YHWH is daring and candid".[36]

2.2 Where is lament in the psalm prayers?

It is safe to say at the outset that there are no out-and-out prayers of lament found within the collection. None of the prayers have the sense of urgency and desperation in the Psalter itself. At no point are the accusatory questions "Why...?" or "How long?" invoked to express the sense of desolation common to the lament psalms. However, before we jump to the conclusion that lament is entirely *absent* let us briefly consider four reasons that might curtail the possibility of outright lamentation in a psalm prayer.

Firstly, the "function" of collect is to "collect", to "gather up" the prayers of the people. With that in mind the writers of the psalm prayers may well have found themselves in a quandary. Of course, during any given office, those praying might be in any of a range of emotional states from lamentation to joy; the writer of a collect must thus "gather up" the (unknown) feelings in a single short petitionary prayer. While the literary form of the collect is not binding here the function was certainly important and therefore most of the prayers err on the side of caution and take a middle-ground approach (ie. trying to "gather up" as many of the possible prayers of the congregation into one prayer as possible). Having said that, one would hope that it is genuinely possible to "collect" the prayers of the people together in bold and unexpected ways and so avoid becoming anodyne.[37]

A second consideration is the consistent use of the first-person plural throughout. The "gathering" nature of the prayers makes this convention appropriate but it must also be recognised that the plural form puts that subject of the prayers at a certain remove from the person praying. Of course, the psalms of communal lament demonstrate the ability of plural language to lament with the same immediacy, but often in the psalm prayers the use of the plural functions to distance the language. For example, Psalm 61's prayer refers to "your presence in our weakness". The plural language here serves to avoid the immediate conclusion that I, as an individual, am weak, preferring to highlight the weakness of the group. Lamentation in a psalm prayer would need to carefully avoid the tendency to use plural

[33] Wallace, *Words to God*, p. 26.
[34] Wallace, *Words to God*, p. 80.
[35] Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, p. 48.
[36] Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, p. 210.
[37] See, for example, the book of daring collects written by Janet Morley, *All Desires Known*.

language as a means of creating distance if the sense of immediacy in lament were to be maintained.

Thirdly, a Christian context for lamentation comes with challenges of its own. There has been a certain resistance to lamentation because lament risks undercutting the central insights of Christianity. One might say that we cannot ask: "How long will you [God] remain silent?" when we recognise that God has definitively *not* stood silently by as demonstrated in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Yet again there is tension here. To return to Moberly, lament is:

> not a sign of deficient faith, something to be outgrown or put behind one, but rather is intrinsic to the very nature of faith. Instead of the problems of the life of faith being put to one side, as if worship should really just be a matter of praise and thanksgiving, these problems are made central to the very act of prayer and worship.[38]

A prayer of lament ought to be honest with God about with the reality of loss, confusion and devastation, but also be able to affirm trust in a God who has acted decisively in Christ. In this sense prayers of lament should be able to follow the pattern of lament psalms and so the concerns that Christian lamentation is inappropriate ought not weigh too heavily.

Finally, we must acknowledge that the psalms of lament were often written in response to a specific situation (or, at least, are attributed or assumed as such). The prayers, however, respond to no specific setting and nor could they, by their very nature. This gets to the heart of the challenge in writing psalm prayers. The desire is to bridge between a specific ancient Israelite context to a general contemporary Christian context. How well can this bridge span the gap but still enable us to lament?

To limit our field of vision we will primarily consider the psalms of communal lament.[39] This has the dual benefit of narrowing the subject of investigation and of limiting the scope to psalms that use the first-person plural (thus making prayers in the first-person plural less obviously awkward). We will look at some of the devices used in the prayers to invoke elements of lamentation, and the ways in which petitionary elements come through in prayer.

2.2.1 Petition in Communal Lament

It is striking that, although every prayer from the communal laments contains petition, relatively few of the prayers contain what might be considered petitions for God to intervene in an external sense. For example, the petition of Ps 12 that the Lord might "cut off all flattering lips" (v3) becomes a prayer about the frailty of our own faith with the petition that God might "restore us". Similarly, the brutal honesty and desperation of Ps 44 evokes a petition that is tame in comparison: "draw near to us, O God". Even the bitterness of Ps 137 produces nothing more than "give us your songs to sing".

The closest that the prayers for communal lament gets to what might be considered a lamenter's petition is Ps 58 which cries: "Deliver us from a world without justice and a future without mercy". The language of deliverance adds an extra urgency and this urgency is

[38] Moberly, 'Lament', p. 879.

[39] I take as my listing the helpful table provided by Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, pp. 9-12, which lists Pss. 12, 14, 44, 53, 58, 60, 73, 79, 80, 83, 85, 90, 106, 108, 123, 126 and 137 as Psalms of "Community Lament".

focussed further by the subject of the petition being something more than an internal attitude of heart. This theme of inwardness will be considered in more detail later.

2.2.2 Words of lamentation

Yet more striking is the absence of actual lament in the prayers. It seems that the writers recognised the absence and so have repeatedly used a device to express lamentation in gentler tones. There are no direct complaints against God found in response to any lament psalms; however, a common device is to introduce indirect complaint with the preposition 'When…'.

For example, the prayer for Ps 44 begins: "In the darkness of unknowing, *when your love seems absent*…".[40] This expresses the possibility of the complaint that at some point (but probably not now) God's love might seem absent. Furthermore, the use of the words "seems" resists the direct lament that God's love *is* absent. This phrase is presumably drawn from the final stanza of the Psalm which directly accuses God of hiding the divine face and asks: "Why sleep, O Lord?". In the experience of the community God *is* absent and they are bold enough to express their sense of abandonment in direct terms. For the contemporary pray-er of Ps 44 the invitation is to acknowledge that sometimes God might appear absent but this is never the actual case. One wonders why it is not considered appropriate to be more direct. As Aquinas notes, prayer occurs on a continuum between faith and experience: it is quite appropriate to lament directly at times.[41]

It is particularly interesting to note that the prayer for Ps 44 in *CW:DP[PE]* includes a further line "… and your favour far away". This additional element of complaint serves to intensify the sense of lament, partly because it is extra and partly because the aesthetics of the prayer demands that the word "seems" doesn't appear a second time. For some reason this extra line was considered too much for the final edition. Furthermore, the original prayer in *CCP* includes a much more direct complaint: "Arise, O Lord / and behold the suffering of your people". There is a much clearer injunction for God to act and the absence of the temporal preposition adds an immediacy to the prayer not seen in later versions.

The lament of temporal abstraction occurs a further four times among the prayers for communal lament.[42] Ps 79 begins: "When faith is scorned / and love grows cold"; Ps 83 laments "when the pride of nations obscures your glorious purpose"; Ps 106 highlights "when our memories blot out your kindness / and we ignore your patient love"; and Ps 108 cries to God "in times of terror". Note that none of these complaints is unmistakably personal. While Pss 79 and 108 could be taken as reference to an individual complaint they could easily be applied to others "out there". Each complaint is distanced from the pray-er both temporally and through ambiguity; none of them would require the person praying to confront God with their misery. Of course, there is a skill in enabling a prayer to offer potential connections to a wide range of circumstances and one doesn't want always to make a prayer so direct that someone not experiencing that situation is almost excluded from praying it, but at the same

[40] See Appendix 1.1 for comparisons.
[41] See Waltke et al., *Psalms, p.* 178.
[42] It further occurs in various forms for the individual laments of Pss. 31, 39, 42, 55, 88, 143.

time unswerving bluntness is occasionally needed to give the prayer power to confront darkness. Christians "pray" the Psalms on a daily basis despite the cultural and temporal distance; the challenge is to find the balance between psalm prayers that domesticate a psalm to such an extent that anyone could pray it (and thereby rob the psalm of some potency) and psalm prayers that retain the sharp, specific edge of the psalms themselves (and thereby limit the ability of the prayer to "bridge" effectively).

