LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

WHEN BLACK MEETS WHITE IN THE HEART OF WORSHIP: A CASE-STUDY
OF MUSICAL CHANGES IN A MULTIRACIAL CHURCH

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Worldwide Church of God, now the entirely reformed Grace Communion International, began in the 1930s as an unorthodox Christian denomination adhering to tenets emanating from Jewish Sabbath and Holy Day observances, kosher dietary rules, and other doctrinal distinctions centered on the exclusiveness of its existence. The church had grown over the decades to include many thousands of African-American members alongside the European-American membership. In the more urban regions of the United States, such as the greater New York City metropolitan area, the number of blacks exceeded that of whites in some of the area's local congregations, yet church liturgy retained its distinct European-American flavor, particularly in the area of music.

When this Christian denomination underwent major official doctrinal changes, including allowing for the inclusion of African-American musical styles in the corporate worship setting in congregations where blacks were represented, many white congregants, along with some blacks, were unable to accept new musical aesthetics and reacted in a manner inconsistent with the Christian response church leaders had hoped for.

Statement of the Problem

The introduction of African-American musical styles in church liturgy that heretofore utilized primarily European-American musical styles led to issues of emotional angst and heated objection over the newly expanded musical portions of the corporate worship service. Congregations under study reflecting this paradigm are member churches of the same

denomination where constituency was racially quite diverse, and where blacks or whites

accounted for at least twenty-five percent of church attendance. Based on this white researcher's

personal observations as a church member, and additionally as a musical director responsible for

introducing new styles during the time of this flux in liturgical polity (albeit under the

supervision of local church authorities not always favorably inclined towards such change), I

would further posit that this problem grew to include a lack of appreciation or concern on the

part of some of the white membership of a foundation of Biblical Christianity: "So in everything,

do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets,"

widely known as the "Golden Rule," and found in the Biblical book of Matthew, chapter seven

and verse twelve. I personally witnessed behavior and commentary regarding the heart music of

many African-Americans that had little to do with this Golden Rule. Church members rising

from their seats and exiting the meeting hall during special musical offerings to show

disapproval of such musical styles were routine. Negative commentary regarding the new music

selections was not hard to overhear in the aisles or common areas following the worship service.

Complaints were raised often, and some complainers found a sympathetic ear in some of their

official local clergy. It should be noted that said new musical genres were not a replacement for

the historical musical styles, but simply an addition. Several chapters later in the book of

Mathew when responding to a question as to what is the greatest commandment, "Jesus replied:

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This

is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as

yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Echoing this

lynchpin principle, Grace Communion International (the now reformed Worldwide Church of

God) Vice President J. Michael Feazell wrote of the link between a congregation's maturity as

expressed in their "worship and liturgy" and of their "growing in love for God and in love for others." (Feazell 2001, 196) In the case of liturgical changes in the Worldwide Church of God, it would appear that for many members within these churches, this key fundamental and its companion "Golden Rule" did not seem applicable when African-American influenced music was included alongside European-American styled music in the church context. What I would suggest what in large part informs this thinking and behavior was what Grace Communion International President Joseph Tkach refers to as the [former] central church doctrine of Anglo-Israelism, a belief that equates the peoples of north Western Europe and north America with the ten tribes of ancient Israel taken into captivity by the Assyrians in the sixth century B.C. This belief, removed from church doctrine in 1995, led many to view non-Anglos as less important. In his book, *Transformed by Truth,* the account of a churches' transition from the cultic to the orthodox, denomination President Tkach writes of how "there existed this Anglo-Israelite doctrine that silently worked to foster racial prejudice" amongst many of the church's members. (Tkach 1997, 130)

Other Scriptural principles regarding how Christians are to relate to one another are found throughout the pages of the New Testament, offered from multiple sources. Directly related to the overarching mandate mentioned in the previous paragraph, is an account of a lawyer who questions Jesus as to "who is my neighbor" that he should love as himself. (Luke 10:25-29) Jesus proceeds to relate a story revolving around a Levite and a Samaritan to illustrate his answer. Any first-century Jew would have understood the centuries-old racial animosity surrounding Jewish-Samaritan relations, and yet Jesus instructs the questioning lawyer to treat others unlike himself (i.e. Samaritans) with love, mercy and compassion. (Luke 10:30-37)

Additional accounts demonstrating inclusionary versus exclusionary Christian principles are contained in the book of Acts where chief apostle Peter is shown through visions that God includes all peoples in what came to be known as His universal church. After several encounters with concepts heretofore foreign to him, Peter finally is reported to have exclaimed: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts those from every nation who fear him and do what is right." (Acts 10:34-35) The human inclination towards showing favoritism is addressed by Jesus' brother James when he writes: "My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism." James then progresses logically and poses the question that if anyone does demonstrate favoritism, "have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?" (James 2: 1, 4) He concludes his argument by declaring that "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers." (James 2:8-9) Writing to one particular congregation, the Apostle Paul expounds upon the virtues of and the application of Godly love when he states: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs." (1 Corinthians 13:4-5) It is evident in Paul's mind that thoughts and actions in contradiction to what he presents are simply not becoming of a Christian. Indeed Paul, in a letter to another congregation, reiterates the inclusionary principle Jesus taught when addressing the lawyer mentioned earlier, when he writes: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28) The context of Paul's statement can easily be extended to include the delineations of culture, ethnicity, and race not being cause for exclusion, since all believers are to be one in Christ. Indeed, describing a

scene depicting heavenly worship and praising God in song, the apostle John writes of "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9) When examining Scripture without prejudice, it becomes clear that the intent of Biblical Christianity in no way espouses national, cultural, ethnic, racial, generational, gender, or any other permutations of human distinctions, or that of any preferential reasoning or practice as pertains to any person or group adhering to the Christian faith. And insofar as God is concerned, denomination Vice President Feazell aptly comments how God is pleased to associate with disparate groups in the context of their particular culture. He specifically mentions Philippine, Arab, Indian, Danish, Latino, Anglo, African-American, and Chinese cultures, demonstrating his understanding of God's embracing of all peoples and their cultures. He succinctly concludes his point with "God loves the worship of his people regardless of its cultural flavor or style." (Feazell, 2001, 196)

