



Secular Music and Young People's Spirituality

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*“Music is the thing known in the present life which most strongly suggests ecstasy
and infinity...”*

C. S Lewis (1971, p119)

Abstract

This dissertation explores how the impact of secular music in young people's lives affects their spirituality. The definition of spirituality referred to is that of James (1902/1961, as cited by Zinnbauer et al, 1997) who defined it as the way the people feel, act toward and experience their idea of a divinity. While there has already been some academic research into the way music impacts the emotional development of young people and some research into the impact of spiritual or religious music on spirituality, there has not been much formal research into the impact that music has on the spirituality of young people.

Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the impact that secular music had, specifically on young people who had an established relationship with a Church. Research was gathered applying a mixed-method approach with 20 questionnaires and 4 interviews being from young people across two different churches. The data was then analysed using a thematic analysis approach.

The findings of this research pointed to three main themes which highlighted how secular music impacted the spirituality of young people through: Secular music reminding young people of God's attributes, Secular music increasing young people's gratitude towards God and Secular music challenging young people's faith. However, the most significant finding is the relationship and intermingling between the three themes and the understanding that the themes cannot be viewed in total isolation and that each theme directly impacts the others.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The goings on in the lives of young people remains a source of intrigue within contemporary society (Heath et al, 2009). In fact, due to the liminal status of adolescence, the role of the youth worker is multifaceted and complex. Fleming (2018) argues that the teen years are indeed a time of identity crisis and for this reason, the National Youth Agency (2013) advocates that the role of the youth worker must revolve around the whole young person, focussing on “delivering improvements in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development” (p.4) in order to support them fully.

1.1 The significance of studying the spirituality of young people

Within this, Nash and Palmer (2011) argue the development of young people’s spirituality is of particular importance as they argue the spiritual development of the young person to be crucial in their development of identify and in realising their capabilities in life. As such, they suggest that youth workers should focus on ways in which they can empower young people to develop spiritually. This suggestion is supported by research within schools, with Ofsted (2004) arguing young people who develop a perception of their own spirituality to be more likely to show respect for themselves,

for others and exhibit empathy towards others' emotions and beliefs. In fact, spirituality has not only been linked to the display of desirable behaviours, but further with general happiness (Holder et al, 2010). It is arguable therefore, that any methods through which the spirituality of young people can be promoted should be endorsed within youth work practice.

1.2 The significance of studying secular music

However, while many "religious subcultures adopt popular cultural artefacts and modes of narration as means of reinforcing identity and communicating religious traditions across generations" (Kärjä and Sjöborg , 2017 p.2), it is important to outline that even for the majority of young people who identify as Christians, religious music is not the predominant style of music that is listened to. In fact, Bennet (2000) suggests secular music, which can be defined as music which is commercially popular (Laughey, 2006), acts as the primary leisure activity of many young people. He suggests this to be not only due to its presence as a media form in its own right but also due to its presence in other areas of popular culture young people are exposed to. Moreover, Schmudlach (2015) suggests exposure to secular music plays a significant role in determining the lens through which young people see the world around them as it "offers a way through which life can be navigated" (Grossberg, as cited by Bennett, 2000, p.40). This being said, despite the influence of secular music on young people within current culture, little research exists in relation to the potential impact of secular music to the spirituality of young people within church contexts. It is possible that research within this area would be significant for the way in which youth workers relate to and employ the use of music in their practice.

1.3 Research aims and questions

Taking these factors into account, it is possible that there may be real benefit in exploring the ways in which listening to secular music influences the spirituality of young people, specifically within a church context. In order to do this however, it is key that the concept of spirituality is defined clearly, as research has shown it to be "an obscure construct in need of empirical grounding" (Zinnbauer et al, 1997, p549). While broad definitions of spirituality exist which argue spirituality to be the subjective way in which we make sense of the world (Erriker,1996, as cited by Nye, 1998), these offer a broad view of the concept which is arguably hard to research. Instead, James (1902/1961 as cited by Zinnbauer et al, 1997) suggests that spirituality can be defined as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine" (p.550). For the purpose of this study, this definition of spirituality will be used.

With this in mind, the aim of this research study is to explore the ways in which the secular music impacts the spirituality of young people. In doing this, it will employ three main research questions:

1. In what ways, if any, does secular music impact the way young people *feel* about God?
2. In what ways, if any, does secular music impact the way young people *act* towards God?
3. In what ways, if any, does secular music impact the way young people *experience* God?

1.4 Outline of the study

The study will be structured as follows:

Chapter two, the literature review, explores literature around young people's spirituality and the affects music has on young people's development. It also unpacks literature around the significance of spirituality in young people.

Chapter three looks at the research design used for this study. It sets out why a qualitative approach was employed and how this is outworked within the study.

Chapter four sets out the key findings of this study by setting out the themes and subthemes that were found in line with the research questions.

Chapter five discusses the importance of the uncovered findings from the study, in relation to the outlined literature. It also explores the theological and practical implications for how these findings impact youth work practice.

Chapter six outlines the key findings of the study. It explains the limitations from the study and explores recommendations for the next steps in future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to literature

Within current studies there has been a lot of research into the effects of music on young people's development due to the popularity of popular music in current UK youth culture and the implications of its use on well-being and behaviour. While a large body of research exists in this area, this literature review will seek to unpack key themes that have already been explored which include the impact of music on young people's personal and emotional development. After this, due to the focus of this research study on the impact of music on young people's spirituality, it will then explore the importance of spiritual development, in order to develop a clear understanding of why spiritual development is crucial in understanding and working with young people. It will finally assess prior research around the impact of spiritual music on young people's spirituality in order to assess the importance of this study's aim to understand the influence of secular music on young people's spirituality.

2.21 Music and self confidence

The benefit of listening to music for young people in particular is an area which has been widely researched within recent years. Emphasis around the significance of music in the lives of young people has frequently focused on the influence music has on young people's social and emotional development and a strong correlation has been found to exist between young people's exposure to music and their development of positive self-esteem (Hallam et al, 2010). Evidence has demonstrated involvement in the creation of music to increase young people's self-image, self-awareness and support young people in developing positive attitudes and behaviours (Whitwell, 1977 as cited by Hallam et al, 2010). Moreover, findings suggest young people who engage in creative musical processes such as learning instruments, to have a higher self-esteem than their peers who have no musical experience and Costa-Giormi (1999) notes children of low economic status who engaged in piano lessons for three years to have reported significantly higher levels of self-esteem than a control group who had no access to music instruction at all. She outlined this to be regardless of family background, employment or even the child's gender.

Bailey and Davidson (2005) offer convincing reasons for this as they suggest that taking part in musical activity is able to grow a sense of community and so is able to make people build up self-confidence in a group setting. This was also found by Sward (1989, as cited by Hallam et al, 2010) who found that as well as communal singing building up self-esteem, those involved in musical

group activities were better able to support each other, maintain better commitment and work more collaboratively as a team. It is important to note that while the above research studies have focussed on research within countries outside of the UK, similar findings have also been recorded in the UK and Welch Sarazin et al (2014) found that in a sample of 11258 children from across various backgrounds, in settings where children “acquired singing competence through participation in a group where learning was collaborative, satisfying, and significant” (p.803) feelings of social inclusion and self-esteem were highlighted.

2.22 Music and Emotional Wellbeing

Moreover while research shows that inclusion in the musical process itself influences social and emotional development, evidence has also shown simply listening to music influences the emotional wellbeing of young people. Saarikallio & Erkkilä 2007 found that listening to music offered adolescents strong emotional experiences and entertainment and served as a resource for personal renewal and recovery, arguing this to be due to the fact that listening to music served as a means of “lifting up spirits through enjoyable activity” (p.104). Moreover, Rudd (1997 as cited by Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007) suggests this positive link between music listening and positive emotional wellbeing to be linked to the fact that the first musical memories of many young people will include feelings of ‘being held’ by parents and being in a safe relationship. While Rudd’s (1997) suggestion fails to account for those that do not experience this form of parenting, it is interesting to note that further explanations for the positive role of music on emotional wellbeing are linked to young people’s positive relationships. Schwartz and Fouts (2003, as cited by Saarikallio & Erkkilä 2007) suggest that listening to music provides validation for the emotions of adolescents by assuring them that they are not emotionally alone, and that their feelings are real. They argue that listening to music enables young people to relate to one another and thus that listening to music allows them to feel a greater sense of emotional connectedness to those beyond themselves.

