

## J: Misvisualisation (prayer)

Even hands-free phoning adds danger to your drive. To some extent this is because of visualisation. We blank off from the road as we focus on the inner voice of the phone, and in our minds follow where it leads. Some even look at their phone as if it's doing the talking, so don't hear the road. Asked about our bank account, we might visualise Wall Street—and next moment, Crash. For so much in life, visualisation is second nature. My concern here is for prayer, and our face to face relationship with deity. Heb.12:2 encouraged some who looked to return to the safety of Judaism,<sup>1</sup> to seriously visualise Jesus. In short, the Bible encourages good visualisation for good theology. However, some songs encourage blindness, and in prayer songs, looking unto Jesus might, surprise surprise, cause us to stumble.

Songs can lead us into various types of misvisualisation. At a low-level, if we *hallelujah* God, we're asking him to praise himself. That's being blind to language. At mid-level, it tricks us out of praying prayer. By toggling between prayer and non-prayer, sometimes at bewildering pace, we simply don't recognise prayer. That's being blind to prayer. A classic example of this is when after a song that's entirely to deity, the congregation is told, "now, let's open in prayer". "Der, isn't that what we've just been doing?" you may ask. Or, when an offending offering bag shakes under our noses during a prayer song—obviously we're not to pray prayer-songs because they ain't prayer! Prayer is being sung into the air, but not unto God. Sometimes, by throwing in a song about God, or a psalm about him, folk even interrupt the flow of a prayer time. Is this because they don't visualise that prayer is actually directly to somebody, so they don't mind interrupting our talk to/with deity?<sup>2</sup> What makes it even worse (hyper) is, if besides overlooking the prayer nature of song, we also overlook the nature of the persons of deity, confusingly switching between members of deity. We address the father, call him, lord, then thank him for being crucified, what scholars call patripassianism (visually crucifying the father). While such misvisualisation between the members of deity also happens outside of prayer songs, I have chosen to ignore marking it down except when in figures in prayer songs, where it makes worse the already bad.

### J1: Soft Misvisualisation

For this, I deduct 12 points.

*YuYu*

If I sing, "You (pronoun), you (pronoun) love me", I am misvisualising, blindly telling I say not whom, that they love me. I think that this almost lack of visual, just about comes under the umbrella of misvisualisation. YuYu basically blocks corporate visualisation, since it doesn't give us the person or being being sung to. It operates as an ambivalent *you*, or even *lord*. Paul sought clarification: *lord*, who are *you* (Ac.9:5/22:8/26:15)?<sup>3</sup> I detail this more elsewhere,<sup>4</sup> but a song addressed to *the lord*, should make it clear who that lord is. Such ambiguity is a kind of "we hate nouns" (WHN) song. A prayer-song should make it clear to whom we are praying, so that we can visualise aright. Is it to God in general? Is it to the father, his son, or to the spirit? Or is it a clear combination of them? "You you you" doesn't help us visualise as one: I sing "you help me" to the father; you sing it to our brother; she sings it to the spirit. This leaving it to guesswork can also lead to a singer guessing one person, only to discover as the song progresses, that the prayer's directed to another person. So, I'm praying a song and picturing the father, then the next line

<sup>1</sup> See our college notes BS03 (NT Survey 2).

<sup>2</sup> Interruptions can be justified—I recall Sam Fry's "I forbid that there prai-er" (R D Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, 1995:470) on hearing of King Charles 2's death. Perhaps someone has news just in about what we're praying for, or feel a relevant scripture should immediately be shared. Yet they could say something like, *I'm sorry to interrupt, but....* This would politely allow those talking to deity to excuse themselves. Otherwise, it's like just hanging up the phone without even an "I'll call you back".

<sup>3</sup> Luke's triple record of this phrase might be based on Paul's gravitation to the term. Paul would usually refer lordship to Jesus rather than to the father (1 Cor.8:5f.), a good pattern for our days of creeping modalism.