When compared to the *Preliminary Edition* we see again a trend of softening and abstracting prayers, giving psychological distance to the pray-er. Ps 79 in *CW:DP[PE]* (following *CCP*) lifts the wording straight from the psalm and petitions God to "remember not our offences / but hear the sorrowful sighing of the prisoners" (cf vv. 8, 12). The setting of the Psalm is debatable,[43] but here the prayer had boldly interpreted the "prisoners" as the contemporary Christian who stands helpless and guilty before God, giving the prayer a sense of lament and woe that is missing from the final version. Similarly, in *CW:DP[PE]* the prayer for Ps 106 begins: "When we scorn your promised land, O God / or worship the false idols of this world / do not be angry with us forever"; the vagueness of the final version replaces a much more direct preliminary edition. It is hard to escape the reticence of the final edition to lament.

2.3 Preliminary Conclusion

Lament is a common form of psalm and yet it is rarely represented in form or language within the psalm prayers. When hints of lamentation are discerned they are always distanced either temporally or through giving the opportunity to make the subject of lament someone other than the self. There is a pattern of toning down lament from earlier versions of Psalm prayers,[44] and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Common Worship is reluctant to lament. Even the service entitled "Facing Pain: a Service of Lament" holds back from allowing the full force of lament to be heard. The design seems to limit lament by always putting it in the context of a God who hears our lament and bears it.[45]

It is quite understandable that lament is uncomfortable for the contemporary Christian. The temptation is often to subjugate lament under the victory of Christ. Particularly in the West there is also the tendency to think that lament is self-indulgent or a private affair.[46] Lamentation is something we rarely do in private, let alone in public. The loss of lamentation risks denying the reality of evil and suffering in our lives and can encourage worshippers to dissemble their emotions from others. I am therefore inclined to argue that reflecting elements of lament in the psalm prayers would be a helpful way of re-developing the habit.

The desire to produce prayers with a common register or tone is commendable in terms of giving a sense that the reader knows roughly what to expect, but the lost counterpoint is

[43] Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, p. 298.
[44] See Appendix 1.2 for a particularly interesting example of an early African collect for Ps 137. The starkness of the language is striking.
[45] Church of England, *New Patterns for Worship*, pp. 443-8.
[46] At a recent Eucharist for ordinands the congregation was encouraged to shout out cries of lament for the people of Syria and for their own lives. The sense of discomfort was palpable. The result was muted at best.

perhaps the ability of prayer to shake us out of complacency. To what extent can prayer be consistent in tone but also bold and prophetic?

3 Christology in the psalm prayers

From the very earliest Christian communities the Psalms have been interpreted Christologically. The Psalter is one of the most frequently quoted book in the New Testament (along with Isaiah) and references to it are found in most NT books.[47] Early Christian commentators frequently found allusions to Christ in the text of the Psalter. Tertullian appealed to the Psalms in his fight against heresy around 200CE;[48] Augustine opens his commentary on the Psalter by finding a reference to Jesus in the very first verse of Psalm 1.[49] Some commentators establish the category of "Messianic Psalms".[50] These are defined as Psalms which refer to the "Messiah" and are then applied to Christ in the New Testament, which are then understood to transcend the historical setting of the Psalm (having been inspired by the Holy Spirit) to point to the person of Jesus Christ. Other Christians recognise more of a tension between a Christological appropriation of the Psalms and interpretations that focus on the form or liturgical usage identified by critical scholarship.[51]

Irrespective of the hermeneutical validity of reading the Psalms Christologically (and leaving aside the vexed question of who gets to decide), those writing and editing the psalm prayers in *CW:DP* have made a conscious choice to acknowledge the long Christian history of finding Christ prefigured in the Psalms. The prayers frequently pick out phrases that are developed as Christological allusions. These connections are rarely novel in the history of Christian interpretation of the Psalms, but repeatedly make the case that the life and work of Jesus is a helpful way of understanding the Psalms today.[52]

To demonstrate the extent of Christological interpretation each prayer was categorised into one of 4 categories. First are the explicitly Christological prayers; those that take a phrase from the Psalm and link it to Jesus explicitly (for example, the prayer for Psalm 24 explicitly identifies "Jesus our redeemer" with the LORD, the "King of Glory" from the Psalm). Second are the prayers offering a Christian interpretation of the Psalm, that is, they express the meaning of the Psalm in terms of reference to the person or life of Christ (for example, the prayer for the lament in Psalm 61 makes references to the "Risen Christ" who "knew the discipline of suffering"). The third category I have labelled "Christ in closing", for these prayers invoke Christ in "pleading" as per Collect form (usually "through Christ our Lord"). Finally (and rarely) is the "None" category. Prayers of this type make no obvious reference to Jesus at all.

[47] Moyise and Menken, *The Psalms in the New Testament*, p. 2.
[48] Braulik, 'Psalter and Messiah', p. 15.
[49] Boulding *et al*., *Expositions of the Psalms: 1-32*, p. 67.
[50] Christou, *The Psalms,* p. 231.
[51] Braulik, 'Psalter and Messiah', p. 16. Though it is common for "modern" commentators to acknowledge the ancient pedigree of Christological interpretation by including a section on such a tradition where appropriate (e.g. the commentaries on the Psalms by H.-J. Krauss).
[52] For a contemporary example see Wright, *Finding God in the Psalms*.

This table shows how the different Psalms are categorised (with the number in brackets as a total for each box).

Table 1: Categorisation of psalm prayers

Category	Psalms 1-50	Psalms 51-100	Psalms 101-150
Explicitly Christological (42)	(16) 1, 2, 7, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 29, 37, 42, 45, 48, 50	(12) 56, 58, 60, 65, 67, 75, 80, 81, 85, 89:19-37, 93, 100,	(14) 105, 110, 116, 118, 119:1-32, 119:33-56, 119:81-104, 119:153-end, 124, 128, 129, 130, 132, 138
Christian interpretation (35)	(15) 6, 8, 9, 11, 22, 23, 30, 31, 36, 38, 39, 41, 44, 47, 49	(12) 53, 54, 59, 61, 64, 69, 79, 84, 86, 89:38-end, 91, 97	(8) 103, 107, 109, 134, 136, 137, 143, 150
Christ in closing (70)	(16)3, 4, 5, 10, 15, 17, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32, 33, 34, 40, 43, 46	(25) 51, 52, 55, 57, 63, 66, 68, 70, 72, 73, 74, 77, 78:1-39, 78:40-end, 82, 83, 87, 88, 89:1-18, 90, 94, 95, 96, 98, 99	(29) 101, 102, 104, 106, 108, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 117, 119:57-80, 119:105-128, 119:129-152, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, 126, 127, 131, 133, 135, 141, 145, 147, 148, 149
None (12)	(3) 12, 14, 35	(4) 62, 71, 76, 92	(5) 139, 140, 142, 144, 146

We can observe in the table that around half interpret the Psalm (or section thereof) in clearly Christian terms. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the Christology that emerges from such readings of the Psalms. This will involve a two-pronged approach: firstly, a comparison of Augustine's way of reading the Psalms Christologically with what is found in the prayers; the second section will take the form of selecting a few themes and drawing out the theology found therein.

3.1 Augustine's Christology in the Psalms

Augustine was the early church's most passionate (and prolific) expositor of the Psalms.[53] In them is found nothing less than prophecies of Christ and his conviction was that their bearing on Christ and transparency to him was "the criterion for correct understanding of the Psalms".[54] His exposition followed the customary patristic practice of interpreting psalms according to a fivefold pattern:[55]

1. A word to Christ (*vox ad Christum*)
2. A word from Christ (*vox Christi*)
3. A word about Christ (*vox de Christo*)

[53] Indeed, his exposition of the Psalms exceeds in size all of the other patristic commentaries put together. See Fiedrowicz, 'General Introduction', p. 13.
[54] Fiedrowicz, 'General Introduction', p. 44.
[55] Fiedrowicz, 'General Introduction', pp. 44-5.

4. A word about the Church (*vox de ecclesia*)
5. A word spoken by the Church (*vox ecclesiae*)

For the purposes of this section the focus will be on the first three "words". Each will be explained and then compared to the pattern employed by the psalm prayers.