2.3 Young people and spirituality

It is not simply music however, that plays a significant role in the lives of young people. Research in this area has shown spirituality to be important amongst young people for a variety of different reasons with Reutter and Bigatti (2014) concluding that for many young people “the relationship between spirituality and psychological health [is] stronger than the relationship between religiosity and psychological health” (p.7). In fact, Englebretson (1999 as cited by Webber 2002) found that in a class of 30, while only 4 out of the 30 had positive experiences of religion, 28 of the class said that

spirituality was extremely important in their lives, showing spirituality is key to those from faith backgrounds and non-faith backgrounds. Furthermore, OFSTED (2004) found that when young people were given the space to develop spiritually, they were more likely “develop their own set of values by which to live, show respect for themselves as well as others, show empathy and stand up for what they believe” (p.13).

More specifically, research from Ruddock and Cameron (2010) has shown the importance of positive spirituality to come from its ability to act as a coping mechanism for young people by giving them the feeling that they are part of something much bigger than themselves and so giving them the permission to ‘hope’. This idea of spirituality as a coping mechanism is also supported by Yodchai et al (2017) who when working with people with kidney disease, found that those with a stronger spirituality were better able to cope with their conditions and accept their illnesses. The idea of spirituality helping in particular hard times including illnesses is also seen in those suffering with mental health issues. Van Dyke et al (2009) when working with urban adolescents struggling with psychological distress and mental health issues, found that “religion and coping converged to promote resilience, healing, and well-being in day to-day living and in facing stressful events.” (p.370).

2.4 Young people, music and spirituality

Despite evidence outlining the significance of spirituality and music in young people’s lives, when researching in this area, I found only one article studying links between the two which explored the way in which music affects the spiritual journey of young adults in Finland (Murtonen, 2018). The study identified ‘spiritual music’, which it clarified as any music ‘that the young adults experienced having supported their spirituality’ (Murtonen, 2018, p.214), to affect the spiritual development of the young adults studied in three ways. Firstly, through influencing the construction of young people’s world view, strengthening of one’s faith and spiritual experiences. Secondly, through supporting young people’s personal functions, through acting as a mental resource or as a source of entertainment to gain positive emotions and thirdly, as a function in which to find social meaning which involves finding spiritual togetherness and community. Despite the strengths of Murtonen’s (2018) study it is important to highlight that as she only studied young people in Finland and therefore, findings cannot necessarily be transferred and used everywhere. Another drawback is that she only explored the impact of *spiritual* music on young people’s lives which misses out a large amount of music that young people listen to. As already acknowledged, secular music plays a key role in the way that young people see and explore the world around them (Schmudlach 2015) and it

is therefore crucial that the way in which secular music impacts young people's spirituality is unpacked.

Chapter Three: Research Design

3.1 The nature of research

MacNaughton et al (2001) argue that "each of us always and inevitably frames the world in the process of seeing it." (p.32). Indeed, the way in which we view the world around us influences our interpretation of it, and this is no clearer than within research. It is key therefore, to discuss the epistemological lens through which research is being conducted as this individual paradigm of knowledge will influence the direction that a study will take (Guba and Lincoln, 2005 as cited by Ulum, 2016) and "carry implications for the ways in which methods can, if at all, be legitimised" (Heath et al, 2009, p. 17). One epistemological paradigm, interpretivism, "emphasises the subjective meaning of social action, therefore giving priority to seeing the world through the eyes of those who are being researched" (Heath et al, 2009, p. 17). Interpretivist research, for this reason, places value on "gaining an empathic understanding of an individual's feelings [...] with the goal to gaining greater understanding of the individual's behaviour [rather than] isolating and objectively measuring variables or on developing generalizations" (Pulla and Carter, 2018, p.11). Indeed, the interpretivist view "invites the researcher to discover the feelings and meaning of a participant" (Pulla and Carter, 2018, p.10), giving real value on the individuality of each person within a study. This idea of seeing the uniqueness of a person is something that can be seen in the Bible, where there are many examples of a personal God meeting with his people individually. Taking this into account, it can be implied that to best understand and relate to people in our research we cannot view all people in a one size fits all model but be willing to understand each person in created as a unique individual.

Due to the emphasis interpretivist approaches take in starting "with individuals and setting out to understand their interpretations of the world around them" (Cohen et al, 2007, p.20) interpretivist research often relies on the use of qualitative research methods as these "assume that the answer to any single research question or objective lies within a host of related questions or issues ", (Roller and Lavrakas, 2015, p.1). Qualitative research places priority on the individuals within the study, understanding the importance of how "context and relationships play in forming thoughts and behaviours" (Roller and Lavrakas, 2015, p.1). Due to the aims of this study to gain non limited understanding into the role of secular music on the development of young people's spirituality, qualitative research approaches have been used.

3.2 Research setting and sampling

3.2.1 Setting

When undertaking this research project, young people from two different church settings were chosen. Both churches were chosen due to personal connections due to the assumption that when undertaking research, those “with insider positioning have a more complete and less distorted knowledge of the social world in which they are researching” (Heath et al, 2009, p.40). Located in Nottingham, the churches chosen varied in size and background. The first church was a large city centre, charismatic church with a youth group of around 30. The majority of the young people within the church originated from white middle-class backgrounds. For the sake of anonymity, within this study, this church has been referred to as Nottingham City Church (NCC). The second setting was a small Anglican church located in a small suburb of Nottingham. Due to a variety of different youth outreach projects, despite having a smaller congregation size, the church had around 25-30 young people linked with it. Within this setting, the young people originated from predominantly from white working-class backgrounds. For the sake of anonymity, within this study, this Church has been referred to as St Peter’s Church.

3.2.2 Participants

Due to the size of the study carried out, I chose to use purposive sampling within my selection of candidates as this allowed for the selection of specific individuals based on certain criteria (Cohen et al, 2007). Taking this into account, the study sample consisted of 19 young people, aged between 13 and 18 years old, each of whom classified themselves as having a Christian faith. Of this sample, 6 participants were female and 13 were male. The distribution of participants across both settings was fairly equal, with 10 participants coming from St Peter’s Church and 9 from NCC. The reason for this equal distribution stemmed from the notion that the voice of participants from both church settings would be equally valid and yet varied. Indeed, Harden et al (2000, as cited by Heath et al, 2009) suggest researching an equal amount of young people from variety of settings to be advisable, through their argument that “young people are by no means a homogeneous group” (p.70).

3.2.3 Voice of the child

The reasons behind this study’s choice to work directly with young people was based on the The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), which states that children and young people should have the right for their voice to be heard in matters that directly impact them. In fact, research has demonstrated the value of asking young people about specific issues in their lives to give authentic insight into the reality of being a young person and influence how work with young

people may be best conducted (O'Reilly et al, 2013). While it has been argued that using adult researchers when researching young people can affect the process and outcomes of research (Lewis and Porter, 2004), it is important that young people are given opportunities to act as “social agents, cultural producers and experts of their own lives” (Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008 p.122) and although power imbalances may affect the outcomes of research with young people, they do not take away from its significance. There are many other research within research where power imbalances can arise, despite the age of participants (Van Der Riet and Boettiger, 2009). With this in mind, in the conducting of this study, young participants were seen as “active partners in the process of research itself” (p.71) who were “‘the best resource’ for understanding youth.” (Schäfer, N & Yarwood, R 2008 p.122).