It is lamentable that foundational principles of Christianity were not more appreciated, practiced, or for that matter taught during the transitional period of the Worldwide Church of God as she progressed forward to eventually become Grace Communion International. And while the basis for her transition is rooted in a fundamental transformation from the fringes of Christian theology to core orthodoxy, I believe it is fair to say that this transformation found expression in the worship formulations demonstrated in the church's liturgy, and as realized in the transition from exclusive to inclusive musical content. Specifically, with the introduction of African-American musical styles, the potential for a more expressive congregational response was very real, and also quite feared by many from both clergy and laity. Expressions including hand clapping, the raising of hands, bodily swaying or rhythmic dance-like motions, and exclamations of 'hallelujah' or 'amen' were things often met with cries of "The next thing you

know they'll be foaming at the mouth and rolling in the aisles," manifestations which I am not aware ever occurred in the congregations represented in this study. Transformational progress was often stymied by both white and black local clergy, who frequently led the charge against such music and any accompanying aforementioned responsive expressions, which were now denominationally permissible. (Feazell 2001, 178) The frustration emanating from local pastors' resistance to these changes while they stalled the spiritual growth of their congregations is evident when Feazell writes of the fear and indifference pastors conveyed to their respective congregations by their "deliberate neutrality, if not avoidance of all things truly Christian that touch the emotions, the heart, the soul, and the spirit." (Ibid., 121) The frustration relayed by Feazell captures the essence of what I felt and experienced in the congregations I attended and served in New York City and Westchester County, New York.

Need for the Study

Existing literature (e.g. Dougherty 2003; Dougherty and Huyser 2008; Emerson and Kim 2003; Emerson and Smith 2001) addresses the extent of racial diversity and integration in American churches from an historical perspective, including those informed by the broader issue of race relations in America. Other literature approaches the problem from an advocacy approach of encouraging racial diversity and multiculturalism in churches (e.g. Black 2000; Foster and Brelsford 1996; Garces-Foley 2007); Hesselgrave 1991; Marti 2005; Marti 2008; Warner 1998; Warner 2008). Still other studies approach this problem as a contemporary phenomena, or through case-studies of churches whose goal was to become racially diverse and/or multicultural in congregational makeup (Edwards 2005; Emerson and Woo 2006; Hawn 2003; Maynard-Reid 2000).

What seems to be lacking in the overall body of literature addressing multiracial churches are studies of churches that have been in existence for decades and have been historically multiracial in makeup, but which adhere to a liturgy centering on the use of mono-racial or mono-cultural musical styles. This experience runs counter to what Dougherty and Huyser suggest when they write that "Congregations with more diversity tend to be larger in size and founded more recently." (Dougherty and Huyser 2008, 32) The congregations of the Worldwide Church of God in this study, (one in existence since 1959, the remaining as later outgrowths of this mother-congregation) were bonded more by denominational church doctrine than any goal of racial or cultural diversity. And it is this distinction that may account for the accommodation by black members (who clearly represented a large proportion of church attendance) of a decidedly white-informed musical representation in church liturgy. There also is a lack of denominational literature addressing music-specific issues emanating from the broader theological/doctrinal changes instituted. Of the two sources offered by both the President and Vice President of the denomination under study, only scant passing mention is given regarding music. It is my intention to interview members of these Churches, both lay and clergy, to better understand what they experienced, felt, and how they negotiated this historically unprecedented inclusion of African-American music styles in their liturgy.

From the research described above, those who directly experienced this significant change might come to better understand what they experienced from the perspective of reviewing what occurred in some cases more than ten years ago, and in others as recently as the present. Others from any denominational or non-denominational churches contemplating or currently engaged in efforts to become racially diverse and multicultural might benefit from the experiences of those participating in this study and who have already navigated this type of liturgical overhaul. This

study may also benefit those wishing to gain greater empathy in order to aid in their understanding of the deep feelings that pertain to the musical aesthetics of those who are not of the same race or culture.

Purpose Statement

My intent in undertaking this study is three-fold. Firstly, to discover and document what some African-Americans experienced when their multiracial church denomination underwent doctrinal changes leading to the inclusion of non-white oriented musical styles within the church liturgy. While there is certainly merit in undertaking a study that includes what white members experienced, I am quite intentionally choosing to limit the scope of study to those whom I feel were most negatively impacted; black members whose musical aesthetic served as the focal point of offence and subsequent complaints, and as such suffered the negative responses and behavior that became associated with the churches' musical-liturgical changes. Additionally, based on my personal experiences and observations as a member of this denomination beginning in 1985, and a musical leader of several of its congregations, I have witnessed how the opinions and feelings of some (particularly non-whites) were treated as less importantly compared to other's. I have also experienced local church leadership's discrediting of inclusionary practices because others were in possession of differing viewpoints, as if that were reason enough to dismiss those in favor of the newly allowable musical styles. Because of this I feel that to include whites in this study would in some respects serve to obfuscate the focused and qualitative nature and intent of this study; that is to give non-obscured voice to a population heretofore perhaps not given equal opportunity by design and practice.

