

Following three years of ethnomusicological fieldwork on the sacred singing traditions of evangelical Christians in North-East Scottish and Northern Isles coastal communities, Frances Wilkins analyses current singing practices by placing them historically and contemporaneously within their respective faith communities. In ascertaining who the singers were and why, when, where, how and what they chose to sing, the study explores a number of related questions. How has sacred singing contributed to the establishment and reinforcement of individual and group identities both in the church and wider community? What is the process by which specific regional repertoires and styles have developed? Which organisations and venues have been particularly conducive to the development of sacred singing in the community? How does the subject matter of songs relate to the immediate environment of coastal inhabitants? How and why has gospel singing in coastal communities changed? These questions are addressed with reference to interview material, fieldnotes, videography and field recordings. As one of the first pieces of ethnomusicological research into sacred music performance in Scotland, this ethnography draws important parallels between practices in the North East and elsewhere in the British Isles and across the globe.

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