3.3 Data collection and analysis

Taking this into account within this research project, I sought to gain deep insight into the ways in which young people perceive secular music influences their spirituality. For this reason, a multi method approach to research was chosen. This decision was based on the idea that the triangulation of research can increase the validity of research (Meetoo and Temple, 2003) by enabling researchers to find patterns within their research which they are able to combine to give an overall interpretation of findings (Fitzpatrick and Boulton, 1994 as cited by Meetoo and Temple, 2003). With this in mind, this research study chose to gain a wider picture of the impact of secular music on young people’s spirituality by using open ended questionnaires and from these, conducted a limited amount of interviews to gain a more in depth view on the personal impact of secular music on young people’s spirituality.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

When beginning this study, a pilot questionnaire was used as Dahlberg and McCaig (2010) suggest that piloting “can help ensure that questions are worded correctly and that respondents navigate round the questionnaire correctly.” (p.181) as well as enabling researchers to see if the subjects are able to interpret the questions in the same way as each other. When conducting my pilot, I discovered that some more open-ended questions within the questionnaire were too broad and therefore were difficult to answer. In response to this, when designing my second questionnaire, I made the questions more direct. This enabled the young people to truly understand what was being asked of them. I also made sure that my questionnaire was well designed and easy to follow with questions having a logical flow as research has suggested that having a questionnaire which “is clear, well laid out, logical in flow from one question to the next [...] will increase response rates and improve quality of response” (De Leeuw and Borgers, 2004, p.180).

A majority of the questions asked in the questionnaire were open-ended. This approach was selected despite the suggestion that using such questions “ carries problems of data handling” (Cohen et al 2007) due to their wide scope and the potential for difficulty when summarising the data, as further research has shown open ended questions to give individuals the opportunity to answer spontaneously without the bias can easily come from close-ended questions (Reja et al, 2003, p.161). Moreover, as evidence has suggested that the use of open-ended questions can lead to individuals not responding to questions at all due to an overload of information (Reja et al, 2003), the questions asked were kept to a minimum and were designed directly in line with the research questions outlined within this study’s rationale. Taking this into account, when administering the questionnaires, it was easy for the young people completing them to do so relatively quickly. Examples of the questionnaires given to the young people can be found in Appendix One.

3.3.2 Interviews

The second method of data collection used within this research study involved selecting certain young people who had completed the questionnaire and interviewing them based on their responses. Once I had gathered the questionnaires I used this information in order to select various candidates to interview within the study. The choice to administer the research in this order was based on the idea that “interviews can be used to cast further explanatory insight into survey data” (Cohen et al, 2007, p.506) which enables the researcher to not only dig in deeper to answers given in the questionnaire but also to hear the answers clarified in the young people’s own words.

Interviews as a method of data collection have been shown to "allow research participants to tell stories on their own terms and in their own words" (Heath et al, 2009, p.80). This enabling and empowerment of allowing people to use their own words helps the researcher to see the world from perspectives of the participants and to gain a deeper understanding into how they see and interpret their personal experiences (Cohen et al, 2007, p.506). While interviews have the potential to cause power dynamics as the interviewer can take over the interview (Roller and Lavrakas, 2015), the use of semi-structured interviews allows for flexibility (Roller and Lavrakas, 2015), therefore taking the emphasis from the researcher and onto the participant. For this reason, semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow the young people to have more ownership over the information they were sharing. During the interviews, plenty of time was given for responses as evidence has shown that “in early adolescence (12-16) memory capacity is full grown, but memory speed is not. Even in this older age group, ample time for answering questions should be allowed.” (De Leeuw and Borgers, 2004, p.414). A sample of the interview questions used can be found in Appendix Two.

3.3.3 Data analysis

In order to understand the ways in which secular music can influence the spirituality of young people, the data collected from the questionnaires and interviews was analysed in line with the themes that arose. Nowell et al (2017) suggest that this form of data analysis acts as a “useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences, and generating unanticipated insights” (p.2) As such, within this study questionnaires were analysed and coded in line with findings which were seen to be reoccurring within the data. Interviews were listened to, partially transcribed and coded in the same way. As a result, several key themes arose and sub themes within these. Examples of the data analysis used can be found in Appendix Three.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Due to the nature of this research study and its focus on the influence of secular music on the spirituality of young people, specific ethical considerations were taken into account as while young people should be seen as active social agents, (Dahlberg and McCraig, 2010, p.122), they remain “a relatively powerless group within a research process” (Heath et al, 2009, p.5). For this reason, when undertaking this study, full consent was sought from the young people involved, as it was considered that young people are at an age where they could do so in an informed manner. Due to the fact that the majority of the young people within the study were minors, signed consent was also gained from the young people’s parents or guardians as well, as “although [gaining a] child’s assent is advisable, the power to consent, in law, is that of his/her parents or legal guardian” (UCL Research Ethics Committee, no date, p.2). The consent forms and information sheets used for this study can be found in Appendix Four. Within the study, all the participants and the settings have been referred to using pseudonyms as is outlined in the Data Protection Act (Great Britain, 2018) and all data stored on computers, including audio and written files has been kept under password protection. The ethical considerations form used for this study can be found in Appendix Five.

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

Within this chapter I will begin to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1.3 of this study, exploring the ways in which the secular music that young people listen to influences their spirituality. To do this, I will refer to the research questions outlined in the study, studying young people's responses against the definition of spirituality which has been outlined as: "the feeling, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine" (James, 1902/1961 as cited by Zinnbauer et al, 1997, p.550) I will do this by presenting findings which I have gathered, combining the themes that have arisen from data collected from across multiple sources and participants, including 20 questionnaires and 4 interviews. This will help me to gain an overview of the overriding impact of secular music on young people's spirituality through an interpretivist epistemological lens.

4.1 Themes

The thematic analysis of the data I have collected identifies three main themes in which secular music influences the spirituality of young people. These themes have been set out in the table below, along with the three sub-themes which emerged out of these main themes.

Table One: Summary of themes

Themes	Subthemes
Secular music reminding young people of God's attributes	Reminding young people of God's love Reminding young people of God's power
Secular music increasing young people's gratitude towards God	Gratitude for music itself Gratitude for salvation
Secular music challenging young people's faith	Challenge to change behaviours Questioning God and His goodness

4:2 Secular music reminding young people of God's attributes

The first theme that I was able to identify was that of secular music serving as a reminder to young people of God's distinct attributes. This appeared to influence young people's spirituality through causing them to experience a deeper level of intimacy towards God. The main two characteristics of God which were outlined by the young people were that of God's love and God's power. These have therefore been highlighted as subthemes.

4.2.1 Reminding young people of God’s love

The influence of secular music on the spirituality of many of the young people in the study, analysis found, was linked to the idea that listening to secular music gave them a greater understanding of God’s love towards them which in turn influenced both their experience, actions and feelings towards God. This idea of secular music enabling the young people to acknowledge God’s love was found in both the questionnaires and the interviews. Many participants noted that listening to lyrics about love within secular music reminded them of the love of God, and what he had done in their lives. This then caused them to experience feelings of love from God and therefore, a greater sense of intimacy with him. Participant 10 offers a good example of this. When asked how secular music affected the way he experienced God, he explained that through the music he was reminded that God is “giving, loving and benevolent” and suggested that this in turn increased the intimacy that he experienced with God. Interestingly, this consequence of listening to secular music was also highlighted within interviews. Table Two below demonstrates this well, referring to Ronald’s response when asked about how the theme of love influences how he feel about God.

Table Two – Secular music reminding young people of God’s love (RONALD: 06:58 – 07:20)

[Following discussion about the song John Bellion – Stupid deep.]

Researcher	How do the themes of this song affect the way you feel about God?
Ronald	I think, when you head songs about love [SIC] you learn to love God, it reminds you of God’s love and you do love God and it brings you closer to Him.

As well as the young people being able to experience God’s love through the music, in some cases listening to secular music also influenced how they felt towards God, as they suggested experiencing God’s love caused them to feel love themselves towards God. For example, when asked about how secular music affected the way she felt about God, Participant 5 explained that listening to secular music which reminded her of God enabled her to “love God and feel God’s love more” showing that listening to secular music young not only influences experience of God but also their feelings towards Him. Moreover, findings suggest that through causing many of the young people to experience God’s love and to love him in return, they were more likely to act differently towards God by spending more time with God, praying more and even wanting to show his love to others in the community.