Secondly, I wish to provide an opportunity for participants to tell their own story in their own words where they may otherwise have not had such opportunity. Thirdly, in subsequent reporting of participant's experiences (ones at times of a heart-felt and emotional caliber), I hope to provide an opportunity for perhaps more soul-searching amongst some church goers who may not normally consider the feelings of their brothers and sisters in the faith who are of a different race.

Individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews, (with possible group follow up meetings) of African-American church members from the greater New York City metropolitan area will take place either in homes or public venues – whichever is deemed by those being interviewed to be a more comfortable setting. At the outset of this study and prior to any recruiting or interviewing of participants, it is my belief that some of the feelings expressed by those participating may include the element of racism, in part emanating from some quarters of the white church constituency where rejection rather than acceptance of the inclusion of black musical styles in the liturgy was demonstrated.

Research Questions and Sub-Questions

The foremost central question this study seeks to explore is what happens when African-American musical styles are introduced into the liturgy of a multiracial church where the liturgy had previously primarily consisted of European-American musical styles? Sub-questions to this central question include: 1. Were members made aware of the decision by denominational leaders, allowing for the inclusion of new musical styles in liturgy; 2. Were the new musical inclusions introduced, and if so in a reasonable timeframe? 3. When they were introduced, what were the initial reactions by congregants? 4. What were the responses by white congregants as per the perception by black members? 5. What were the responses by black congregants? 6.

Were any of the responses negative? 7. If so, were black congregants hurt by any negative responses from their white brothers and sisters? 8. Were negative responses perceived or explained to be based more upon emotions, aesthetics, philosophy, or some other criteria?

A second central question this study seeks to answer is what role did church leadership (at either the local or denominational level) play in either the success or failure of this new phenomenon? Sub-questions posed based on this second central question may include: 1. Was the decision for the change in musical liturgy explained to congregants in a clear and understandable fashion? 2. Was the need for the change given adequate Biblical defense based upon Christian principles that could be clearly presented from the Bible? 3. Was local church leadership perceived by the congregants to support the denomination's decision to allow for applicable musical style additions to the liturgy? 4. What were the responses from church leaders when questioned by congregants about any perceived support or lack of support for this change? 5. What were the responses from denominational leaders to complaints about local leader's support for the new musical inclusions? 6. What were the responses from denominational leaders to complaints about local leader's lack of support with the new directives in the churches liturgy?

Glossary of Terms

For purposes of this paper, the following terms are defined as follows:

African-American: Descendants of Non-white peoples having mostly West-African roots, and having been exiled to the United States of America primarily as part of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade of seventeen, eighteen, and nineteenth centuries. Note: This definition may also include,

although to a much lesser degree for purposes of this study, non-whites having African origins and domicile history in the Caribbean nations prior to residing in America.

Black: African-American (In the context of this paper, use of the term *black* is simply employed as a shorter way to express what is understood by participants of this study to be inherent in the term *African-American.* Using this terminology is a generally accepted means of expression by those it describes in the purview of this study. It is acknowledged that distinctions may exist between blacks having historical roots in America, and those more recently arrived as students or workers, or for other reasons. However, these distinctions are not representative of blacks in the context of this paper.

Black music: Used to generally describe music that most people would readily associate with African-American stylizations that include elements of more highly sensitized syncopation of rhythm. Particular genres that employ said stylizations and rhythms include what has come to be termed *soul* music, *blues, rhythm & blues*, *hip-hop,* and various hybrids drawing from these genres. It can also be associated with certain harmonies and chord progressions that many would distinguish as emanating from music associated with black performers or those performing black music. Genres such as *jazz, soul-jazz, gospel* (as specific to black-styled sub-genres within this broader category) would include such harmonic and chord progression elements.

European-American: Descendents of white peoples having mostly European roots and residing in the United States of America for a period of time, and more than likely generationally.

Heart Music: Music that deeply resonates on an emotional level with a particular population or group. This music may appeal to an aesthetical sense related to a group's cultural identity and shared experiences, and as such may not resonate with other groups in the same manner, or at all.

Liturgy: A collection of arranged formularies and rituals employed in the practice of a public church worship setting. This may include congregational singing, prayer, special music, dance, theatrical, or artistic display or presentation, spoken message, and readings.

Multiracial Worship: A church gathering represented by multiple races where a shared liturgical practice is experienced. This form of worship may however not be representative of all participants' cultural experiences or sense of musical aesthetics. As a case in point, musical elements of worship in Worldwide Church of God congregations were for decades representative of white culture only, yet participants represented other races as well.

Organizational Identity: A socially constructed sense of "we" that bonds members to the organization and to each other. The stronger this bond to one another becomes, "the less salient personal differences become." (Dougherty and Huyser 2008, 25)

Racialization: Socially constructed aspects of American society whereby "race matters profoundly for differences in life experiences, life opportunities, and social relationships." (Emerson and Smith 2001, 7)

Racism: An evolving ideology that functions via the "collective misuse of power that results in diminished life opportunities for some racial groups." (Ibid., 9)

White: European-American (Use of the term *white* is simply employed as a shorter way to express what is inherent in the term *European-American.* Using this terminology is a generally accepted means of expression by those it describes.)