<sup>4</sup> Eg, <http://mdtc.eu/wggyndale.html>.

on the overhead says “thank you for dying for me”! Oops, father, sorry, should’ve been singing this number to Jesus, goodbye and I’ll switch to him now. That’s embarrassment in prayer. Ultimately, a song which says “you sent your son” clarifies the addressee, so is not a yuyu song, but hopefully clarification should come early into the song lest we have to re-visualise, redirect the flow, having been singing to the wrong person. It’s good to run through a song before beginning to [prayer] sing it.

### Noyu

An opposite hiccup is the “we hate pronouns” (WHP) songs. This too hinders visualisation. If I sing, “Lord Jesus (noun), Jesus (noun) loves me”, I am misvisualising, blindly telling one Jesus about another Jesus. But, if avoiding the WHN of Scylla and the WHP of Charybdis, I sing “Lord *Jesus* (noun), *you* (pronoun) love me”, I’m visualising, picturing Jesus in front of me. This course also takes in the possessive case. Say I meet two friends, one’s John, one’s Jack, who has a book I’d like to see. So, which shouldn’t I say, “*John*, please pass me *Jack’s* book”, “*Jack*, please pass me *Jack’s* book”, or “*Jack*, please pass me *your* book”? Of course, if I’m not looking at them and not really visualising them, I might absentmindedly say “*Jack*, please pass me *Jack’s* book”, but that wouldn’t be real life. Yet some prayer songs reflect this absentmindedly, so don’t reflect reality. Prayer-songs shouldn’t inculcate absentmindedness. It’s part of a bigger problem with prayer. In *War & Peace*, Princess Mary’s prayer is answered by God who absentmindedly talks about himself in the third person: “If it be God’s will to prove thee in the duties of marriage, be ready to fulfil his will” (3.3). As in the story of the three holes, I’d say well, well, well!

Why ask “God, we would see *God’s* glory,” when instead you can really picture yourself before God and ask, “God, we would see *your* glory”? What is so wrong with pronouns? Yet in the nineteen eighties, Chris Bowater wrote a song to the *Spirit of God*,<sup>5</sup> asking him to let him know Holy Ghost liberty. Chris’ wording was absentminded misvisualisation, and, even in that decade, rather old hat. No *ghost* was needed in the picture. Two decades earlier I’d been asked if Christians believed in ghosts. I said no, and was told I was wrong, because Christians believed in the Holy Ghost! Got me there, at least if we’re singing from the good old KJV. Pneumatology aside, wouldn’t let me know your glorious liberty, sound more like the spirit was *actually* in the singer’s sight? In short, formally Bowater’s song turns from singing *to* the spirit, to singing *about* the spirit, thus lacks prayer focus.<sup>6</sup> Devotion is better if our heads and imaginations sing from the same song sheet. Then nonbelievers might be more likely to suspect that we really do believe that we’re singing to deity. What an amazing idea!

OK, we’ve looked a bit at theodirectional songs as unidirectional, and have contrasted them to polydirectional songs. Let’s look a bit at what some manward songs, and I call anthrodirectional. It may be put like this:

<b>Anthrodirectional</b> <sup>7</sup>	Unidirectional to man (yourself, and/or others)	God is praiseworthy, isn’t he?
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### Hallelujah?

*Hallelujah* is an anthrodirectional word in itself, to be sung only to each other. You see, it’s a Hebrew word, inviting people to praise Yahweh. The *hallel* bit says *praise*. The *u* bit urges *creatures* in the Thomist sense (Ps.148), generally humans, to do the praising. The *jah* bit, which some prefer as *yah*, is a shortened way of saying the creator’s name, *Yahweh*,<sup>8</sup> which we used to spell as *Jahveh*. Put together, we can see that *hallelujah* urges human beings to praise Yahweh. In fact, since his name has a heavy

<sup>5</sup> <http://lyricology.eu/hswwy.html>

<sup>6</sup> I wrote to Chris about this song. Chris replied that *Chris* didn’t see any grammatical problem in it, and *Chris* explained that *Holy Ghost liberty* was the kind of liberty *Chris* was asking the spirit for! Actually, to use pronouns, Chris replied that *he* didn’t see any grammatical problem in it, and *he* explained that *Holy Ghost liberty* was the kind of liberty *he* was asking the ghost for.