4.2.2 Reminding young people of God's power

As well as finding that secular music influenced young people's spirituality by reminding them of God's love, findings also showed listening to remind young people of God's power in their lives and that this again, developed for many a deeper sense of intimacy in their relationships with God. In relation to research questions one and three, when asked how Christian themes in secular music affected the way they experienced God, a number of participants acknowledged that the content of secular music served as a reminder of the lives that they would have led without God's saving power in their lives. They suggested that through reminding them of His power in this way, they were drawn into a deeper sense of intimacy with Him. Participant 4 stated specifically that listening to secular music "brings me closer to God as it shows me how powerful He is." This demonstrates how acknowledgement of God's power caused by secular music has the ability to draw people into a closer relationship with God and strengthen their faith. Moreover, Participant 3 suggested that being reminded of this power not only caused him to experience God more closely, but by doing so increased his feelings of hope towards God, as he outlined this theme within secular songs reminded him "someone is there to save him".

Through reminding the participants of God's power, listening to secular music did not simply impact their feelings towards God and experiences of him but also impacted how they acted towards him. Many of the young people who recognised secular music as a prompt in this way also commented that the music they listened to made them want to draw closer to God, because of His power that had saved them. When asked about this in his questionnaire, Participant 8 acknowledged that being reminded of God's power made him act more reverently towards God, in recognition of His power, and this in turn encouraged him to draw closer to God in his prayer time. Moreover, this acknowledgement of God's power through listening to secular music was also able to help young people to act more confidently in their lives, due to the fact that they recognised God's power. This, they suggested, enabled them to achieve more. Participant 13 spoke about how he was able to act more confidently and push himself to achieve more because he knew he had a powerful God who is with him at all times.

4.3 Secular music increasing young people's gratitude towards God

Another key theme that arose from the study was that secular music was able to increase a sense of gratitude towards God for many of the young listeners. This was outworked in two separate subthemes, the first of which was gratitude to God for music itself and the enjoyment that it brings,

while the second was a sense of gratitude to God for the hope that He has given them and for what He has done for them in their lives.

4.3.1 Gratitude for music itself

Within the questionnaire and interview responses, young people suggested that listening to secular music influenced their spirituality by causing them to feel a deep sense of gratitude towards God for music itself and for the positive impact that this has on their lives. In relation to question one of the study specifically, when Participant 7 was asked about how secular music made her feel about God, she responded that it made her “feel thankful to God for all the great music.” This idea of being grateful for the positive feelings that are experienced when listening to music was also found by Participant 8 who commented that he felt thankful to God when listening to secular music as he was able to “experience all positive emotions that listening to music has.” This idea was not only drawn from questionnaires however, but repeated within participant interviews. The following abstract is from an interview with Eve which shows that she clearly feels a deep gratitude for the music that she listens to and how this has a positive influence on her life.

Table Three – Gratitude for music (EVE 05:33 – 06:20)

<i>[Following a discussion about the song ‘Where is the love’ by The Black Eyed Peas..]</i>	
Researcher	How, if at all, do these themes in non-Christian music affect the way you feel about God?
Eve	How do they affect?
Researcher	So, the themes that you listen to, in the Non-Christian music you listen to, how do you think they affect the way you feel about God?
Eve	They don’t really that much, well actually sometimes they do. If I was listening to ‘Where is the Love?’, I’d be like “oh yeah, I need to pray more”, cause um, cause he prays in the song, well kind of prays in the song, and then I also think that I need to thank Him as well for the amazing songs
Researcher	So, it can make you feel, like, grateful?
Eve	Yeah, basically.

Some participants suggested that because of their gratitude for music, they were able to experience God in a closer way as their enjoyment of the music allowed them to feel more connected to Him. This suggests links between simply listening to secular music and young people’s experiences of God. However, while many of the participants suggested that listening to music increased thankfulness

for the music itself and some a deeper experience of God, none of them suggested that this thankfulness would lead them to any specific action towards God such as thanksgiving or praise.

4.3.2 Gratitude for the hope God has given them

As well as feeling a sense of gratitude for music, analysis showed many young people involved in the study also felt a sense of gratitude towards God for what He had done for them in their lives. For many of the young people who suggested this, they gave reasons which suggested that listening to secular music caused them to feel grateful for their lives compared to those writing the lyrics of the songs as, because of the hope that they have been given by God, their lives were not like the stories and themes in the songs. This feeling was particularly prevalent in Participant 16’s questionnaire, whose answers to a variety of questions carried a genuine sense of gratitude. He commented that when listening to secular music he felt “grateful for the hope I have in Christ, that I have hope and certainty in my life.”

When asked about the way he acted towards God in a later interview, this answer informed his response when he shared that as a result of this gratitude he is able to feel more confident coming towards God, secure in the knowledge that God “only wants to give good things.”

Table Four – Gratitude for the hope God has given them (JAMES 06:49 – 08:23)

<i>[Following a discussion about Christian themes found in secular music.]</i>	
Researcher	How, if at all, do these themes in non-Christian music affect the way you feel about God?
James	Hmm ok, um, can I use an example?
Researcher	Yeah, yeah, yeah
James	Ok, so just, um, just from, yeah, just from there’s a song by the 1975 called ‘love it if we made it’, um and yeah it just I think I just think in that song, I definitely feel like, ah I’ve kind of a bit of desperation, like I’d love it if we made it, we probably won’t, but I’d love it if we did
Researcher	Yeah
James	And so that even just listening to that, it’s quite affirming for me cause I was like ah, that’s not me like I know that, I’ve made it, that we have made it, because we are in Christ, rather than just I’d love it if we did, this world’s like going to pot, um yeah so definitely I dunno it makes me feel grateful for what I have, yeah.

The gratitude for the things that God has done which young people were reminded of when listening to secular music also appeared to impact their experiences of God as well as their feelings towards him. Many suggested that this gratitude for the way God had changed their lives led them to experience God's joy and hope more clearly therefore enabling them to feel closer to him. This was evident in Participant 12's questionnaire where he suggested that through listening to secular lyrics he experienced God more closely as he was grateful for the fact that God is so much greater than the things he was listening to which appeared shallow. As with others of the sub themes, the young people who felt this gratitude and closeness to God suggested that their actions to God were also likely to be effected and they were more likely to spend time with God in his presence or to pray.

4.4 Secular Music Challenging young people's Faith

Another theme that was brought up in the study was that of secular music being a direct challenge to young people's faith. This included two main subthemes which came out through the analysis. The first of these was that listening to secular music challenged young people to change their own behaviours through listening to the behaviours of those in the songs. The second subtheme was that listening to secular music challenged and made young people question their individual faiths and God's goodness in their lives.

4.4.1 Challenge to change own behaviour

The research showed that when young people listened to secular music it caused them to reflect upon their own actions due to the lyrics of the music containing themes which were either contrary or in support of their faith and beliefs. In this sense, listening to secular music served to challenge young people to live out their faith in a more active way. Those that highlighted themes that were supporting of their faith within the music suggested that these challenged their actions towards them to respond to God by making them want to pray more and spend time with Him. Participant 7 suggested that listening to secular music which supported her faith caused her to: "pray more when I am reminded by the song". As well as encouraging young people to pray, Participant 6 suggested that secular music did more than this, inspiring her to do more good deeds and be a more giving person as she stated that the songs caused her to "pray more to God, make me a better person, do more good deeds". This theme of 'doing good' in response to the music was also found in Participant 2's response, when he commented that it "makes me want to raise money for charity", again showing the young people being stirred to live out their faith practically.

As well as reminding the young people to live out their faith by affirming positive actions, clashes between their faith and the content of the songs reminded many of the young people of how they shouldn't be behaving when they heard the negative content of secular music. For some of the young people, this caused them to feel far away from God when they realised their behaviour was the same as that in the secular music. For this reason, they suggested listening to the lyrics of the music caused them to want to take practical steps to change their actions. For example, Participant 11 found that when he listened to secular music it caused him to feel distant from God as he found himself affirming the behaviours that he was listening to and therefore, it caused him to want to worship so that he felt close to God again.