White music: Used to generally describe music that most people would easily associate with European-American stylizations that generally include fewer elements of more highly sensitized rhythmic syncopation. It can also be associated with certain harmonies and chord progressions that differ in what tones are more emphasized or employed in melodies or chords, or what sequences of chords are used than by those often utilized in African-American music. (Refer to *black music* definition above for a more detailed comparison)

Limitations of the Study

The research study will be limited to data collection stemming from interviews of African-American church goers affiliated with denominational member congregations in the greater New York/New Jersey metropolitan area. Other data to a lesser degree might be harvested from possible group discussions following the completion of all one-on-one interviews, and with the understanding that as such those wishing to take part would accept the loss of confidentiality amongst others participating in the study. For the scope of this master's thesis, white church goers will not be interviewed. It is conceded that as such this study can be considered to be one-

sided. However, it should be noted that my intentional limitations of participants to people of color primarily stems from my belief that to include whites in this study would serve to obscure the clearly stated intention of this study (in short, what some African-Americans experienced when music associated with their culture was permitted in church liturgy), and perhaps lessen the credibility and validity of what blacks experienced. More will be included on this matter at a later stage in this paper. However, as stated previously, it is understood that there is a valid premise for a larger scope of research that would include the interviewing of white church members.

Assumptions

My expectation is that a complexity of views rather than narrow meanings will be discovered. The views of participants will primarily inform the meaning of critical questions and issues. It is also expected that some common threads of thought amongst participants will be discovered due to the realities of African-American group identity and culture. A diversity of perspective, emotions, reasoning, and conclusions of participants as to the success (partial or full) or failure (partial or full) of the musical changes in liturgy is expected, along with feelings of racism perceived to emanate from some white church constituency. I also would expect that there will be similarities and differences of understanding of guiding religious principles, as well as differences of opinion as to what future steps would be helpful in moving forward.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter serves to highlight what has already been documented on the general theme of multiculturalism within the American Christian church, and more specifically on American churches consisting of a multiracial constituency, particularly of the black-white category. While primarily reviewing material published within the last twenty-five years, examination of other primary and secondary historical documentation covering the history of religion in America, along with some early primary Middle-Eastern church-related documentation as it pertains to musical practices and multiculturalism, will also be covered. Additionally, several sources reviewed deal not with American Christianity directly, but offer keen insight into the commonality of such cultural demarcations amongst humanity in general.

A review of studies on this topic, primarily those taking a case study approach, is undertaken to address the problem of introducing African-American music styles into a liturgy mostly or exclusively consisting of European-American musical styles. In my introductory and subsequent chapters, I will offer insider perspective on a group of associated churches located in the northeast region of the United States and affiliated with the same church denomination, where historically mostly one style of music was used in the worship setting, but following doctrinal changes, multiple styles were employed.

My purpose in conducting research into this topic is to approach it ethnomusicologically in the orthodox sense, taking care not to use my Christian belief system as a cover for advocating personal and/or denominational doctrines, but rather as an aid and means for genuinely exploring and understanding the people groups that make up the face of today's American church. As a

practicing Christian, however, I do purpose to include in my thesis the advocating for churches made up of a population representative more of overall local demographics than on ethnocentric or nationalist-oriented church constituencies of the kind more commonly found.

This review is organized based on six thematic categories. Beginning with general and historic sources, the reviews examine the role of the church in music, especially in the Western European Art Music tradition. Following this sources providing data on American multiculturalism and diversity are reviewed. Next, sources offering pertinent data on multiculturalism in corporate worship are covered. Further, I will include a section on sources describing multicultural paradigms on non-American landscapes. Following this sources providing specific data on racial perspectives within the American church context are reviewed. Lastly, sources offering applicable case-study data on specific American churches are explored.

General and Historical Sources

Establishing an historical link between music, culture, and Christianity is important to informing any understanding of contemporary dynamics containing these components. Weiss and Taruskin (1984) assemble a collection of primary and secondary documentation specifically relevant to the history of Western music, beginning in antiquity and ending in the late twentieth century. The role of the Church in music, and how music manifested in the Church is detailed from historically contemporary letters written in various stages of Western music history. Of particular relevancy are accounts linking Temple and Jewish Synagogue musical practices with the musical practices of the early Christian Church in the Middle East. Psalms decreeing the use of a wide variety of instrumentation along with singing and dancing are numerous. Late 4th century psalmody along with hymnody and antiphons (i.e. call and response singing) are

documented by a Spanish nun named Egeria during her travels throughout the Holy land. This would seem to strongly indicate the continued use of culturally-specific (both socio-musical and geographical) music practices throughout the early centuries of Christianity in the general area of its birth. The use of antiphonal singing would many centuries later become an integral component of the African-American church experience, although this may be less directly linked to the early centuries of Middle Eastern Christian musical practices, and perhaps more immediately associated with common historical musical stylizations stemming from West Africa. Advancing forward in time and shifting westward geographically, Allitt (2000) has compiled a significant body of primary and secondary literature detailing the history of the Church in America. While inheriting much from the Protestant Reformation denominations that migrated to her shores, but due to her large geographic expanse, America has also indigenously spawned many of her own denominations. The disparity between learned clergy (mostly from the Reformation denominations imported from Europe) and uneducated preachers (mostly of the home-grown variety) led to major distinctions within the overall American Church landscape. Emotionalism, along with its accompanying unique musical aesthetics, led to cultural schisms that are still very much in presence today. Additionally, Allitt includes letters and essays concerning the assimilation process of recent immigrants and how religion plays a role in their new lives in America. He also includes documentation surrounding the heightened divisions amongst Black and White churches during the civil rights and protest eras of the nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixties. Sermons by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and writings by author James Baldwin, both renowned black historical figures, along with articles written by whites from the widely circulated periodical *Christianity Today,* are used to highlight this area of reporting.