3.1.1 Psalms as a word to Christ

Augustine frequently reads the Psalms as invested with and addressed to Christ.[56] Indeed, his exposition of Psalm 19 is explicit that in the psalm it is not Christ speaking but rather it is "the prophet who addresses Christ, singing in the guise of one who longs for what is to come".[57] Similarly, Psalm 55 is interpreted by Augustine as an address to Christ for help in a time of trouble.

Similarly, a good number of psalm prayers take the form of an address to Christ.[58] These prayers address Christ directly, drawing on the psalm as their raw material. However, of these 22 psalms, sixteen of the psalms are read as words *about* Christ and then these words are worked into prayers addressed *to* Christ. For example, Psalm 100:2-3 affirm that "we are… the sheep of his pasture" so therefore we are to "enter his gates with thanksgiving". This language of sheep and gates are interpreted as references to Christ and so the prayer addresses Christ as "door of the sheepfold" (drawing on John 10:7). Another good example is Psalm 128, which mentions vines and branches (v. 3), which is then transposed into a prayer addressing "Christ, our true vine" (cf. John 15:1).

However, seven of the prayers do address Christ in a way that interprets the psalm itself as words to Christ.[59] Psalm 16 is a good example. It is clearly addressed to God in an imperative voice: "Preserve me, O God!" (v. 1). Yet the prayer adopts the language of God as "my portion" (v. 4) and "in [God's] presence is the fullness of joy" (v. 10) to understand the psalm as addressed to Jesus, who is then petitioned to "give to us… the fullness of grace / your presence and your very self / for you are our portion and delight". There is a subtle Eucharistic tone here which neatly incorporates the idolatrous drink offerings of blood (v. 3) into a prayer of thanksgiving for the presence of Christ in wine outpoured.

Another good example is Psalm 31, with its well-known night prayer response: "Into your hands I commend my spirit / for you have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth" (v. 5). The prayer picks up the image of being held in God's hands and interprets them christologically in a double sense. Firstly, the prayer asks Christ to hold us in his hands (making the petition itself Christological), but secondly it refers to the hands as "wounded" and thereby links the hands of Christ to the cross and to the final word of Christ (Luke 23:46). The prayer further makes the petition of v. 16 into a word to Christ: "make your face shine on us again".

[56] Fiedrowicz, 'General Introduction', p. 45.
[57] Boulding *et al*., *Expositions of the Psalms: 1-32*, p. 215.
[58] See prayers for Pss 1, 6, 13, 16, 19,29, 31, 39, 60, 61, 71, 93, 100, 107, 110, 116, 119: 81-104, 128, 129, 132, 140, 143.
[59] Pss. 13, 16, 31, 39, 71, 116, 143.

It therefore seems that the psalm prayers have a fair representation of prayers using the *vox ad Christum* form of Christology.

3.1.2 Psalms as words from Christ

The New Testament has already put words from psalms into the mouth of Christ, and Augustine sought to continue this tradition in the use of the prosopological method of interpretation.[60] This method attempts to cast light on a text by considering the speaker of different elements. Augustine could find both Christ speaking in his own name, and Christ speaking as the *totus Christus*, the full body of Christ.[61] For example, in response to Psalm 41:5 he states: "The speaker here is our Lord Jesus Christ, but we must consider whether his members are not concerned too".[62]

It is, at first glance, difficult to see how any psalms read as words from Christ could then be prayed in the psalm prayers. However, there is one avenue of enquiry, the "acknowledgement" clause of the prayer in which the addressee of the prayer has attached some qualification or justification for being addressed. An example is taken from the prayer for Psalm 23, which addresses "God our sovereign and shepherd, *who brought again your Son Jesus Christ from the valley of death*". This would appear to take a prosopological approach to the psalm in reading Jesus as the speaker (of verse 4 at the very least).

The same kind of approach is found in the prayer for Psalm 41, which refers to "the one… whose betrayal brought our salvation". The suggestion is that Psalm 41:5-9 (at least) are words from Christ, with a particular reference to the betrayal of Judas in v. 9. A final example can be found in Psalm 86 which declares: "Great is your steadfast love for me / for you have delivered my soul from the depths of the grave" (v. 13). These words are implicitly put in Jesus' mouth as the prayer then petitions the "God of Mercy, who… drew your Son from the depths of the Pit".

This form of Christological interpretation is not terribly common, but neither would one expect it to be. However, it is good to see that this way of finding Christology in the Psalms is there for those with ears to hear in order that the full scope of Christological appropriation may be recognised.

3.1.3 Psalms as words about Christ

Arguably the easiest way to find Christ in the Psalms is to read them as words *about* Christ. One of the simplest moves to make is to transfer the title "Lord" onto Jesus, but it was just as easy to see references to concrete objects as metaphors for Christ (doors, the sun, bread, light) or even abstract concepts such as truth, peace or mercy.[63]

This method is found quite frequently. A good example is the prayer for Psalm 119:81-104 which makes it clear that in spite of the many worldly "ways" (vv. 101, 104), Christ is the "living way". The "sweet words" of verse 103 (cf. vv. 81, 89, 101) are most fully realised in

[60] Fiedrowicz, 'General Introduction', p. 51.
[61] Fiedrowicz, 'General Introduction', pp. 58)2-3.
[62] Boulding *et al.*, *Expositions of the Psalms: 33-50*, p. 224.
[63] Fiedrowicz, 'General Introduction', pp. 46-7.

Christ: "you are our living Word". Similarly, Psalm 4's prayer makes the link that Christ is the Lord who enables us to rest in peace at the end of the day (v. 8). Such examples are not difficult to find but one wonders whether they might be a little too difficult (there are many examples in which the prayers leave obvious Christological links unacknowledged). Perhaps it is fear of the perception that Christians are claiming wholesale rights to the Psalms that stops the psalm prayers finding Christological import in every psalm; perhaps it is a desire for some variety that avoids endless Christological imputation. Either way, it is clearly a challenge for a single short prayer to sound the depths of every psalm. This is presumably why Augustine's expositions frequently include several wildly different expositions of the same psalm.

3.2 Christ the King

The image of Christ as victorious King over creation should, in some respects, flow directly from the Psalms, particularly the Royal Psalms and we observe variations on this theme picked up in the psalm prayers in several places. It would be easy to find "words about Christ" in this field. However, the connection is often inflected in a way that represents distinctively a Christian model of kingship.

A good place to start is Psalm 2, with its reference to God's "Messiah" (v2) and its frequent NT usage. The original context is probably that of coronation (or enthronement festival),[64] and the prayer picks up this coronation theme from v. 6 and links it to Christ. However, the nature of Christ's coronation is radically transposed; the "holy hill" becomes Calvary and the "enthronement" is Christ's crucifixion ("lift up our eyes to your Son / enthroned on Calvary") in an interpretation that owes much to John's Gospel. Few commentators discuss the nature of the Messiah's enthronement and only Craigie explores the inauguration of a new kingdom through the "receipt of violence and death".[65] There is a subversive (but not inappropriate) tenor to the prayer because what we behold in gazing upon the enthroned Christ is his "meekness", not his glory; it is not the nations that are shattered in the process but "our earthly pride". Here we see a new kind of kingship emerging from the Psalm. However, as we have observed previously *CW:DP* innovates in its theological slant and there is a direction of change as we trace the evolution through from *CCP* via *CW:DP[PE]*. The prayer for Psalm 2 in *CCP* evokes a traditionally powerful redeemer-King who "has shattered our yoke of sin", and seeks acknowledgement of "the servants who bow before you". In *CW:DP[PE]* this has evolved into the form found in the final version but refers to the fear of "the world's wars" and, crucially, notes that the meekness of Jesus "dumbfounds kings / and shatters earthly pride" (note the omission of the pronoun "our" to qualify further the "pride" in the final edition).[66] There is a clear progression from a powerful king who shatters oppression, to a humble king who undermines the earthly pride of the powerful, to the king of the meek who shatters the personal pride of the everyday believer.