4.4.2 Questioning God and His goodness

While the majority of young people listening to secular music outlined how listening to the lyrics influenced them to behave as opposite to the people in the songs, a number of young people in the study found that listening to secular music made them question their faith and the very nature of God due to the clashes between the content of the songs and the content of their faith. Participant 13 found that often when listening to secular music, he would feel angry towards God for not having the answers to the issues in the songs he was listening to. This in turn caused him to question God and his own faith which led to his actions towards God being more angry. Moreover, Participant 17 found that listening to secular music served as a distraction from her relationship with God and directly affected her ability to experience God. She suggested that often the lyrics pushed her “away from His ways and towards evil, in simple terms making me follow what everyone else is doing.” This idea however was not limited to questionnaires and the interview below with Naomi offers a clear insight into the challenges facing young people spiritually when listening to secular music.

Table Five – Questioning God's goodness (NAOMI 13:22 – 15:44)

[Following a discussion about the song 'Same Love – Maclemore' and 'Take me to Church – Hozier'.]

Naomi	When I listen to them I almost get a sense of, like I really love the songs, it's just like a contrast cause like some lyrics, if I listen to the lyrics carefully, like I realize it's like almost anti-Christian, but yet I really love the song. Which can sometimes stir an anger in, like why is this song aimed at me, yet I love the song?
Researcher	So, what is your response when you listen to them, in terms of your faith?

Naomi Well I obviously get like quite angry about it when I, like I love the song doesn't mean I get angry when I listen to the song. Like I get angry at my relationship with God that He, I dunno, like why is that ok that Christians should be hated yet I don't feel the same way maybe? Like when I listen to the song I get angry at God like look what you've caused, this song is aimed at us, like Christians. And yet I love the song, but it does bring a sense of anger to my relationship with God

4.5 Theme Interaction

While the previous three themes state clear ways that secular music impacts the spirituality of young people in different ways, it is also important to highlight that none of these themes are found in isolation, but rather they all overlap and occur as a consequence of one another, interacting to influence spirituality. For example, when Participant 6 was asked how she felt about God, she replied that she recognised God's love for her and this recognition led her to want to pray more and do more 'good deeds', which in turn led her to experience more of God's love towards her and caused her to then be more grateful for that love. In essence, it is evident that there is not one clear way in which secular music influences young people's spirituality, but it does so through affecting multiple aspects of their faith including their feelings, understanding and actions towards God.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The set of data collected within this study builds upon previously conducted research which notes the significance of listening to music on the development of young people. Specifically, it builds upon the findings of Murtonen (2018) who found that music was a tool through which young people were able to feel connected to God as it gave them a sense of social meaning and served as a tool for mental strengthening. However, while Murtonen (2018) explored the ways in which spiritual music influenced the spirituality of young people, she failed to address the impact that secular music might have in this area. For this reason, this study chose to look at the impact of young people's spirituality when listening to secular music, focusing specifically on young people within church settings. While there are some differences in the results of both studies, this study builds upon this previous research by exploring a wider range of music to which young people are more often exposed.

Moreover, the strength of this study's findings lie in the fact that as well as identifying a clear link between listening to secular music and young people's spirituality, it also presents three strong ways in which this is outworked. Firstly, it does so through reminding young people of positive attributes of God; secondly, it increases their gratitude towards God for music and for what he has done for them; and finally, it challenges their faith by making them question their behaviours and their understanding of God. While Murtonen's (2018) findings suggested that listening to spiritual music evoked positive outcomes for young people's spirituality, this study found that while for a majority of young people listening to secular music impacted their spirituality positively, this was not the case for all of the young people. This implies the links between listening to music and young people's spirituality are less clear than previously suggested.

5.2 Secular music reminding young people of God's attributes

This research found that when the young people listened to secular music they were often reminded of God's characteristics, notably his power and love, which led to them to experience a deeper sense of security and intimacy in their relationships with Him. This finding builds upon the work of Murtonen (2018) which suggests listening to music to strengthen the faith of young people, however takes this further, offering reason for this in the suggestion that this strengthening of faith occurs through the young people being reminded of God's attributes while listening. The power of

reminding ourselves of God's characteristics is something that is echoed throughout the Bible and is something that Christians are encouraged to do. In Joshua 4 :20-24, after crossing the River Jordan, Joshua instructs the Israelites to build an alter to the Lord to serve as a reminder to them and future generations of God's faithfulness, so that "all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God." (v.24).

This study also found that as a result of this experience of intimacy, young people felt led to outwork their faith both in spiritual and practical ways and were confident to do so, as they felt equipped by the power and love of God. This builds upon research from Ruddock and Cameron (2010) who found that when young people thought of themselves as part of something bigger they were able to find comfort and act with greater confidence, as they felt connected to those within the music, which benefitted their sense of self. This study found similarly that listening to secular music has the ability to increase the confidence of young people, however, this was not as a result of music making young people feel part of something bigger within the physical world, but by making them aware of the being connected to a God who is bigger than their circumstances. In essence, being reminded of God's power and love served the young people to better understand the vastness of God and so to find intimacy and security in their relationships with Him. By feeling a greater sense of connectedness to him, they were confident that God would be with them in their actions, which changed in the light of this. This finding could be significant particularly for practitioners working with young people with low self-confidence, as it implies that listening to secular music not only has the ability to benefit emotional wellbeing as previous research has shown, but to increase confidence and active steps of faith by drawing young people deeper into understanding of God's love and power.

5.3 Secular Music increasing young people's gratitude towards God

Findings from this research also support findings by Whitwell (1977 as cited by Hallam et al, 2012) which found listening to secular music to cause young people to develop better behaviours and have a more positive attitude towards their lives. However, while this study supports this finding, it again gives further and more complex reasoning to the factors behind this, arguing the cause of this positive attitude to be more than simply an increase in self-image and awareness, but rather an increase in gratitude towards God for music itself and for the positive impact that God has had on young people's lives. Participants of the study suggested that because of their gratitude for music, they were able to experience God in a closer way as their enjoyment of the music allowed them to feel more connected to Him. This supports findings from Saarikallio & Erkkilä (2007) which outline

secular music to serve as a tool for personal renewal and recovery, through its ability to lift young people's spirits through them finding pleasure in music itself.

Moreover, this study also found that listening to secular music had the ability to increase feelings of positivity by encouraging feelings of gratitude towards God for the hope that he has given Christians. Many of the young people suggested that listening to secular music caused them to feel grateful for their lives compared to those singing the songs and suggested that this gratitude led them to experience God's joy and hope more clearly which enabled them to feel closer to him. This idea supports findings from Rudd (1997 as cited by Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007) which outline the positive correlation between music listening and positive emotional wellbeing to be linked to feelings of acceptance in familial relationships one remembers when listening to music. The findings of this study however, build upon this, suggesting these feelings of acceptance elicited when listening to music many not only be linked to family, but further than this, to God himself and the things he has done in young people's lives. This idea of gratitude or thanksgiving is important in the life of a Christian and serves as a means to thank God for the things he has bestowed onto us (Grenz, S.J, 1994). In the Bible, Christians are encouraged to live out an attitude of gratitude and thankfulness in their lives towards God (Colossians 3:16-17) specifically being encouraged that when they come towards God with gratitude and thankfulness, this helps to free them of the worries or troubles that burden them (Philippians 4:6-7). Taking this into account, it is arguable that these findings could be significant for youth workers when considering how to support young people to live out their callings as Christians to foster this grateful attitude, as well as for those seeking to create environments where young people experience God's joy and feel closer to him.