<sup>7</sup> This includes the egodirectional, eg inner reflection.

<sup>8</sup> Compare Ps.68:4 in the KJV, to the NKJV. Arguable, *hallelujah* should now be written a *halleluyah*, as the ethnic Jewish CJB/TLV do. Imma(n) (with) –u (us) –el (God).

tie in to covenant, you may say that it's covenant praise. In short, it is a word TO praise, not a word OF praise. If leadership says *hallelujah*, the biblical lay response is "yes, let's do so!" and then to get on and praise Yahweh, rather than endlessly repeating the injunction, *hallelujah*. Otherwise it's like saying to a group of youngsters, "let's cross the road, let's cross the road, let's cross the road, let's cross the road, let's cross the road," without the youngsters ever crossing it. Incessant *hallelujahs* can actually prevent the exploration of praise, even tripping us up if we begin to actually explore praise. To those who roll out the hundred *hallelujah* chorus, I wish to say "silence, please, and let me praise!" Like an order to troops to get into battle, just one call to *hallelujah* should lead to a brainstorming of Yahweh's praiseworthiness, a going into praise. Let's then ask ourselves what is actually praiseworthy (for example, his character), about how *benevolently*, and how *well*, he's worked, etc. Then meditate on such, and share with others. *Hallelujah* is positive. Brueggemann taught that praise should be specific, and that "*when praise gets flattened out and generalized...decline is setting in*" (Reform). Though Brueggemann has been rightly knocked for knocking Ps.150—what I'd call a rousing let-it-rip call to symphonise praise—in general his observation here is valid. However, exploration does not mean that the praiseworthiness we have already discovered is yesterday's news, *passé*, history! The wonderful remains wonderful, even if we are now at home with it. Each year, Ethnic Israel was told to recollect the wonderful way Yahweh had delivered them from Egypt (Ex.12:26f.). In salvation history terms, yesterday's news is life to us. Old and new insights should be itemised, and often pondered. Count your many blessings, and consider them one by one. Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, should be daily events, melded together as one. I would honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year, living in its past, present, and future, spirit.

*Hallelujah*, mishandled, is meaningless, disempowered. Over excitedly, Mick Ray cried "hallelujah, lord", while Robin Mark was busy urging Yahweh to praise Yahweh, and while I was wondering why Yahweh should play ball.<sup>9</sup> Objectively both were mistaken, but so what, lots of folk sprinkle *hallelujah* over whatever is on the table, so why shouldn't they? And that seems to make fine sense if you don't know *hallelujah*'s sense: ignorance can be bliss. Some simply take the line that like Humpty Dumpty's "glory for you," *hallelujah* should mean what they say, and God be praised (switching to Shakespeare), "*it is the blessed sun: But sun it is not, when you say it is not; and the moon changes even as your mind. What you will have it named, even that it is; and so it shall be so for Katharina*" (William Shakespeare: *The Taming of the Shrew*: 4.5). No, it has its biblical meaning, and so it should be for us. Clichés like *hallelujah*, should be avoided in songs, and avoiding them also helps in avoiding polydirectionalism, an even worse form of misvisualisation. Many, feeling God, pray *hallelujah*, unaware of what it means, simply because it feels right. But heh, I'm not planning on asking Mary to pray for me a sinner, either now or at the hour of death, even if it feels right to those acclimatised to praying to her. To me, knowing right is truer than feelings. Paul grieved that his kinfolk's enthusiasm trumped understanding (Rm.10:2). He himself harnessed Jewish enthusiasm to messianic understanding. Yes, ignorance can be bliss, but let's have happy hearts hunder hedicated heads.

### *Unique Sonship*

"God did not keep back his own son, but he gave him for us" (CEV: Rm.8:32a). If I pretend to overcome the deity barrier, replacing Jesus as God's son by myself, I'm not getting the true picture. There's an added gender barrier for the fair sex, who have to do, may I say, the trans-visualisation twist. Having spoken of being a son among his sons, in *Now Are We* (1990), Kayla Parker crossed both gender & deity boundaries, and sung that she was chosen to be his son. Adding confusion, though specifying the father, she called him both *lord* and *prince of peace*, perhaps thinking him to be his own son, which turns out to be, herself. So a lot of misvisualising, Kayla, biblical terms thrown willy-nilly into the pot.