[64] Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, p. 32; Krauss, *Psalms 1-59*, p. 126.
[65] Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, p. 69.
[66] See Appendix 1.3 for a comparison.

Other than in Psalm 2 is it generally the case that *CW:DP* does not make any royal connections to Jesus from the "Royal Psalms". The closest we come to royal language is the prayer for Psalm 18 which refers to God's "royal throne" from which the "living Word" (presumably drawing imagery from vv. 14, 31) was sent to "pierce the gloom of oppression". There is an inward turn here ("penetrate our darkness" cf. "spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness [*CCP*]) that we will return to later. However, the relative absence of messianic kingship in psalm prayers has not always been so as the prayers for Pss. 45, 110 and 132 attest.

Psalm 110 is a particularly interesting example as a Psalm frequently used in the NT to identify Jesus as Messiah.[67] The Psalm introduces the glorious Lord sat at the right hand of God (v1; picked up in the NT and Creeds), it has been read as establishing the power of kings and nations as being finally answerable to the Messiah Jesus.[68] It expresses the gracious messianic rule of King Jesus in terms of justice and faith for those in need.[69] These themes of the gracious and merciful exercise of divine power are picked up in the *CCP* prayer for the Psalm. It declares Christ as "our king" who now pleads for us "in power" and reigns in the glory of the Father. Similarly, *CW:DP[PE]* refers to Jesus' incarnation "in majesty" and attempts to recognise the tension between glorious and humble kingship. However, *CW:DP* will not attach either the word "king" or "majesty" to Jesus.[70] A similar reluctance to ascribe power and might to Jesus is found in the prayers for Psalm 132. Both *CCP* and *CW:DP[PE]* refer to Jesus as "Mighty One of God" while *CW:DP* omits the phrase (leaving the rest of the prayer mostly untouched, except for replacing the final doxology "To you be glory for ever!" with the rather more measured phrase "we pray in the power of the Spirit", and changing the petition to "make us faithful" to "make us fruitful").[71] One wonders what is objectionable about the phrase "Mighty One of God" (which draws on vv. 2 and 5).

None of this is to say that *CW:DP* is entirely reticent to declare Jesus as king; there are several prayers (not linked to the royal psalms) which give Jesus the attribute. The prayer for Psalm 24 explicitly connects Jesus to the "King of Glory" (vv. 7-10); for Psalm 29 the prayer makes the "glorious Lord Christ" (cf. v. 1, 3, 8) to be "our King" (v. 10). With Psalm 69 we see Jesus identified with experience of the "reproach of the oppressed" (vv. 8, 21) and the prayer draws on the links to the Johannine Jesus again. John 15:25 refers to Psalm 69:4 to explain what will happen to him, and the prayer picks up the crucifixion account of the offering of wine vinegar (John 19:28-29 cf. Ps 69:23) as it refers to Jesus "thirsting on a cross".[72] The Johannine understanding of Jesus' enthronement on the cross is presumably the link to the prayer's final plea that "the whole creation [might] know its true king". Again, there's a sense that Jesus' kingship is of a different order to traditional power and might.

The one example of *CW:DP* actually sharpening claims of Christological kingship is the prayer for Psalm 93. While *CCP* and *CW:DP[PE]* both refer to the establishment of the Lord's throne,

[67] Matt. 21:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44; Acts 2:29-36; Heb 1:5-14.
[68] Mays, *Psalms*, p. 354.
[69] Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, p.481.
[70] See Appendix 1.4.
[71] See Appendix 1.5.
[72] Goldingay, *Psalms, vol. 2*, p. 356.

CW:DP is explicit that it is "Christ the King" who is urged to "reign from your royal throne / above the chaos of this world / that all may see the victory you have won". There is a perhaps a further nod to the Johannine Christ here as it is a king who "put on the apparel of our nature" (cf. John 1:14) and reigns "above" so that we might see and trust. It is also possible that the title "Christ the King" is given in this prayer because of the Psalms' usage on that date in the liturgical calendar (see section 4).

3.3 Christ as Saviour

There is an interesting, although unsurprising, pattern when themes of salvation are explored. The OT's understanding of "salvation" is primarily contained in the root יְשַׁע in its various forms. The root is concentrated in the Psalms[73] and carries a sense of God's saving action in history (in the Psalms the root always has YHWH as subject, unless YHWH's salvation is being contrasted with the "salvation" of a human agent or idol).[74] Middleton and Gorham see salvation in the sweep of biblical narrative as "God's deliverance of those in a situation of need from that which impedes their well-being, resulting in their restoration to wholeness", paradigmatically seen in the Exodus and culminating in the person of Jesus.[75] The OT concept of salvation tends to be physical in nature (deliverance from enemies), whereas the New Testament tends to focus more on deliverance from sin and its consequences.

The language of salvation comes out in the psalm prayers in various ways. Psalm 62 has the greatest concentration of "salvation" language,[76] and the prayer uses the phrase "our rock and our salvation" from vv. 2 and 6 as a source for this; the object of the prayer's search for security is God, rather than Jesus in particular. This is perhaps a helpful affirmation that locates the category of salvation in the broadest sense of security and safety. The only difference between *CW:DP* and the prayer found in *CW:DP[PE]* and *CCP* is that the earlier version boldly declares "we seek security and deliverance" whereas the final version more humbly entreats God to "teach us to seek security". It is unclear whether this represents a crisis of confidence or, more simply, a human acknowledgement of the challenges in seeking security in God. I am inclined to think the latter, but it is interesting to note that the consistent feature of prayers which step away from immediate emotional response is still present.

Psalm 85, by contrast, has some more obvious Christological tones. Language of salvation appears 3 times (vv. 4, 7, 9) and vv. 9-13 introduces themes of God's descent to earth which could easily be interpreted incarnationally.[77] Such themes are picked up in the prayer which refers to "your Word made flesh / our Saviour Jesus Christ". There is yet another Johannine connection here.

[73] 136 of the 354 occurrences. See *TDOT*, vol. VI, p. 446.
[74] *TDOT*, vol. VI, p. 459.
[75] Middleton and Gorham, 'Salvation', p. 45.
[76] The root occurs 4 times (vv. 1, 2, 6, 7) in the 12-verse Psalm, each time in *CWP:DP* translated "salvation" except v. 7 where it is translated "strength".
[77] See, for example, Mays, *Psalms*, p. 278, or Brueggemann and Bellinger, *Psalms*, p. 369.

3.4 Summary

Both the themes of Christ as King and Christ as Saviour tend to make the most ground when reading relevant psalms as words *about* Christ. This is not surprising, given that it is grammatically substantially more challenging to read a psalm as a word *from* Christ or *to* Christ; just about anything can be read as a word *about* Christ. Having said that, most of the interpretations as words about Christ felt quite natural and unforced. Such links often drew on New Testament imagery to bridge the gap; for example, the reference to Christ as "living water" in the prayer for Psalm 42 (cf. v2) draws on Jesus' encounter with the women of Samaria (John 4).

On balance, the psalm prayers offer a reasonable range of Christological interpretations of the Psalms. A variety of images (concrete and abstract) are used to make Christological connections, there is at least some evidence of reading the Psalms as *to, from* and *about* Christ. However, the compilers are rather hamstrung by the need to limit each psalm (or part-psalm) to a single, brief prayer.

4 Liturgical Connections

In some private correspondence about the process of composition of the *CW:DP* psalm prayers, Canon Angela Tilby recalled a conversation with another member of the Liturgical Commission on the matter. She wrote: "I remember discussing with him what would be the right sort of prayer for Psalm 18 - he felt that it was important that it had a Christmas / Epiphany resonance which is picked up in the prayer." This brief chapter picks up that thread and explores the extent to which Psalms that are linked to liturgical times have such resonances echoed in their prayers. Of course, the fact that particular Psalms have been associated with certain moments in the liturgical calendar means that it is likely that seasonal themes are present within the chosen psalms, but I want to analyse how often these links are picked up.[78]

In terms of method I refer to the Psalms set for Morning and Evening Prayer on festival days. I have ignored the lectionary for Principal Services on the grounds that on such occasions the Psalms are unlikely to be read from *CW:DP* (if they are read at all) and so will not have the prayers attached. To limit the scope of this chapter the study focusses on festival days rather than seasons.