5.4 Secular Music challenging young people's faith

The final theme highlighted within this study was that listening to secular music served as a direct challenge to young people's behaviours and faith. For some young people, listening to secular music served as a tool that caused them to question and wrestle with their own behaviours in the light of the lyrics of the music and as a consequence change their actions towards God. This led to more young people trying to do good deeds or spending time in prayer and worship as means of feeling more connected to God. This finding supports findings from Schwartz and Fouts (2003, as cited by Saarikallio & Erkkilä 2007) which suggests listening to music enables young people to relate better to one another and feel connected. This study however, takes these findings further, outlining and given reason for the notion that, for children within the church, listening to secular music may have a similar impact on their relation to God as well. Indeed, these findings should not come as a

surprise due to the findings from OFSTED (2004) who found that those who developed spiritually were more likely to be “showing respect for themselves as well as others, showing empathy and standing up for what they believe in.” (p.13). Taking this on board, it is clear that this finding raises implications for the way in which secular music is used by youth workers as it appears that secular music may be used as a tool which is able to create opportunities for young people to have space to live out their faith and in doing so to be challenged to live lives that look more like Christ. This is what Christians are called to do, to be active in their faith in order to serve the world in which they live in. (James 2:14-17, 1 Timothy 6:18-19, Matthew 28, 16 – 20).

Moreover, while Murtonen (2018) found that spiritual music served only as a means through which young people’s faith was strengthened, this study suggests that this is not always the case. For some young people within this study, as well as causing them to question their behaviours, listening to secular music brought up issues in songs that they either didn’t know the answer too or that came in direct opposition to what their beliefs or religions taught. However, whilst appearing in some way negative, it is important for young people to have space and time to battle with these questions. In fact, this is something Christians are encouraged to do. In James 1:2-4, the author writes that we should welcome trials and troubles as Christians because it is through those struggles that faith can be strengthened. This finding serves as a challenge and an insight to youth workers into how they are able to utilise secular music as a resource through which they can engage young people in significant conversations and discussions around their individual faith which may not naturally occur.

5.5 Theme Interaction

While all three of the themes can be defined individually, it is important to note that none of them can be read or understood in isolation. In fact, all of these themes overlap with each other and in doing so help to create a more holistic view of the way that spirituality is impacted by listening to secular music. Through the use of a multifaceted definition of spirituality, it is clear that the ways in which listening to secular music impacts that the way young people feel, act towards and experience God cannot be easily separated. In reality the effects that secular music has on spirituality is complex and the impact it has on each young people will be different. Despite this understanding these links make it clear that the integrations of secular music into youth work practise will serve as a beneficial tool which will help to support and strengthen the spirituality of young people across a variety of contexts.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 The significance of this study

While there already exists some research into the impact of spiritual music on young people's spirituality and of secular music on young people's socioemotional and academic development, until now research into the direct impact of secular music on the spirituality of young people has been non-existent. We know from Chapter 1 however, that secular music is not only incredibly prevalent in the lives of young people nowadays but is also incredibly influential in their development and therefore, it is crucial for practitioners working with young people, particularly within church settings, to understand how secular music affects young people's spirituality. For this reason, this study aimed to research the impact of listening to secular music on young people's spirituality. In doing this, three clear ways were highlighted which show how listening to secular music influences the spirituality of young people.

Findings from this research found that secular music was able to influence the spirituality of young people firstly, by reminding them of the attributes of God. Many of the young people within the study outlined that listening to secular music had the power to increase their awareness of God as they found that they were reminded his love and power during listening time. This in turn was able to make them feel a deeper sense of intimacy with God which led to a deeper sense of connectedness with Him and encouraged them in their faith. It also made them feel more self-confident to take action in their faith. Secondly, research found listening to secular music to influence spirituality by leading the young people to feel a greater sense of gratitude to God. This was noted firstly, to be due to the fact that listening to secular music increased gratitude for the physical things God gives, including music itself and secondly due to the lyrics of secular music reminding young people of the value of the salvation that they have been called into. Thirdly, the findings suggest listening to secular music to influence young people's spirituality by causing young people to question and challenge their faith. This was largely due to the clash between the content of the music and their faith which young people outlined caused them to both question the goodness of God and challenge their behaviours.

Finally, and potentially the most significant research from this study is in the interlinking nature of the three themes found. The research has suggested that when looking at the impact of secular music on young people's spirituality none of the findings can be found in isolation but in fact all the themes interlink. It is therefore important to view them all together in order to understand the

wider impact that secular music is having in the young people's lives. Taking this into account these findings raise implications for those working with young people, as they outline that practitioners must be willing to use secular music, something with which young people are already engaging, as a tool through to help them grow in their journeys of faith and discovery.

6.2 Limitations

While this study is useful in understanding the ways in which secular music impacts the spirituality of young people there are some obvious limitations to the study which it is important to address.

Firstly, the sample size was fairly small, with only 20 questionnaires and 4 interviews from two church settings being used to inform the findings. While the church settings used within the study were different in denomination, it is important to note that within both settings, the majority of participants were from a fairly similar lower or middle-class backgrounds which means that the results cannot necessarily be generalised across all young people. Moreover, both church settings used within this study were based in central Nottingham and therefore, while it is possible that findings may be representative of young people living in larger UK cities, it is arguable that they do not represent those living in more rural environments or even those from outside of the UK.

Furthermore, due to the purposive sample used within this research study, another limitation of the findings stems from the fact that all the young people who participated in the research were either Christian or linked with a Church. This means that the majority of the young people included within the study already had some form of established relationship with or understanding of God before the study which may have led to bias in terms of the way in which they perceive the world around them, including the music they listen to. This means that these same findings cannot necessarily be generalised across all young people from other faiths and for those with no faith. This puts a strong bias on the findings being more useful for those working within a church background or working with Christian young people.

Moreover, due to the prior church links of the young people in the study, the questionnaires and interviews employed were structured in a way which sought to help the young people to think about themes in the music which they could link to their Christian faith. While this was done in an attempt to support the young people to make links between their faith and the secular music they listen to, it is possible that getting the young people to focus on the more 'Christian' themes in the secular music limited the responses they gave and could have led to the participants giving responses they deemed appropriate rather than giving a wider representation of their views.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

Taking all of this into account, there still remains a large amount of potential for follow up research to be done into the area of secular music and young people' spirituality from this piece of work. As outlined above, due to the limited sample of the research, findings are not generalizable across the nation and in order to determine whether the findings of this study correlate country wide, it would be beneficial to conduct this same study in a number of different churches nationwide. Doing this would create a much bigger sample size and could allow for the inclusion of participants from a more diverse range of nationalities and socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, the use of a wider sample would allow for researchers to take from a greater sample of ages, rather than simply 13-18 year olds. This would allow researchers to better determine the effect that secular music has on the spirituality of young people on their different stages of adolescence in order to study whether the way they engage with music and spirituality changes during this specific life stage.

As well as this, because this research is limited due to its sole focus on the spirituality of those associated with the Christian faith, it would be beneficial for further research to carry out a similar study with young people from differing faith groups as well as with young people with no faith. This would allow researchers to determine how the secular music young people of varying faiths listen to affects their spirituality and the impact this has on them. Such research would arguably provide more diverse findings across the board on the impact of secular music on all young people's spiritualities rather than just those from one specific faith group. Through this, researchers would also be able to compare young people from different faith groups and the varying perspectives they may have on how secular music affects their individual spirituality. This would enable professionals to be able to determine whether secular music's impact on spirituality is generalizable for all young people or whether it is more specific to individuals with different beliefs.

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Chapter Eight: Appendices

Appendix One: Questionnaire



Secular Music and Spirituality

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. All of your data will be anonymous and confidential as explained on information sheet provided.

Name _____ Age _____

What is your gender?

(Please circle the appropriate answer)

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Other

What religion are you?

(Please circle the appropriate answer)

Christian

Muslim

Sikh

Hindu

Buddhist

Jewish

Atheist

Agnostic

Other *(Please Specify)* _____

How often do you choose to listen to Music?

(Please circle the appropriate answer)

Everyday

A few times a week

Weekly.

A few times a month

Never

What genres of music do you most frequently listen to?

(Please underline ANY appropriate answers)

Rock

Pop

Rap

Metal

Hip Hop

Classical

Others *(Please Specify)* _____

Which of these themes, if any, do you identify in the non-Christian music you listen to?