<sup>9</sup> *I'm Forgiven* (1978): [www.higherpraise.com/lyrics/love/love853113.htm](http://www.higherpraise.com/lyrics/love/love853113.htm); *Garments Of Praise* (2007): *Hallelujah / sing hallelujah / we give all honour and praise / to your name.*

Let's focus here on the singular expression, *his son*. Is any Christian, *God's son*, *his son*? Firstly let's look at how we often talk. I've watched many a *Bonanza*, and Hoss could say he was his father's son, though Adam and Little Joe were also sons of Ben Cartwright. Many of us have related thus to parents. Had Hoss said that he was *a son* of his father, he would have sounded pedantic, though being pedantic in a good cause works well. In common language, an exclusive term can sometimes allow inclusivism, as once upon a time *fishers of men* could include women & children, and a girl could happily confess to being *a sinful man*. However, the Cartwrights' common sonship was purely within similarity, whereas Jesus combined similarity within dissimilarity: my father and your father (not *our father*); even God, who is mine and yours (not *our god*)—Jhn.20:17. That is, he specified that we'd never be 'sons', even children, in the same way that he was. As regards our relationship with God, though varying their approaches, the biblical writers likewise kept clear blue water between Christians and Christ. I am anointed but I am not *the* anointed; a child of God, but not *the* child of God. If truly Christians, we are children of God, say sons of God if you insist,<sup>10</sup> but never is any individual Christian God's son or God's child. We have group identity, but never individual identity in that league. *God's son* is a unique title for a unique man, and there ain't no competition.

So, we have God as our father, and he does not have any of us down as *his son*. I really do feel that talking otherwise talks down the biblical teaching of God's one-of-a-kind son. Am I Jesus? No. Am I a bit like him? Yes, Christlike, but not Christ. Even "I am your child," is not as clear as, "I am *a* child of yours". God has *many* children, though, as shaper and shaker David du Plessis said, no grandchildren.<sup>11</sup> It can pay safety dividends to be annoyingly pedantic. Paul and John used different approaches. John's was to keep *son* (*huios*) exclusively for Jesus' relationship to God, and *children* (*tekna*) for Christians' relationship to God, so he never called Christians God's *huioi*. Christians who insist that 'son' alone highlights inheritance, arguably downgrade John for downgrading that theme. Did John miss the inheritance theme? They also overlook that even Jesus used *tekna* to speak of heirs (Lk.15:31), as did Luke (Lk.1:7), Stephen (Ac.7:5), and Paul (Rm.8:17). Paul used *son*, to be more precise, *huios*, for both the one-of-a-kind son, and for Christians in general, but his contexts made the distinction between the one-of-a-kind son, and us, very clear: Mormonism need not apply.

## J2: Hard Misvisualisation

For this, I deduct 24 points. This is where there is a simple misvisualising between deity & humanity, a lack of direction that disempowers prayer. Like the punishment of Tantalus, these songs switch between looking up to the sweet fruit of prayer, to snatching it away as we look to the mortal flow of human fellowship, itself snatched away as we again look above. These songs are polydirectional. Henry, driving two children, drove straight into a hedge. Why? Because coming to the T-junction, the boy said 'left', the girl said 'right', and they didn't make up his mind quick enough. Understanding direction is important.

### *Polydirectionalism*

Let's recap some terms.