The general sense is that many psalm prayers link well to the festivals for which they are set, to the point that one might consider it to have been a conscious effort to do so.

4.1 Christmas

Although not strictly a festival, psalms are set in the lectionary for Christmas Eve. For the morning is set the middle section of Psalm 89 (vv. 19-27) which begins with the words: "You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people: 'I have set a youth above the mighty; I have raised a young man over the people.'" The prophetic imagery of the unfulfilled promise is drawn upon in the prayer's opening petition: "Faithful God / remember your promise". There is a sense of yearning for the coming salvation which is fitting on Christmas Eve. Interestingly, the break after verse 37 for this prayer isn't found in either *CCP* or *CW:DP[PE]*; the prayer we find in the final edition is an edited version of the prayer at the end of Psalm 89 in *CCP* which focuses down to entreating God to remember his promised salvation.

A similar theme emerges with the prayer for Psalm 85 (set for Evening Prayer on Christmas Eve). The incarnation imagery of heaven stooping to earth (vv. 9, 11) is brought out in the reference to the "Word made flesh" in the prayer. This is sharpened for Christmas Eve with the tone of the fearful worshipper stepping into the light to find that "truth is one with love". The entirely different prayers in the earlier versions share no such Christmas Eve undertones.[79] It might be argued that reading incarnational imagery into the psalm is

[78] It should be noted that the link between particular psalms and seasons is not uniformly established. The Church of England lectionary has significant differences to the current Roman Catholic lectionary in the Psalms set for any given season. Further, Psalms reported for the Paschal celebrations in 4th century Jerusalem bear almost no resemblance to what we use now (see Schuman, 'Paschal Liturgy and Psalmody in Jerusalem').

[79] See Appendix 1.6.

unnecessary or arbitrary eisegesis, but if the purpose of the prayers is to help the contemporary pray-er to pray more richly then such resonances can only add to the layers of meaning found in the psalm.

The prayer for the psalms set for Christmas Day itself (Ps 110, 117 for morning, and Ps 8 for evening) have very little Christmas resonance. One would have to look very hard for incarnational themes, although none of the psalms in question would have made it difficult to draw such links had one desired to do so.[80] This is probably the strongest evidence that no systematic attempt was made in this regard.

4.2 Lent

The Psalms assigned for Ash Wednesday (Ps 38 for morning and Ps 102 in the evening) are both good penitential psalms and so carry obvious Ash Wednesday connotations. The petition in the prayer for Psalm 38 reads: "behold with pity the wounds of your people / do not forsake us, sinful as we are". That sense of the "wounds" of the people resounds with the description of the imposition of ashes as a "sign of our penitence and a symbol of our mortality".[81] Such resonances also appear in the prayer for Psalm 102: "Have pity on our frailty, O God". Neither of these links are quite so obviously made in *CCP* or *CW:DP[PE]*.

The prayers for Maundy Thursday psalms are similarly appropriate. Psalms 42 and 43 are set for morning prayer, and this pair of psalms point towards several Maundy Thursday themes. The refrain through both ("Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul…", [Ps42 vv6, 13, Ps43:5]) is found on the lips of Jesus in Gethsemane (cf. John 12:27) and this weighty lament is brought out in the prayer for Psalm 42: "sustain us when our hearts are heavy". But there is a further Johannine link also. Mays identifies the "thirst for God" (42:2) with the living water spoken of by Jesus (John 4:14, 6:35),[82] and this thought is also developed in the prayer for Psalm 42[83]: the heavy-hearted Jesus in Gethsemane becomes the fountain of life-giving water. The move to the first-person from *CW:DP[PE]* brings us much more directly into Gethsemane with Jesus and once again we can see increasingly seasonal links in the move from *CCP* to *CW:DP.*

A similar move happens with the prayer for Psalm 43 which, like *CCP*, picks up the "altar" language from v. 4. The petition to "bring us to the altar of life" in the prayer can surely be read as a reference to the institution of the last supper, highly appropriate to Maundy Thursday. Those compiling the prayers have done well to hint towards seasonal associations where possible without making any prayer irrelevant to other days of the year.

The prayer for the evening psalm for Maundy Thursday (Ps 39) is rather mysterious. It petitions, "Help us when we are too cast down to pray", is not a phrase obviously drawn from the text (although the phrase itself certainly has a Maundy Thursday tenor). The silence of the

[80] Psalm 8:2, 110:3 are obvious ways in to this.
[81] Church of England, *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*, p. 230.
[82] Mays, *Psalms*, p. 204.
[83] See Appendix 1.7 for the full text.

oppressed man (vv. 1-3) could easily have been linked to Jesus before Caiaphas (Matt. 26:63) but wasn't. *CW:DP[PE]* and *CCP* use the equally mysterious phrase: "grant that we may… feed on you all our days", which has yet stronger Maundy Thursday connotations but is even harder to link to the Psalm itself!

For the morning of Good Friday, we revisit Psalm 69 with the obvious link: "Thirsting on the cross / your Son shared the reproach of the oppressed." However, the evening psalm (Ps 130) is rather more subtle. The prayer holds together the Good Friday experience of "crying from the depths" with the "hope of the dawn of your forgiveness and redemption". The Psalm is a "succinct but powerful expression of the theme that is at the heart of Scripture"[84] (ie. human sinfulness and the need for God's grace) and, of course, for Christianity the fulcrum of this theme is the Easter narrative. The prayer subtly hints at the dawn of resurrection coming on Sunday in a way that neither of the preceding versions do. Again, it could be argued that this move is forced and imposes meaning on the text in order to make arbitrary liturgical connections. However, I suspect Augustine would disagree: to find the life and work of Christ in the Psalms is nothing less than the primary job of interpretation.

4.3 Further on in the year and summary

The pattern continues into Easter, Ascension and Pentecost to some degree (with the evening Psalm for Easter Sunday [66] even referring to "Easter people"). It therefore seems like an unavoidable conclusion that some conscious effort has been made to make the psalm prayers seasonally appropriate.

This is a rather wonderful development. The prayers are all subtle enough to stand in their own right out of season, but when read in seasonal context they enable the psalms to be read with an extra twist. Their subtlety must surely be the final argument against claims of imposed liturgical connection. These are not heavy-handed or clumsy links but a genuine attempt to pray the Psalms within the seasonal life of the Church of England. Having said that, it makes the fact that the prayers are often limited to Morning and Evening Prayer somewhat sad as this would have been a good opportunity for the Psalms to be linked more fully back into corporate Sunday worship in a way that would have helped the average lay Christian make more sense of them.

[84] Mays, *Psalms*, p. 405.

5 The Inward Turn

Much of what has been discussed above points to what might be characterised as an "inward turn" in the prayers. Looking at the language used demonstrates that there is an overwhelming tendency either to internalise the external enemy or to ignore any language of foes (or other external evil). Examples abound from the beginning of the Psalter. The prayer for Psalm 2 picks up the terminology of v. 9 which describes how the chosen king will "break [the nations] with a rod of iron / and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel". This show of sovereign power in the psalm[85] becomes a reference to the meek, cross-enthroned Christ whom we ask to "shatter our earthly pride" in the prayer. Similarly, in Psalm 3, which is filled with adversaries and enemies, the language of the prayer moves to the petition that we might be shielded from "all evil" which is then linked to the internal enemies of "apathy and despair".

This habit is not particular to the psalm prayers or a new development found therein, nor is it greatly problematic in itself; however, it is worthwhile to note what is happening and to consider the implications. The chapter will consider some of the more general examples of this tendency outside of the psalm prayers and will then move to explore what the overall linguistic pattern is. Examples will be given to highlight the problem.