As a means to better understand the general aspects of the interrelatedness of culture and music, and how they combine to inform a people group's identity, Clayton, et al. (2003) and Martin (1994) have respectively edited a collection of essays by many contributors that cover multiple areas of the music experience from geographical, aesthetical, biological, social, and performance perspectives. All contributing authors to this body hold respected positions (many long-time) in academia, and most within the United Kingdom. While secular in nature, and not particularly American in outlook (although seven contributors are American), their particular areas of study are applicable to understanding music and culture within the church construct, since church attendees emanate from specific culture groups, and would fall under the same or similar realities in their cultural understandings as those discussed. To understand people from the context of their culture and understanding of their own music, is to better understand music's diverse usages within the context of the church existing within a specific culture. And when such understanding is realized it can shed light on the complexities of sharing worship spaces amongst divergent groups where music is provided. Moving from a more secular worldwide culture study to the non-secular arena, Farhadian (2007) introduces the concept of corporate worship as it is experienced in diverse worldwide cultures. Cultural aspects such as dress, speech, interpersonal communications, and aesthetic sensibilities are brought to bear on this subject. Concepts having their source in the Bible are posited in a manner as to aid in appreciating cultural distinctives that can and often do lead to misunderstandings amongst people groups sharing the same religion within the same church congregation context.

Sources Providing Data on American Multiculturalism and Diversity

A good amount of research has been conducted in the area of churches that are multicultural in makeup. Foster and Brelsford (1996) approach this topic from the affirmative

position that all who follow Jesus are an equal part of His Church. However they note with equal affirmation that relating to others unlike themselves is something that Christians, and Jews alike, have struggled with for millennia. The aspects of difference loom large in their work, along with how great difficulty is experienced when attempting to bridge such differences. Armed with a grant from the Lilly Endowment to study congregations who have to one degree or another been successful in overcoming the difference obstacles, and by boldly celebrating difference, the writers embark on a study of three uniquely different multicultural congregations in the Atlanta, Georgia metropolitan area. All three congregations had committed to intentionally seek cultural diversity for at least eight to ten years. The author's main question is centered on how these congregations incorporated others into the identity and theology of their church life. Their findings support their initial theory, that congregations that intentionally embrace multiculturalism within their ranks better represent Christian community. However, they also discovered the fragility of even such well intentioned and grounded congregations, in that certain changes, such as in pastoral leadership or ministry outreach, were perceived as a major threat to the continuation of the multicultural congregation's existence.

Warner (2005) offers insight garnered from accumulated research begun in 1986, and concludes that the Church, while in Europe was firmly established by governmental authorities, in America the Church was and remains a disestablished entity, as government, while not establishing any particular religion, has from the beginnings of its existence been fundamentally inclined to tolerate all expressions of religion. This led to the diversity of church experiences based on the diversity of constituency cultures, in turn based on factors such as ethnicity, race, geography, economics, politics, and education amongst other things. It was here in America that immigrants discovered that they could retain and maintain cultural distinctives within the

construct of religion, thus leading to religious assembling based on natural and familiar cultural affinities. Warner (1998) in another study makes particular note of more contemporary immigration trends from mostly areas considered to be of Third World stature. As millions gain entry from countries within Southern Asia, the Middle East, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, the assembling within a religious context informed by particular cultures continues to occur. I would postulate that this realization may indeed account for why assembling with others who are different is seemingly unnatural from the general perspective of humanity's penchant for the comforts and security that a familiar insularity can afford.

One church that intentionally sought to reach beyond such insularity to become one of the largest multicultural churches in America is "Mosaic" in Southern California. Marti (2005) chronicles the unique approach of this church's development from their origination based on the premise of offering multiple havens of inclusion that span the ethnic demographics of their constituency area, and thus rendering ethnic demarcation moot. Marti presents a case for "Mosaic" as a model for the future of American Christianity despite the 94 percent of her churches presently retaining an ethnocentric membership and outlook. And while based on projected census data indicating that by 2050 no single ethnic group will possess a plurality in numbers, the church, while behind what will become a more integrated society in the secular realm, will have to follow suit if it will remain a viable institution. Echoing the sentiment regarding this future trend as it evolves even now is Garces-Foley (2007). She postulates that Christians are faced with ever-increasing ethnic diversity whether they live in cities of suburbia. And because of this irreversible trend, they will need to reevaluate the purpose of congregational life as it exists in this new landscape. Homogeneous congregations may still make up the overwhelming majority of the Church whole, but events are currently in progress where some

congregations are making the sincere effort to become less so and thus more multicultural. Inclusion of those who were considered others will be essential going forward. Marti (2008) further expounds upon this inclusionary principle when race is added to the multiethnic mix. Here too, centric interests are found to recede when a higher call to embrace our common origins and destiny are emphasized. Hence, a focus upon inclusionary identity will ultimately hold sway over the more divisive particularisms of ethnocentricity.

It should be kept in mind that navigating cultural particularisms requires an appreciation and understanding of how different cultures communicate, learn, and process. Within the church construct Hasselgrave (1991) provides much insight into these divergent means of cultural communication. Care is taken to provide valuable cultural-specific information on the differing worldviews, cognitive processes, conceptual thinking, intuitional thinking, concrete relational thinking, and linguistic means of expressing ideas. Without such understanding, opportunities to advance the multicultural church can be stymied or perhaps even irreparably damaged, at least temporarily. Complementing this approach to cultural understanding is Yob (1995). She argues for the inclusion of religious artwork for the purpose of multicultural education in the secular environment. Her position is based upon the belief that when multicultural teaching is systemically presented in the classroom, cultural sensitivity will ensue. Using religiously-informed art such as liturgical music, paintings, sculpture, architecture, sacred literature, dance, and costumes, will enhance the education appreciation of cultural diversity.