<sup>10</sup> The relevant texts are: Rm.8:14,19; Gal.3:26 (the Greek *huioi*) & Php.2:15; 1 Jhn.3:1f. (*tekna*). *Huioi* more readily translates as *sons*, or *sons & daughters*, but may be put as *children*. *Tekna* more readily translates as *children*, but may be put as *sons/daughters/sons and daughters*, as *per* context. Curiously, for *huioi* the KJV has *sons* in Rm.8:14,19 and *children* in Gal.3:26, and for *tekna* *sons* in Php.2:15 & (very badly) in 1 Jhn.3:1f. For formal but misguided consistency of *huioi* always as *sons*, and *tekna* always as *children*, see the NKJV. Justifiably for function, the ERV/NCV/NIV/NLT/NOG/NRSV consistently translate *children*, for both. The NET is inconsistent on the wrong side. Despite any explanations, saying 'literally' *sons* (NLT) misreads the Greek: *sons and daughters*, or *children*, will do. [www.mdtc.eu/wgggender.html](http://www.mdtc.eu/wgggender.html)

<sup>11</sup> Ie, children born to Christian parents aren't Christians though, as any human being, may become so. Christianity is a belief about Christ entered by welcome of him. I could not be a Christian before being able to believe Christianity, and would arguably cease to be a *Christian* if I ceased to believe it and closed to Christ.

<b>Anthrodirectional</b> <sup>12</sup>	Unidirectional to man (yourself, and/or others)	God is praiseworthy, isn't <b>he</b> ?
<b>Theodirectional</b>	Unidirectional to deity	God, <b>you</b> are praiseworthy.
<b>Polydirectional</b>	Part to deity, part to man	God, <b>you</b> are praiseworthy, isn't <b>he</b> ?

What is prayer toggling? Song leaders sometimes toggle between a theodirectional song (for example, *Jesus How Lovely You Are*), then an anthrodirectional song (for example, *Majesty, Worship His Majesty*), then a theodirectional song (for example, *Reign In Me*), without any apparent awareness of changing the direction of our focus. And if the offering bag passes under the nose while we are singing—that is, *praying*—to deity, why then we'll simply interrupt prayer.<sup>13</sup> After all, deity's not *really* listening, and we're not *really* praying, right? Hopefully, wrong! Strictly speaking, politeness to deity would require the worshipper to stop singing, ask him to whom they *were* singing, to excuse them a moment, then put something into the bag, *then* perhaps resume their pray-song where they left off. That is, *if* a prayer-song is actually prayer—which of course we all know it isn't, don't we? Hum. And after a prayer-song is ended, are we sometimes invited to *begin* to pray, as if we're to switch from *mere* song (therefore not prayer?) to prayer? Sadly, song leaders and church leaders can be equally oblivious to the obvious fact that some songs are actually prayer—not all prayer ends with *amen*. Some lyricists suffer this blindness: by mixing two or more directions *within* songs, they produce polydirectional songs. We should see that “*when singing is spiritual, it is as important an exercise as prayer—and for the most part it is prayer, only sung rather than spoken*” (Prime & Begg 2004:209). Theodirectional songs are precious, and good lyricists add value to worship.

Of course polydirectionalism can be creative. Many of the psalms—Hebrew songs—were in fact *polydirectional*, as antiphonal/responsory. That is, they were sung or chanted between, or by, two groups, a kind of a dance, between leadership and people. Ps.136 is a good example. Yet biblical polydirectionalism doesn't transfer well into our culture. Using functional equivalence,<sup>14</sup> some translate polydirectional psalms into our culture, even changing them into unidirectional psalms. Isaac Watts perhaps started this ball rolling by enculturating *Psalms*, dressing Sinai in Christian garb.<sup>15</sup> Comparing the NIV and the CEV shows some interesting ways in which functionalism makes for better English. Starting easy, compare Ps.43:5's “why, my soul, are you downcast?” (NIV), with, “why am I discouraged?” (CEV).<sup>16</sup> Does the CEV lose my soul, or simply get to the heart of what it means? Why, my mind, does it matter? When we think reflectively, what is our natural style? At a more radical level, let's compare Ps.23:1f,5f.'s “Yahweh is my shepherd...he leads me...You prepare a table before me...in the house of Yahweh” (NIV), compared with “You, Yahweh, are my shepherd...you lead me...you treat me to a feast...in your house” (CEV: both retetragrammatised). Should our songs switch between the third person (he), and second person (you)? Sure, Christians can acclimatise to the original speech style, but it's likely this'll seem silly to outsiders. True, there are some gains in reading the dialogue, the drama, as it was initially structured. However, the elegance of the CEV's innovation should serve as a lesson to lyricists. They should not throw in needless complication. New songs should usually conform from the outset to the principle of directional consistency. How about this lively little song?<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This includes the egodirectional, eg inner reflection.