5.1 A general inward turn?

An inward turn is to some degree already at work in the way the Bible is translated.[86] Indeed, common translations of Psalm 46:10 demonstrate exactly this as the phrase: "Be still and know that I am God" is used.[87] In context, the imperative translated "Be still" has the force of "drop the hands", stop doing what was being done, stop fighting.[88] However, as it is read (and often taken out of context) the meaning of ceasing from war to acknowledge the power of God often becomes an exhortation to come to know God through quiet contemplation.[89] I doubt this is an unparalleled example. The process of "transposing biblical words from the material and bodily realm into the spiritual sphere" was also taken up by early Christians such as Augustine.[90]

A brief perusal of the general Collects and Post Communion prayers (CPCP) given in Common Worship also suggests an inward turn. There is very little sense of any external enemy against which we might fight and from whom we might seek shelter in God. Indeed, there is only one use of the word "enemy" in any of the Common Worship CPCP (used in the post-communion prayer for Easter Sunday), and even there the implication is that the "enemy" is death (God

[85] Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, p. 132.
[86] See Erica Longfellow, 'Inwardness and English Bible Translations' for a brief summary of how early modern English translations translate the language of inwardness itself.
[87] This translation starts in the KLB and is later found in many modern translations including the NIV and NRSV.
[88] Ross, *The Psalms*, p. 98.
[89] Credit to Philip Jenson for bringing this common misunderstanding to my attention.
[90] Fiedrowicz, 'General Introduction', p. 35.

has "delivered us from the power of our enemy").[91] "Evil" is present, but primarily as an internal condition; almost all of the 6 occurrences in CPCP refer to evil as such. The post-communion for Lent 2 petitions that God defend us from "all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul" and on Easter Eve we ask God to grant that we may "continually put to death our evil desires". It is only in the Collects for saints and martyrs that "evil" is used to refer to physical, external suffering.[92]

Such analysis is somewhat difficult to quantify but gives an indication of the way the prayers in Church of England liturgy get their emphasis. There is no great reason to suppose that CPCP ought to focus on enemies and evil, but if they follow similar patterns to the psalm prayers then their language may be telling.

5.2 The inward turn in the language of the psalm prayers

The Psalms are full of the language of enemies, shame and deliverance from evil. The term "enemy" appears 79 times, "evildoer" occurs 20 times, "foe" comes 35 times.[93] In almost every case these words refer to physical, external people or groups. It is striking that relatively few psalms make no reference to either an unnamed or specific enemy. Even the psalms of praise regularly recount God's mighty victory over enemies of the past. Similarly, the psalmist often complains of "evil" plotted against him (47 times) and such evil is invariably personal and external in nature; he petitions for God's deliverance from all of these things 37 times.

But what of the prayers that bridge these psalms to the present day? Not one of the prayers refers to *any* kind of enemy, foe, adversary or evildoer. The arrogant and proud are notable by their absence. The bloodthirsty are nowhere to be seen. The wicked are gone.[94] It is not even that the "enemy" is transposed as an internal state, enemies are entirely stricken from the record. It is almost as if there is a deliberate choice to ignore such language in the themes picked up from the Psalms.

A similar move takes place with the use of "evil". This word does occur (in 11 prayers) but many of these refer to internalised evils (eg. Ps 3 as above, Ps 7 which relates evil to the duplicity of our own hearts, Ps 10 which asks God to destroy the "masks of evil", Ps 140: the "subtle evils" of "poisonous words and the spirit of war"). Even when evil isn't explicitly internalised it is generalised (Ps 110: "inspire us with the confidence of your final conquest of evil"). In fact, the closest we come to particularising evil is the prayer for Psalm 149: give us "wills to reject the world's deceits, that we may bind the evils of our age".

Of course, these prayers are written for the prayer of the whole Church of England and its many situations and circumstances. It is therefore difficult to be too specific in prayer without alienating certain groups. Furthermore, the prayers are all first-person plural and so are inevitably slightly general. However, the Psalms themselves are highly specific, often to an

[91] The word "foe" also occurs once, in the Collect for Alfred the Great. In this instance, we petition God to "shield us from our foes, that… we make inwardly love you".
[92] See Collects for James Hannington, Leo the Great and St George.
[93] All numbers are taken from Accordance searches of the NRSV translation of the Psalms (Accordance 11.2.4, with NRSV text version 3.5) and include plurals.
[94] There is one reference to the "wicked world" (Ps 52).

individual, and were used to form a whole nation's prayer-book. Given that *Common Worship* is limited to a single national context at a specific point in time one wonders whether it would have been possible to name some of the evils of the present age.[95]

A simple example on the internalising tendency and the discomfort with enemies comes from Psalm 27. Both *CCP* and *CW:DP[PE]* pick up on the consistent language of enemies and foes and begin by addressing God as "our defender". However, the final edition uses the language of v. 1 and addresses God as "our light and our salvation", focussing the whole prayer on the light and goodness of God.

The same internalising pattern occurs with the use of "shame" as a category. The modern usage of the term is rather different to the biblical context: "Among North Americans, honour and shame often refer to a psychological state — a person's internal moral character or the actions that reflect that character. In the world of the Bible and in traditional Mediterranean societies, however, honour and shame are social values determinative of a person's identity and social status".[96] We find the same usage when comparing the Psalms' language of "putting to shame" and "disgrace" with the prayers' language of internalised shame.

In the Psalms the Hebrew verb בוש (to be ashamed) appears 34 times. Invariably it refers to an external agent (usually God) putting enemies to shame, or a petition that the Psalmist might not be put to shame. For example, the opening verses of Psalm 25 read:

> *To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;*
> *O my God, in you I trust;*
> *Let me not be <u>put to shame;</u>*
> *let not my enemies triumph over me.*
>
> *Let none who look upon you <u>be put to shame</u>,*
> *but let the treacherous <u>be shamed</u> and frustrated.*

There is no sense of the modern sense of "shame" as embarrassment or guilt. Similarly, the nouns בשת, בושה and בלמה meaning shame or disgrace appears frequently (15 times between them) and again refer to externalised disgrace imposed.

By contrast, the psalm prayers make absolutely no reference to "dishonour" or "disgrace" and only refer to "shame" three times (Pss 13, 25 and 31). On each occasion the "shame" in the prayers is implicitly internalised, it is something experienced by an individual, rather than something put onto an individual by an external agent. Ps 13 pleads for those who cry to Jesus "in shame and silence and defeat"; the use of the preposition "in", along with the general tenor of the prayers suggests that readers will understand this as internal shame. It's a phrase coined for the final edition, replacing the mysterious "from lands where all things are forgotten" in *CW:DP[PE]*, which itself replaced the much more externalised "let not our spiritual foe prevail against us" from *CCP*.

[95] See Appendix 2 for some examples.
[96] Simkins, 'Honor / Shame', p. 603.

The internalising process is at work again Ps 25's prayer. Both *CCP* and *CW:DP[PE]* petitions God to "relieve the misery of the poor and destitute" and acknowledges that not all people meet that description by following with "fill us all with the hope of peace". The final edition instead prays for relief of the "misery of the anxious and ashamed" and then omits the word "all" in the penultimate clause to imply that all experience anxiety and shame. Such shame can only be internalised.[97]

The only example of "shame" in the prayers that is possibly external is for Psalm 31. It draws on the image of the psalmist as "a city besieged" (v. 21) and prays that "when scorn and shame besiege us… hold us in your wounded hands". Although the grammar implies an external agent bringing scorn and shame, I suspect that the tone of the other prayers means that the reader is likely to interpret this prayer as referring to the experience of isolation caused by internalised shame.

5.3 Summary

There is nothing inherently wrong with the desire to internalise aspects of the Psalms that we find profoundly alien. After all, these prayers are doing exactly what was intended in "bridging" between an ancient world, in which the threat of external enemies was ever present, and today's Britain, in which we don't usually experience the same fears. In respectable, middle-class Church of England parishes there is a risk that the psalm prayers reflect back to us our own assumptions rather than opening up for us a different and challenging worldview – the skill is to enable Christians today to enter into the experiences of those represented in the Psalms (or those in the world for whom such experiences are still very present).