Sources Providing Data on American Multiculturalism in Corporate Worship

Within the church worship context there exists a good deal of diversity when viewed from a perspective beyond the format consisting of congregational participation in musical singing and a message delivered by an ecclesiastical official. Black (2000) defines her terms by emphasizing the difference between ethnicity, culture, and race. When these are figured into congregational response in a worship setting, differences become apparent. Responsiveness is much more evident amongst black membership than white, and when emanating from within multiracial congregations, responsiveness falls in between what normally is evident in the mostly black and white church constituencies. She also stresses that unlike ethnocentric views, where one's own culture is elevated above all others, a multicultural view respects the existence of all cultures.

Branching forth from the standard worship format constants previously mentioned, Maynard-Reid (2000) focuses on three cultural-racial groups and explores the multiethnic dimensions of worship within the African-American, Caribbean, and Hispanic context. How the constants along with the diverse culturally-specific manifestations of the worship service can both be respected is a key question considered. Worship and culture are highlighted historically to provide perspective, along with a more detailed examination into contextual applications of each of the three groups within the worship paradigm. When studying multiracial churches, Edwards (2008) discovers that while diversity from within the corporate worship context is notably more apparent than in a mostly uni-racial church, blacks were prone to be more sensitive to white sensibilities than the other way around, and as such blacks somewhat refrained from their more natural enthusiastic response to what was occurring in the worship environment, whether during the participatory music sections or the preaching portions of corporate worship. Conformity to white expectations in the church setting is noted to be similar to how such conformity is exercised in other social situations.

The role of music in cross-cultural worship settings is examined by Hawn (2003). Case-studies of four Dallas United Methodist congregations are detailed taking into account socio-economic and ethnic specifics. Insight garnered from the studies is synthesized to provide guidelines in achieving a genuine multicultural worship service experience using culturally and contextually appropriate music. Data from this study is critical to my topic due to the information provided on the cultural sensitivities which need to be considered if all participating parties are to be genuinely respected and served.

Sources Providing Data on Non-American Multiculturalism

So that perceptions do not form that lead to the conclusion that America is the only problematic region when considering things multicultural, it is reasonable to consider the difficulties encountered in a few other areas of the world where co-existence of multiple cultures was difficult or even unachievable. As this condition is probably a worldwide phenomenon, space here will allow for the inclusion of only a few examples. From within the Christian context, Lange (2003) provides a case-study of a Hungarian Pentecostal church whose constituency is made up of many Hungarians, but includes substantial numbers of Romani (i.e. Gypsy) congregants. This multicultural church's success in this endeavor was in large part due to the efforts of its pastor. And while this experience must be considered a success, difficulties were encountered and still at times surface today. Longer-standing Hungarian members had to deal with culturally-rooted prejudices towards Gypsies in general, and specifically with their ideas of what constituted musical acceptability. It may be that success in navigating such differences may

have been aided by the spiritedness and acceptance of emotional expressiveness, (rooted in this denomination) that allowed for eventual acceptance of Romani spirited musical aesthetics.

From within another Christian context is found a multicultural demographic that did not ultimately manifest in a shared multicultural church experience. Palackal (2004) notes how an early first-century Christian presence in Kerala, India was established under the leadership of St. Thomas, one of the original twelve apostles of Jesus. This community was later strengthened in the fourth-century by emigrating Christians from Persia, what would become modern-day Iran. He includes how from the fifth-century forward visiting bishops from Persia were received by this multicultural Christian community. However, throughout the course of time, and attributed to outsider interference from said Christian authorities, this community dissolved into intra-church conflict. And while said conflict is not based upon differences in culture per se, what became musically identifiable and distinctive within some of the churches had its genesis in Syria and Palestine, where a musical culture was shared by Hellenistic and Aramean Christians. As a result, there exist today seven separate churches amongst the original group of what had become known as the St. Thomas Christians.

Another area where cultural separation informed by music is maintained is in the State of Israel. While this experience is not specifically within the Christian construct, it lends itself nicely to supporting the premise that music is used as a tool to unite, but can also serve as the means for division. During the founding of this new Jewish nation, following the horrendous persecution and prejudice with malice administered by self-appointed racially and culturally superior Nazi Germany during WWII, Saada-Ophir (2006) recounts how European Ashkenazi Jews considered themselves superior to darker skinned Middle Eastern and North African Jews entering the newly-formed state. A musically ethnocentric mindset also prevailed as European

Western music, albeit tinged with a flavoring of Jewish Yemeni musical aesthetic for added exotic spice, was deemed superior and thus the crowned and sanctioned standard of the music of Israel.

Sources Providing American Racial Perspectives within the Church Paradigm

Several works mentioned within the statistical realm of study are applicable here as well. Cavendish (2000), DeYoung et al. (2003), Dougherty (2003), Dougherty and Huyser (2008), Emerson and Smith (2001), Emerson and Chai Kim (2003), and Emerson and Woo (2006) all provide pertinent data as covered earlier. Other works offering a more ethnographic or case-study approach to the theme of racial perspectives in America are numerous, and only some will be referenced for this work.