<sup>13</sup> OK, your church doesn't use offering bags. But if it did, *would* it use them to disrupt prayer?

<sup>14</sup> Functional equivalence is an accepted method of translation that seeks to translate textual meaning above textual words.

<sup>15</sup> There is scope for this: *Israel's Gone Global*, ch.2

<sup>16</sup> The CEV's wider context may suggest that the psalmist was speaking to God. The Amplified Bible has the expression, *O my inner self*, highlighting the idea that *soul* (*nefesh*) sometimes carried the idea of how we are deep down inside, core.

<sup>17</sup> Patricia Morgan's *Come On and Celebrate* (1984). Grimace: the king is a *thing*!

Inconsistent		Consistent	
<b>Anthrodirectional</b> I'm singing to you	Come on and celebrate <u>his</u> gift of love	Come on and celebrate <u>his</u> gift of love	<b>Anthrodirectional</b> I'm singing to you
<b>Theodirectional</b> I'm now singing to deity	We'll shout <u>your</u> praise O king	We'll shout and praise <u>the</u> king	<b>Anthrodirectional</b> I'm still singing to you
<b>Theodirectional</b> I'm still singing to deity	<u>you</u> give us joy <i>nothing</i> else can bring	<u>who</u> gives us joy <i>no</i> <i>one</i> else can bring	<b>Anthrodirectional</b> I'm still singing to you

If this song had been written consistently anthrodirectional, would it have sensible to change it into inconsistent style? If not, was it sensible to write it inconsistently in the first place? Take another example, *Blessed Be The Name Of The Lord*. Outstandingly, it urges lament in a Christian land where lament seems scarce. It nevertheless suffers from gaffes, boasts, and ignoring God's name. As polydirectional, it presumably intends we sing to others that Yahweh (though it ignores his *name*), should be praised (though it says *blessed*), toggling to Yahweh—you give and take away.<sup>18</sup> Even commendable songs can be ill-conceived in polydirectionalism. If you had to close your eyes at the prayer bits, and had to open your eyes at the congregational bits, you might call them *blinking songs*. Follow your eyes, for eyes, and eyelids, tell a story. Sometimes a very bad one, such as a solo artist singing a worship song to their audience—and their audience sure isn't with the king of kings, even if their hands are in the air. If I didn't know better (which I don't) I'd suspect that they had an oversized ego, an undersized idea of worship, strength in entertaining but not in enlightening, and good performance fees and CD sales. Worship songs should be sung with the people, not to the people.

Do we have congregational vision? Anthrodirectionally, you can sing to yourself. "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation" (Ps.42:5: ESV). Quite a few of the psalms were about inner reflection, egodirectional. For visualisation, I like to look at human faces if singing anthrodirectionally, and avoid them if singing theodirectionally or egodirectionally. From what I've seen, most usually pray with their eyes closed. OK, that's fine. Each to their own. Indeed, at least in early Christian years, closed eyes even to God might be best to block out distracting noise, but once our minds get used to spiritual focus, I've found it's nice to usually pray with eyes open. But if closed eyes help for theodirectional songs, why not at least open eyes for anthrodirectional songs, even making eye contact with those to whom you sing? I love that bit in *Wall•E* when for people on the good ship Axiom, overlooking turns into seeing each other.