[97] See Appendix 1.8.

6 Conclusions

I hope it has been clear that I have written out of appreciation for the psalm prayers in *CW:DP*. So often I have found my own faith and experience reflected back to me, through the lens of the psalm, in a way that has helped me to "pray the Psalms" better. However, this is both a strength and a weakness; as gratifying and encouraging as it is to find myself in the Psalms through the psalm prayers I am still left with a nagging suspicion that the Psalms ought to be pushing me on into less comfortable territory.

My concluding remarks are therefore twofold. Firstly, I will briefly summarise what I have found in the way the psalm prayers interpret and pray their raw material. Secondly, I shall make some suggestions for ways in which these helpful pieces of liturgical material might be developed and used further.

6.1 A brief summary

The starting point for discussion was the consideration of a study of the way a particular genre of psalm was used in the prayers. In exploring lament I showed that the genre so prevalent throughout the Psalms is not found in the prayers that interpret them. The western Christian setting makes lament uncomfortable and strange as a genre and so there is a tendency to gloss the depths of lament and look to redemption in Christ. Any hints at lament within the prayers often moved the locus of lament away either temporally or onto the troubles of others.

This avenue was followed by a brief study of some of the Christological themes that emerge in the prayers. It was clear that the stated intention of drawing out Christological connections in the Psalms was met, although not always in the ways one might have expected. There was a sensible balance of bringing out Christological connections without finding Christology at every turn. We also found that there was some evidence of the patristic pattern of treating the psalms as words *to Christ*, *from Christ* and *about Christ*.

Next, we showed that an apparently deliberate effort has been made to make the prayers seasonally appropriate. There were often delicate links to the part of the Christian year in which the relevant psalms are used. This gives the prayers helpful holistic resonances for those with ears to hear but can also risk forcing the psalms into pre-defined categories.

Finally, the last section showed how the prayers demonstrate the habit of contemporary Western churches to internalise the meaning of the Psalms. We saw how selective reading of the Psalms systematically omits external enemies and instead makes them into the internal demons of despair or apathy or greed. Once again, this pattern is not wrong in itself but leads to a rather narrow interpretation of the Psalms. If, as I have suggested, the psalm prayers are treated as a main hermeneutical key for the Psalms then we are left with an impoverished reading.

6.2 What are the Psalms?

Howard Neil Wallace (along with Bonhoeffer, Barth and others) has argued that the Psalms are unique in the biblical canon in that they are not only words *from* God, but are also words *to* God.[98] Not only are the Psalms given from God for our edification and understanding, but they are given by God as tutors in the art of prayer. Commenting on Psalm 13, Wallace notes that "a desire to praise God may still have room to recognise the need for protest and petition".[99] These prayers are to be treated as models for our own life of prayer, and thus are not to be redacted solely through the lens of contemporary, comfortable Western Christianity and its sensibilities.

It seems to me that the psalm prayers found in *CW:DP* often treat the Psalms as words *from* God. Words to be interpreted and understood in contemporary ways. The prayers often do an excellent job of bridging the gap between the ancient Israelite worldview and its concerns and the 21st Century worldview. However, they perhaps do not attempt to bridge the gap as words *to* God. There is a risk that a uniform register in prayers kills the diverse registers of the psalms themselves and so fails to bring the pray-er into the way of praying these ancient words to God in a contemporary setting. This is not to say that the prayers themselves are not words to God, because of course they are. However, they often transpose perceived psalmic words *from* God into contemporary words *to* God, rather than treating psalms as words to God in their own right.

If Brueggemann is right that Israel's praise in the Psalms is not just descriptive of reality but generative,[100] then we ought to take seriously the words given by God for us to address the divine. Perhaps, therefore, the prayers we use to bridge the Psalms ought to reflect the nature of the texts given in order to generate in the lives of worshippers today the realities God would have us face. What are we missing if we cannot pray psalms of lament *with* lament? What have we lost if we can no longer accuse God and demand divine action in imprecation?

Nehrbass focuses on the imprecatory psalms and argues that there is a place to pray them still.[101] He notes that many commentators attempt to play down the imprecation and apologise for their distasteful violence. However, to avoid the psalms of imprecation is to be blind to much of the world where people *do* live in daily fear of oppression, violence and bloodshed (including places in the West).[102] When we read and pray the psalms of imprecation with the eyes of victims (the perspective of the psalms themselves) then we can see them as prayers of hope for the hopeless, power for the powerless, validation for the invalidated.[103]

All of this is to argue that the Psalms are not simply ancient Israelite "words from God" for us in the West to accommodate to our own worldview. They are also words *to* God which call us

[98] Wallace, *Words to God, Words from God*. See p. 20 n. 2 in particular.
[99] Wallace, *Words to God*, p. 80.
[100] Brueggemann, *Israel's Praise*, pp. 14-18.
[101] Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*.
[102] Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*, p. 51.
[103] Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*, pp. 53-64.

into a bigger world of prayer; they are to raise our spiritual temperature as we begin to identify with others; they are to bring us into solidarity with the vulnerable and lamenting, which the Bible consistently holds up as a primary concern.

6.3 A modest proposal

In writing I hope I have been clear that I have personally found the psalm prayers in *CW:DP* to be an invaluable asset in bridging between the world of the Psalms and the world of the contemporary Church of England. However, I hope I have also been clear that as I have studied and prayed I have found an increasing awareness that the prayers provide a comfortable account of the Psalms which does not always draw me into the fullness of the experience presented by the Psalms themselves.

No short text can, by itself, provide a complete and varied interpretation and prayer for a psalm. Even if it were possible it would be inadvisable; the great strength of the prayers provided in *CW:DP* (and others) is that they are brief, spacious and pick up on one or two particular themes or phrases to link together the world of the psalm and the contemporary pray-er. However, it does not follow that only one prayer can be offered to fulfil this role. Just as it is common to find books of collects that follow the lectionary in order to give alternative ways of gathering Sunday readings together,[104] so it is quite possible to envisage a collection of psalm prayers offering a variety of options (while hopefully retaining the literary qualities of the *CW:DP* offerings). Such a collection would enable those leading worship to draw upon a much deeper pool of psalmic imagery and might have the further benefit of more easily bringing the Psalms back into regular Sunday use among congregations for whom the Psalms remain a mystery. We see this possibility already in the quite different prayers offered the essentially identical Psalms 14 and 53.

This proposal goes some way to overcome some of the criticisms I have made. Where the existing psalm prayers miss the genre of the psalm, a prayer can be added to draw this out and so lament and imprecation can start to be embraced. For every prayer that takes an inward turn, one can be written with an outward emphasis. Seasonally appropriate prayers can be included. Prayers can be written to draw on the fullness of Christological resonance. Appendix 2 is an example of how one might approach such an idea for Psalms 1-4, with four different prayers for each psalm and a few sentences of commentary. With such a model the Psalms can start to be reclaimed by the Church of England as "words *to* God", the "prayer book of the Bible".[105]

Word count: 14,453

[104] See, for example, Steven Shakespeare, *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* or Janet Morley, *All Desires Known*.
[105] Bonhoeffer, *The Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible.*

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Appendix 1: Psalms Compared

Below are some tables showing how prayers for particular psalms have changed through the editorial process, along with some occasional suggestions of my own.

Appendix 1.1: Psalm 44

Final Edition	**Preliminary Edition**	**Celebrating Common Prayer**
In the darkness of unknowing, when your love seems absent, draw near to us, O God, in Christ forsaken, in Christ risen, our Redeemer and our Lord.	In the darkness of unknowing, when your love seems absent, and your favour far away, draw near to us, O God, through Jesus Christ the forsaken one, the risen one, our redeemer and our Lord.	Arise, O Lord, and behold the suffering of your people; reveal your power, that being made like Christ in his death, they may attain to the resurrection from the dead; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A prayer of lament for Psalm 44:

Awake, Lord,
whose face is hidden while we, the sheep, suffer;
remember your steadfast love,
and reveal the presence of the Good Shepherd,
that we may hear his voice
and follow him into fullness of life,
for his name's sake.