In establishing the difference criteria between what will be referred to as the Black/White dynamic, Agawa (from Clayton et al. 2003) posits a distinctively Africanist ethnomusicology where difference provides the basis for his perspective. He utilizes the characterization of people having African roots by non-Africans as a people radically unlike ourselves, as a catalyst to confront difference, both real and presumed. What he argues for is an ethical study and evaluation and hence acknowledgement of, the legitimate differences between African oriented and Western oriented musical practices. Brackett (from Clayton et al. 2003) brings to the fore the stylistic differences between Black and White popular music, and how many elements of Black music over time find their way into White consciousness and hence, acceptability. The cross-over affect of accepting what was once considered unacceptable is highlighted. I would offer that this phenomenon can play a role, to a greater or lesser extent and depending on factors such as leadership and education, in navigating the Black/White dynamic within the multicultural church

context. Addressing differences from an interesting angle is Aghahowa (1996), which she attributes a good deal simply to taste, and that aesthetic expression, particularly of the musical variety, often divide Christians more than anything else. I would agree with her conclusions based on my own personal experiences in having the task as music director of providing musical offerings for a group in possession of very different musical aesthetics.

In crossing this particular ethnic divide, Garces-Foley (2007) provides insight based on a healing and reconciliation perspective having its genesis in the civil rights movement. She notes how, despite the persistent rarity of multiracial churches, there, in fact, exists a pronounced desire amongst many Christians for this to occur. Her ethnography of one church examines how a homogeneous community endeavors to become a better multiethnic community, along with triumphs and setbacks along the way. Emerson, with Woo (2008) provides perspective of how the dream of America is not necessarily a standard one. In depth analysis is given surrounding multiethnic/racial churches, and what dream is held by different groups. Edwards (2008) claims that even within committed multiracial churches, the racial divide is always present in how response is elicited from and provided by different constituencies. She also claims that more often than not Black members of multiethnic churches will acquiesce to White norms in order to allow their White comrades to remain somewhat comfortable. I would ask, however, if this dynamic is genuinely indicative of a successful multiracial entity. I have doubts about this, and will delve into such questions when applying Biblical principles pertaining to the heart and mind of those who would be adherents to the teachings of Jesus.

Analyzing the attempted merging of divergent, often racially-informed cultural practices within the worship context of a church, Priest and Nieves (2007) in chapter seventeen report two

congregation's experiences. *This Side of Heaven* offers keen insight and exposes key potential pitfalls in embarking on such a merger.

In frank, no-holds-barred language, Emerson and Yancy (2011) tackle America's historic dilemma, race relations. Explaining succinctly the how and whys of America becoming a country of racialized white supremacy, they offer critical perspective on defining a future that advances beyond the present state of misunderstandings and cultural differences between the predominantly black-white racial issues, while establishing the facts surrounding the assumptions of white cultural normalcy.

Sources Providing Case-Study Data on a Specific Church

Having provided information compiled from multiple sources covering the general, historical, statistical, multicultural (both American and non-American), multiethnic, and multiracial, and as music often relates to these themes, I now wish to offer a final perspective from a specific church paradigm with which I am personally familiar. The Worldwide Church of God was once a denomination that bordered on the cultic in that it viewed itself as God's true church and others as not. What is perhaps most interesting about this denomination is that it was truly worldwide in geographic scope, encompassing individuals from varied cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. However, a mono-cultural construct was assumed as authoritative in how the corporate worship service manifested – which is to say Eurocentric, or otherwise, white. An elitist perspective was assumed and as such, music that fell outside the realm of what denominational leadership felt to be acceptably Western-derived (and more or less classical in style) was considered to be inferior at best and diabolical at worst. What seemed to hold this multicultural-ethnic-racial church constituency together was denominational doctrines, along

with customs and practices more associated with Judaism than with Christianity. After experiencing major doctrinal changes leading to an orthodox Christianity, membership radically dropped, and as a result, what heretofore would have appeared as vibrant well-attended multicultural congregations would become fledgling small congregations facing the same challenges as other orthodox churches face in today's ever-changing American and Christian landscape. Tkach (1997), the denomination (now Grace Communion International) President since 1996, provides first-hand knowledge of the events and processes that led to this transition, along with the huge difficulties that it entailed. Feazell (2001), Tkach's senior advisor and denominational Vice President, portrays this modern-day Reformation from his unique on-the-scene perspective. From this denomination's transition experiences, I will offer my own insight from a music director's view of how music played an important role is highlighting this transition from the old paradigm to the new, and the resultant difficulties and emotional turmoil that was brought to bear when true multiculturalism was posited as the goal.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Background

To reiterate the premise for this study as outlined in chapter one, the research problem arises from the introduction of African-American musical styles in church liturgy that heretofore utilized primarily European-American musical styles. This phenomena triggered emotional angst and heated objection amongst many members. Congregations of the former Worldwide Church of God (now the newly and completely reformed Grace Communion International) from around the greater New York City/New Jersey metropolitan area reflecting this paradigm are member churches where constituency was fairly racially diverse, and where blacks or whites accounted for at least twenty-five percent of church attendance. These congregations serve as the basis of this study.