Looking *at* each other when we are singing *to* each other, makes sense. Sometimes a song leader encourages the congregation to do so, which for some adds the fun of novelty. Otherwise it might freak folk out, not because the logic is faulty, but because western conventionality is below the logic. We don't do because we haven't learnt. We haven't learnt because we haven't been taught. Unlike in *Phantastes* (George MacDonald: ch.16), where the White Lady cries, "you should have sung to me," we usually say "you're not supposed to sing to me!" What's the difference between saying to you and singing to you the words, be bold, be strong? Easy, I see you when I speak to you but not when I sing to you. Perhaps the KJV is right to call us a peculiar people (1 Pt.2:9). Does it make sense

<sup>18</sup> I've heard someone say they felt blessed at having discovered that the words are really you give and make a way! The blessings of exodus? But no, the words are from Job 1:21 (see NKJV). Ancient Near East Yahwism often spoke in terms of Ultimacy. Yahweh might not have directly stepped in and blessed or spoilt whatever, but *ultimately* he had allowed it. This included *the problem of pain* (see C S Lewis), yet Job would praise him. In western terms, we might cram in (as if) you give and take away, and follow it, perhaps, by my heart does choose to say, Yah prais-ed be your name / praised be your name, Yahweh: how about whatever comes my way instead?

to see people with their eyes shut singing *to you*, “be bold”? Bring back King Arthur’s Round Table, please. Circular seating can help folk unabashedly sing to each other, though bowing to our wish for personal space, more intense face to face singing may be more appropriate at a fair distance between singer and sung to (sinee), whereas talk prefers closeness.

Do you sing with your eyes open, looking at the congregation or above the congregation, depending on whether a song is to them or to deity? Or do you close your eyes to heaven and open them to church? Either way will increase your empathy with songs, and lead to, and maintain, spiritual crescendos through visualisation. Ideally, don’t look to church when you sing to deity, or shut your eyes when you sing to church.

Imagine I visit your local church as guest speaker. I invite you to close your eyes (and of course bow your heads) for pray. A hush descends. Reverently standing at the front, I close my eyes and bow my head. I begin praying out loud *to* God. I ask *him* to help us. I thank *him* for recent ways in which it seems to us that he’s stepped in, enriched lives. Eyes still tightly shut, I begin saying *to you* that God is really behind your building plans. I say that *you* need to look around for a good architect. Then I ask if *anyone* in the congregation has any suggestions about car parking. I then ask the *musicians* to prepare to lead us in the next song, in which we’ll sing to each other *Be Bold, Be Strong*. All the time, my head is bowed, my eyes tightly shut.<sup>19</sup> For the last five minutes you’ve been staring at me, ever since I started talking *to you*, and you’ve been wondering when on earth I’d look at you as if I were now talking to you, and not to God. Of course we all know that eyes need closing and heads bowing when it’s Godward (do we?), but when it’s manward, it’s certainly awkward. But please feel free to invite me soon to be a guest speaker, since my doctor assures me that I’ve almost gotten over my bad case of polydirectionalism, and believes there’s every chance of my full recovery. I rest my case.

To really sing a song’s meaning means to be in tune with the song’s language. To do that we must visualise it, caress it in our mind’s eye. And then we must decide whether we agree with its message, whether to marry up with it, letting it come into our life. Have you developed the art of analysis and understanding while singing? If so, you have learnt to visualise to whom you sing. If not, you’re only dreaming, at best your spiritual Reticular Activating System is beginning to awaken your spiritual brain. If a polydirectional song forces you to switch faces willy-nilly, it’s a shoddy song.

### *J3: Hyper Misvisualisation*

It can get worse. For hypermisvisualisation, I deduct 36 points, where it adds misvisualising the members of deity to a hard polydirectional song. This can be mid misvisualisation plus soft misvisualisation, eg, through the ambiguous *you*. Hypermisvisualisation songs fall short, not by denying the trinity, but by merely confusing the three persons in the mind’s eye. They are neither Jesus alone does, nor Jesus alone is God, songs. Just foolishly confused. But that rubs off on us, and that’s the rub. If I sang The lord on high, we love him true / I love you father, yes Jesus, I do, that’d be such a song. It’d verge on the deeper problem of unitarianism, but might be no worse than not really focusing on the father, his son, and ourselves, as we sing. It does not predicate actions of the one to the other, as patripassian songs do. It does not proclaim a doctrinal error, simply a visual error, and makes an already polydirectional song worse.

<sup>19</sup> I have witnessed with amazement folk close eyes for prayer, and soon, keeping their eyes shut, talk to the church. “Look at us!”, I silently plead.