Appendix 1.2: Psalm 137

Final Edition	**Preliminary Edition / CCP**	**Early African Collect**[106]
God of our pilgrimage, you sent your Son to our strange land to bring us home to you; give us your songs to sing, that even in our exile we may be filled with the breath of the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord.	God of our joys and sorrows, comfort the exiled, console the oppressed and bring us in joy to our true home, where your faithful servants sing your praise, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for all eternity.	Hear the weeping of your servants, O gracious Lord, and take us away from the instruments of our captivity. Do not let us sing your song in a foreign land any longer. Restore us all. Spare us all. May we be worthy to possess the heavenly Jerusalem with all the saints.

[106] Nichols, 'Instruction, Improvisation and Imagination', p. 45.

Appendix 1.3: Psalm 2

Final Edition
Most high and holy God,
lift our eyes to your Son
enthroned on Calvary;
and as we behold
his meekness,
shatter our earthly pride;
for he is Lord
for ever and ever.

Preliminary Edition
Almighty God,
when the world's wars
terrify us,
lift our eyes to your Son,
enthroned on Calvary,
whose meekness
dumbfounds kinds
and shatters earthly pride.

CCP
O God, whose kingdom
is not of this world:
your Son has shattered
our yoke of sin
and loosened the fetters
of all that bound us in tyranny:
acknowledge the servants
who bow before you
and bless the inheritance
of your Son's redeeming;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Appendix 1.4: Psalm 110

Final Edition
Lord Jesus, divine Son
and eternal priest,
inspire us with the confidence
of your final conquest of evil,
and grant that daily on our
way we may drink of the
brook of your eternal life
and so find courage
against all adversities;
for your mercy's sake.

Preliminary Edition
When you came among us
in majesty, O God,
you took the form of a servant.
May we whom you call
to your priestly service
work to establish
your justice on earth,
that we may be inheritors
of your kingdom in heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

CCP
O Christ, our king
and our great high priest,
as in humility you were
born among us
so now in power may you
ever plead for us;
for you are alive and reign
in the glory of the Father,
now and for ever.

Appendix 1.5: Psalm 132

Final Edition
Jesus, Son of David,
make us a priestly people;

clothe us with righteousness,
make us fruitful,
and give us hearts to shout for joy
in your salvation;
we pray in the power of the Spirit.

Preliminary Edition / CCP
Jesus, Son of David, Mighty One of God,
you have called us to be priests
of the new covenant:
clothe us with righteousness,
make us faithful
and give us hearts to shout for joy
in your salvation.
To you be glory for ever![107]

[107] The preliminary edition replaces the exuberant exclamation mark at the end with a full stop.

Appendix 1.6: Psalm 85

Final Edition

Most holy God,
when we come to you fearing that
truth condemns us,
show us that truth is one with love
in your Word made flesh,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Preliminary Edition / CCP

Be gracious to us, Lord our God,
and restore us to fullness of life with you;
that mercy and truth may be our guide
and peace be a pathway for our feet;
through our Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Appendix 1.7: Psalm 42

Final Edition

Come, creator Spirit,
source of life;
sustain us when our
hearts are heavy
and our wells have run dry,
for you are the Father's gift,
with him who is
our living water,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preliminary Edition

Creator God,
whose life-giving Spirit
wells up with streams
of living water,
sustain those whose
spirits are heavy
and whose wells have run dry
through Jesus Christ,
the rock of our salvation.

CCP

O God,
as we come before your presence
satisfy the hearts of all who wait
in hope for your coming;
fill our soul with streams
of living water
as we place all our hope in you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Appendix 1.8: Psalm 25

Final Edition

Free us, God of mercy,
from all that keeps us from you;
relieve the misery of the
<u>anxious and the ashamed</u>
and fill us with the hope of peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preliminary Edition / CCP

Free us, God of mercy,
from all that keeps us from you;
relieve the misery of the
<u>poor and destitute</u>
and fill us <u>all</u> with the hope of peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Appendix 2: The Psalm Prayer Collection

Psalm 1

Each of these prayers deals with themes of water and fruit (v. 3) to bring out different aspects of human flourishing.

CW:DP
Christ our wisdom,
give us delight in your law,
that we may bear fruits of patience and
peace in the kingdom of the righteous;
for your mercy's sake.

Scottish Episcopal / ACC Psalter
Giver of life,
save us from the desert of faithlessness and
nourish us with the living water of your word,
that we may bring forth fruit that will last,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

CCP
O Christ, our fountain of living water,
welling up to eternal life:
as by your obedience
many were made righteous,
so may we delight in your commandments
and flourish in your way;
who live and reign, now and forever.

Author
Blessed God,
plant us ever more firmly into Christ,
from whom streams of living water flow.
May that water bring us to thirst
for justice and righteousness
as we follow your way,
to the glory of your Name.

Psalm 2

These prayers all find Christological resonance in the psalm. *CW* focuses on the meekness of the crucified Christ, *SE/AAC* centres on the resurrection, *CCP* emphasises our freedom from bondage to sin through Christ, and my version attempts to draw out themes of freedom in Christ to confront injustice.

CW:DP
Most high and holy God,
lift our eyes to your Son
enthroned on Calvary;
and as we behold his meekness,
shatter our earthly pride;
for he is Lord for ever and ever.

Scottish Episcopal / ACC Psalter
Ruler of heaven and earth,
you sent your only Son into the world
to be our Redeemer,
and by raising him from the dead
you gave him victory over all his enemies.
Show us the power of your saving love
and bring us to share in your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

CCP
O God, whose kingdom is not of this world:
your Son has shattered our yoke of sin
and loosened the fetters of all
that bound us in tyranny:
acknowledge the servants who bow before
you and bless the inheritance of
your Son's redeeming;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Author
King of the nations,
may your people fast from injustice;
shatter the yoke of our complacency and comfort,
and place upon us the gentle yoke of Christ,
in whom we find true freedom
and by whom your wrath is turned aside:
to him be glory and praise for ever.

Psalm 3

These prayers all identify different ways of understanding the enemies we face and yet find ways to respond in Jesus Christ.

CW:DP

Shield us, Lord, from all evil,
and lift us from apathy and despair,
that even when we are terrified,
we may trust your power to save;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Scottish Episcopal / ACC Psalter

Shield and protector of all,
hear the prayers of those who call upon you,
and set them free from violence, persecution,
and fear,
that all may know that deliverance belongs to you.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
our Saviour and Redeemer.

CCP

Arise, O Lord; deliver your people
and rouse us from the sleep of sin:
for as your Son offered up prayer with tears
in the days of his flesh,
so hear his heavenly intercession for us;
that though we may be tempted in every
way as he was,
we likewise may not fall away from you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Author

Lord God of truth,
deliver us from the enemies, without and within,
who whisper the lie that there is no help in you;
lift up our heads to see the salvation and
blessing that comes from you alone,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Psalm 4

CW, *SE/ACC* and *CCP* all hint at the sleep/death allusion to make this both an evening psalm and a prayer for the life of the world to come. My version is a more simple petition for fullness of life that reaches a broken world.

CW:DP

Give us today, O God,
a glad heart and a clear conscience,
that when we come to this day's end
we may rest in peace with Christ our Lord.

Scottish Episcopal / ACC Psalter

Faithful defender,
do not let our hearts be troubled,
but fill us with such confidence and joy
that we may sleep in peace
and rise in your light;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

CCP

In fear and trembling we offer you, O Lord,
the fruit of lips
which acknowledge your Name.
May our sacrifice of praise at this hour of
darkness turn upon us the light of
your countenance;
that finding rest in sleep,
we may rise to give you glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Author

God of marvellous kindness,
who puts gladness into our hearts,
may our lives be
sacrifices of righteousness,
demonstrations of your liberty and mercy,
and full of the peace of your safe dwelling;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.