(Please underline ANY appropriate answers)

Love

Faith

Sacrifice

Hope

Joy

Anger

Others *Please Specify* _____

Please answer the following questions as thoroughly as possible. These questions will help me to understand the ways in which you feel that listening to the above themes in non-Christian music influences the way in which you feel, experience and act towards God.

Which of these themes that you hear in non-Christian Music link to your faith?

(Please answer below)

Can you give me any examples of a non-Christian Song that has one of more of these themes? (Please answer below)

How, if at all, do these themes in non-Christian music affect the way you feel about God? Why do you think this is? (Please answer below)

How, if at all, do these themes in non-Christian music affect the way you act towards God? Why do you think this is? (Please answer below)

How, if at all, do these themes in non-Christian music affect the way you experience God? Why do you think this is? (Please answer below)

Dissertation Interview Questions

Section 1

1. What is your name?
2. What gender are you?
3. How old are you?
4. What Religion are you?
5. Do you attend a Church or other place of worship?
6. How regularly?
7. Describe to me in your own words what your faith means to you?

Section 2

8. Do you listen to music?
9. For how long each day would you say you listen to music?
10. How important is listening to music for you?
11. What specific genres or artists do you most frequently listen to?
12. What themes do you usually listen to, when choosing music?
13. Do you find any themes that could be considered as 'Christian' in the music you listen to e.g. faith, hope, love, justice?
14. How, if at all, do these themes in non-Christian music affect the way you feel about God? Why do you think this is?
15. How, if at all, do these themes in non-Christian music affect the way you act towards God? Why do you think this is?
16. How, if at all, do these themes in non-Christian music affect the way you experience God? Why do you think this is?

Section 3

17. Play/show me one of your favourite **non-Christian** songs?
18. What do you like about this song?
19. What themes can you hear in this song?
20. How do the themes of this song affect the way you think about God?
21. How do the themes of this song affect the way in which you act towards God?
22. How do you think the themes of this song affect the way you experience God?
23. Is there a specific song you listen to that directly impacts your faith that isn't a worship song?

Appendix Four: Consent forms and information sheets



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Consent Form: Questionnaire

Title of Project: Secular Music and Young People's Spirituality

Researcher: Dave ~~Cutteridge~~, Youth Worker, St John the Baptist Church, Carlton. NG4 1BP.

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of my research project explained in the information sheet provided.

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my/my child's choice to participate is voluntary and that they are able to withdraw at any time up to the 21st February 2019.

I agree to the use of anonymised quotes under a pseudonym.

I understand that all of my/my child's details will be held strictly confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

I agree to/for my child to take part in the above study and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. I have read the information sheet provided and the information above and understand what taking part in the study involves.

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Name of participant's parent

Date

Signature

Name of researcher

Date

Signature

|

Consent Form: Interview

Title of Project: Secular Music and Young People's Spirituality

Researcher: Dave Cutteridge, Youth Worker, St John the Baptist Church, Carlton. NG4 1BP.

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of my research project explained in the information sheet provided.

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my/my child's choice to participate is voluntary and that they are able to withdraw at any time up to the 1st March 2019

I understand that the interview will audio recorded for use in the study.

I agree to the use of anonymised quotes under a pseudonym.

I understand that all of my/my child's details will be held strictly confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

I agree to/for my child to take part in the above study and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. I have read the information sheet provided and the information above and understand what taking part in the study involves.

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Name of participant's parent

Date

Signature

Name of researcher

Date

Signature

INFORMATION FOR

DISSERTATION PARTICIPANTS



Information

WHAT IS THIS FOR?

My name is Dave Cuttredge and I am inviting you to take part in the research for my dissertation for my degree in Youth Work and Community Work and Practical Theology at MCM. My study is looking at the ways Christian themes in non-Christian music affect the way young people interact with God.



Participation

WHAT TAKING PART INVOLVES?

I am inviting you to take part in a 30 minute interview, in which I will ask questions about you and the way you listen to non-Christian music, and how it makes you feel and the way it makes you see the world and how you see faith and God. The interview will be audio recorded.



Individuals

WHY HAVE I BEEN ASKED?

You have been asked as you are a young person between the ages of thirteen and eighteen and you have a link to a Church. You have also been asked as you are on some kind of journey of exploring your faith.



Confidential

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY INFORMATION

All your information be stored extremely securely and your name and details will never be used. The audio recording will never be shared. In the research you will be given a pseudonym to ensure full confidentiality. You will be able to withdraw your information up to the 1st March 2019.



Next Steps

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

If you decide you want to take part please complete the attached consent form, you will also need parental consent in order to take part in this study. We can then arrange an interview time. If you or your parents wish to contact me, my email address is Davecuttredge@gmail.com

ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?
CONTACT SEVAMAMBADIGMAN@ME.COM

INFORMATION FOR

DISSERTATION PARTICIPANTS



Information

WHAT IS THIS FOR?

My name is Dave Cuttredge and I am inviting you to take part in the research for my dissertation for my degree in Youth Work and Community Work and Practical Theology at MCM. My study is looking at the ways Christian themes in non-Christian music affect the way young people interact with God.



Participation

WHAT TAKING PART INVOLVES?

I am inviting you to answer a short questionnaire about you and the way you listen to non-Christian music, and how it makes you feel, and the way it makes you see the world and how you see faith and God.



Individuals

WHY HAVE I BEEN ASKED?

You have been asked as you are a young person between the ages of thirteen and eighteen and you have a link to a Church. You have also been asked as you are on some kind of journey of exploring your faith.



Confidential

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY INFORMATION

All your information be stored extremely securely and your name and details will never be used. In the research you will be given a pseudonym to ensure full confidentiality. You will be able to withdraw your information up to the 21st February 2019.



Next Steps

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

If you decide you want to take part please complete the attached consent form, you will also need parental consent in order to take part in this study. I will then give you a questionnaire to fill in. If you or your parents wish to contact me, my email address is Davecuttredge@gmail.com

ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?
CONTACT SEVAMAMBADIGMAN@ME.COM

Module Number YM6333	Module Name Dissertation	
Student Number S1611504	Student Name David Cutteridge	
Word Count N/A	Assignment title ~ (include reference to which part is being submitted if there is more than one part to the assignment) Secular Music and Young People's Spirituality	
Name of CYM staff member receiving		Staff Signature
Date & Time when received by CYM		Notes

Plagiarism

Please read this note carefully. If you are still unclear whether or not some of your work has been plagiarised, please consult your Student Handbook or talk with your module tutor.

Plagiarism can take several forms:

- Using other people's ideas without acknowledging that the ideas are theirs
- Copying from other published or unpublished work without acknowledging the source
- Quoting from books, articles, law reports or any other writings without acknowledging that the words are being quoted.

Further, assessed work should be your own work and should not be produced jointly with any other students or individuals unless the instructions clearly specify this. Where collaboration is permitted, it should be made clear which part or parts of any jointly-produced work are shared.

Any course work submitted for assessment which is plagiarised, in whole or in part, may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure.

Candidates must ensure that course work submitted for assessment in fulfilment of course requirements is genuinely their own and is not plagiarised.

If you are clear, please sign the statement below.

I have read and understand the notes above and I confirm that the work submitted for assessment is my own work and has not been plagiarised in any way.

Signature Dave Cutteridge

Section A

Student information

Name: David Cutteridge
Address: 36 Kenilworth Road, Nottingham, NG9 2HR
Tel. No.: 07896420803
Email: Davecutteridge@gmail.com
Regional Centre: Midlands CYM
Title of dissertation: Secular Music and Young People's Spirituality

Section B

Initial declaration

This investigation will include formal study of children, young people or vulnerable adults Yes / No
This investigation will include formal study of adults Yes / No

If you have answered YES to either statements above, then it is presumed that you are completing an Empirical - based Dissertation. You must complete **Sections C, D E and F**.

You will also **MUST** include a copy of your **Consent Form and Information sheet for human subjects**.

If you have answered NO to BOTH statements above, then it is presumed that you are completing a Library-based Dissertation. You must go straight to **Section E** and obtained your tutor's signature only, then complete **Section F**.

Section C

Please answer the following questions, and give details if answering Yes (or if necessary to explain No):

<p>1 Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent?</p> <p>All the participants who will take part in the study will be under the age of 18. Because of this I will gain written consent from the parents of all the young people as well as the young people.</p>	<p><u>Yes</u> / No</p>
<p>2 Will the study require access to groups or individuals because of their membership of a particular group, organisation, place of study or dwelling place? (e.g. particular youth group, school, community group)</p> <p>The participants that I require access to will all be members of my placement church, another church I attend and youth group which runs out of my placement church.</p>	<p><u>Yes</u> / No</p>
<p>3 Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge/consent at the time?</p> <p>All participants involved in the research project will be fully aware of the procedures and rationale for the study as well as its aims. Their consent will be sought as well as their parents'. If any of the participants seek to stop being involved I will remove their data from the results of the research.</p>	<p>Yes / <u>No</u></p>
<p>4 Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics not usually addressed in your placement work?</p> <p>Some of the research within my study will be involve discussing personal reflections and experiences. For this reason, although I do not envisage that this research will cause harm to any of the young people involved, support will be made available for the young people should any sensitive topics arise. All the participants and parents will be encouraged to seek pastoral care if anything comes up that needs discussing further.</p> <p>I do not envisage any topics will arise which are not usually addressed in the work I do at my placement.</p>	<p>Yes / <u>No</u></p>
<p>5 Could the study induce psychological stress, anxiety, or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encounter in normal life?</p> <p>It is extremely unlikely that any psychological stress or anxiety may arise due to the study, but all participants and parents will be advised to seek out pastoral care if any issues do arise.</p>	<p><u>Yes</u> / No</p>
<p>6 Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses) be offered to participants?</p> <p>No inducements will be offered for taking part in the study.</p>	<p>Yes / <u>No</u></p>

Section D

The investigation that you are about to begin is potentially harmful to participants. You are being judged on four issues:

- Is your study valuable enough to ask other people to give up their time?
- Have you considered that some people might not want to take part in your study, and how they will say no (the issue of informed consent)?
- How can individuals leave the study if they wish to?
- How are you going to store and use the information you have gained?

<p>1. What do you hope to achieve through this study?</p> <p>Through this study I hope to be able to understand how young people are able to worship God through the use of music not often found in Church settings. I will set out to explore when listening to secular music with Christian themes, how young people link this with their personal faith or whether they separate this kind of music. The specific focus of this pilot study is to explore if there is any link between secular music and spirituality as well as seeing if the young people understand the language used in the study.</p>
<p>2. How will the study be carried out? (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, observation)</p> <p>In this pilot study I will be using a mixed method approach. I will be conducting up to 10 interviews and collect 30 questionnaires. This approach will mean I can compare different kind of data and compare them to see if the results are the same.</p> <p>I will collect the 30 questionnaires from young people from my placement church as well as another church that I have links with. The questionnaires will aim to get a wider sense of how young people with a Christian faith interact with secular music they listen to and how they link this music to their faith. These questionnaires will also enable me to compare young people from two different church backgrounds and to explore whether impacts the way in which young people interact with secular music.</p> <p>I will conduct the interviews with young people from my placement church as well as another church that I have links with. I will select the young people by using the questionnaires in order to select candidates who I feel will be good participants in the study. I will use interviews as this will enable me to spend more time exploring in depth how specific young people engage with their favourite music and how it may affect their emotions and perceptions of the world. As part of the interview, I will ask them to come prepared with one bit of music which they currently enjoy and then subsequently will ask them about other pieces of music that I have chosen.</p>
<p>3. How will you collect and store the data (e.g. recording, written notes)</p> <p>I will collect the questionnaires which will all be on paper and they will be stored in a locked filing cabinet which only me and my line manager will have access to in line with the Data Protection Act (1998).</p> <p>The interviews I conduct will all be audio recorded and the interviewees and their parents will have given prior permission for this to be done. I will record them so that I do not have to take notes as this could affect the interview. In order to safeguard the identity of participants in data recording, all transcriptions and data collection files, including those not directly used in the research body, will be password protected and deleted only 5 years after the research study has been submitted, in relation to the Data Protection Act (1998)</p> <p>The spreadsheet which will contain real names and corresponding pseudonyms will also be password protected. All audio recordings will also be password protected and deleted only 5 years after the research study has been submitted, in relation to the Data Protection Act (1998)</p>
<p>4. How many participants will be recruited, and by what criteria will they be selected?</p> <p>The questionnaire will be given to 30 young people between the ages of thirteen to eighteen. The young people will be from various different churches and will include young people from different genders and backgrounds, but all will have some link to the churches. All the young people will be on some kind of journey of exploring their faith and spirituality.</p> <p>For the interviews I will use young people from my placement Church as well as another Church that I have links with. The Young people will be between the ages of thirteen to eighteen. All the young people will be on a journey of faith and spirituality. They must also be available to be interviewed at the end of a church service or another agreed time.</p>
<p>5. Outline your plan for gaining informed consent</p> <p>(a) Initial approach – potential participants will be told about the study and asked if they would like to take part. This will all be vocal in order to determine who would be interested in the possibility of doing either the questionnaire or an interview.</p> <p>(b) Individual consent – participants will be given an information sheet and a consent form which will be signed by the participant and their parents.</p>

<p>Questionnaires: The participants will be given an information sheet about the nature of the study and told that their information will be completely confidential. They will also be given a consent form which will also need to be signed by their parents as all participants will be under the age of 18. See Appendixes 1 and 2</p> <p>Interviews: The participants will be given an information sheet about the nature of the study and told that their information will be completely confidential. They will be told that the interviews will be audio recorded and that those recordings will be saved on a password protected computer. They will also be given a consent form which will also need to be signed by their parents as all participants will be under the age of 18. See Appendixes 3 and 4</p>
<p>(c) Ability to withdraw – All participants will be able to withdraw from the study up to the 21st November 2018.</p>
<p>(d) Parental consent – All participants will require parental consent to take part in the study. This is due to the fact that all participants who take part in the study will be under the age of 18.</p>
<p>6. Do you foresee any potential adverse effects of the study?</p>
<p>It is unlikely that any adverse effects may arise from the study. All participants will be advised to seek pastoral support if any issues do arise. I will give them the information of my line manager who is a Priest-in-charge and trained in pastoral care.</p>
<p>7. Will confidentiality be maintained and if so how?</p>
<p>(a) Confidentiality of the individual? Confidentiality will be given for all participants. All participants will be referred to using a pseudonym in the study. This will mean that they will not be able to be linked to the study using their own personal name. All their personal information forms will be put in a locked filing cabinet which only me and my line manager will have access to. All audio recordings from the interviews will be kept on a password protected computer.</p>
<p>(b) Confidentiality of the placement? I will give confidentiality to my placement and other church which the young people will be from, by using vague information on them and never explicitly name the church so all the participants are safe as they are all under the age of 18. Both churches, if being referred to directly will be given pseudonyms. I will also refer to my placement as an Anglican church located in the suburbs of a large city in the East Midlands. I will refer to the other Church as a large city centre church in the East Midlands.</p>

Section E

Supervisors

Supervisors are required to have personal experience of formally studying human subjects. The professional practice agency line-manager / gatekeeper (if appropriate) has a particular responsibility to ensure the well-being of the people involved in the study.

CYM Supervisor	Professional Practice Agency Line-manager /Gatekeeper (empirical-based dissertation only)
Name: Sally Nash	Name: Amanda Digman
Address: MCYM	Address: St John's Vicarage, Oakdale Road, Carlton, Nottingham, NG4 1BP
Tel:	Tel: 07803 625049
Email: s.nash@stjohns-nottm.ac.uk	Email revamandadigman@me.com
Signature: Sally Nash	Signature: <i>Amanda Digman</i>

Section F

I agree to conduct this study in line with the ethical guidelines laid down in the National Youth Agency document 'Ethical Conduct in Youth Work', and the ethical expectations placed on me by the Practice Agency supervisor.

Signature of student: Dave Cutteridge.....

Date: 14/01/19.....