Given the nature of this research problem, (the former systematic exclusion of black musical styles within the worship context, and the subsequent inclusion of these styles, and where said musical styles are representative of sizable populations from within such churches) the issues of racial-cultural marginalization at best (whether benignly unintentional or intentionally orchestrated) or artistic oppression at worse exist. For this reason, I believe that a researcher with an affinity for an advocacy worldview is well suited to study this problem. Creswell notes that the *Advocacy* worldview stems from the concern that there are "issues of social justice that needed to be addressed." (Creswell 2009, 9) And while this worldview is mostly suited to qualitative strategies, the research problem can potentially serve as a base for quantitative research. (Ibid.) This may especially be the case if compiling statistical data that can be measured and compared based upon numerical and demographical data constituting these churches. However, if this problem is viewed from Creswell's premise that the researcher needs

to pursue an "action agenda" in order assist marginalized populations, then the collaborative approach espoused would directly inform the need for a qualitative approach. (Ibid. 9-10) Reform is a major goal of this strategy, and as such research needs to be "intertwined with politics and a political agenda." (Ibid. 9) When viewing politics as the aggregate of people relationships where authority and power are involved, an advocacy worldview with an action agenda is not difficult to embrace, especially when what is ultimately sought is change – individually and institutionally speaking. The platform for change for the advocate and participatory researcher is advanced through dialectical pursuits. (Ibid. 10) This approach would seem to work best when all concerned parties are involved. Logical and rational discussion should be sought to create a climate of understanding and tolerance. All of these aspects can fit together nicely when applied to the research problem mentioned above. That is, of course, if all interested parties are willing to honestly and rationally discuss the issues together. Where religion is considered, however, discussions do not necessarily follow a reasoned and rational path. The extent of participant willingness to genuinely engage will inform what strategies to utilize and they may need to be modified as responses to the research emerge.

While I am not embarking upon a quantitative study, some theories generally associated with this approach do, I believe, offer pertinent perspective on the qualitative approach I will pursue. There are several theories I belief merit consideration in this study. Organizational Identity as it applies to the racial-diversity church construct is a theory posited by Dougherty and Huyser in their 2008 paper "Racially Diverse Congregations: Organizational Identity and the Accommodation of Differences." They developed their theory while applying additional criteria in their study of prior data gathered in the 1998 National Congregational Study. This theory indicates that existing variations in racial diversity are dependent on a variety of factors that

include whether or not churches have, and actively pursue, a racial reconciliation effort, if clergy members are of a different race than many church participants, and what style of worship is practiced.

As applies to my study, the above criteria are considered as they represent denominational polity. Additional to the organization identity theory as it applies denominationally, the theory of Congregational Identity can also be seen as appropriate when viewing individual churches within the parent denomination. Key criteria that might be measured from the perspective of African-American non-clergy church constituency include the intentionality of local church clergy and leadership in incorporating the key elements of denominational policy relating to the aforementioned organizational identity.

My expectations are that independent variables of racism and intentional positive promotion of musical inclusion will directly, and perhaps indirectly, influence dependent variables of either acceptance or rejection of the incorporation of black musical styles in a new and more inclusive liturgy. I expect this to be realized because while the first, i.e. underlying racism, will negatively inhibit progress towards inclusion and diversity, the other, i.e. genuine teaching and promotion of inclusion and diversity, will in some regards positively mitigate the negative effects of the former variable.

I will embark on this study with a Grounded Theory strategy that assumes that Christian understanding of relationships, especially amongst fellow Christians, would be primarily informed by the textual examples found in various books included in the New Testament collection of the Bible. Broad and non-threatening open-ended questions could first be presented, followed by more specific and perhaps challenging ones. Again, the success of this sort of

advocacy approach is ultimately predicated on the participation of all parties so that the intended agenda – music used in liturgy that is inclusive of constituent demographics rather than exclusive and centering on a singular style – can be realized. However, given the scope of study involving significant numbers of both black and white constituencies of multiple congregations, I believe for purposes of this study a reduction in scope is necessary. Thus, a case-study approach of a particular church or closely associated churches would be the more beneficial path to employ. Additionally, and considering this researcher's interests and worldview, an ethnographic approach will be utilized within the case-study in order to bring to life a number of individual stories of African-American's experiences that fall within the purview of this research problem.

My purpose for embarking on a qualitative inquiry is to research the personal experiences of some black church members when denominational doctrine changed to allow for the inclusion of non-European-American musical styles within church liturgy. This musical change in liturgy as it was experienced in several multiracial congregations of this denomination in the greater New York City/New Jersey area is well suited to a strategy that includes personal and in depth face-to-face meetings with several African-Americans from each of the four or five congregations where this occurred. While this number of interviewees would not represent a quantitative approach, nor will it serve to perhaps be representative of all non-white views concerning the subject matter of the study, it does qualitatively represent what some African-Americans from multiple congregations meeting in the same general geographic area experienced. I believe that what these congregants experienced is also representative of what others experienced, particularly if certain trends are discovered to emerge from analysis of interview data across multiple congregations. To discover their perceptions of said changes along with their personal subsequent individual and potentially collective experiences during the implementation of this

liturgical modification justifies a qualitative strategy. In pursuing such a strategy, an

understanding that includes the personalized feelings of those who experienced these phenomena

first-hand could be attained. (Creswell 2009, 13) The characteristics listed below of a qualitative

research centered on an ethnographic strategy would support my approach to this topic of study:

> 1. Qualitative design is emergent, allowing for a more natural process predicated on the perspectives of the participants in this study. (Ibid., 175-6)
> 2. The detailed focus on participant perspective is paramount in qualitative study. (Ibid., 176)
> 3. The collection of data by the researcher, via primarily individual and possible group interview, along with observation from within the natural church worship service setting is a hallmark of qualitative study. (Ibid., 175, 181)
> 4. Researcher interpretation of the data collected is based in part upon the researcher's perceptions formed from time spent with participants, and is informed by an intuitive and felt knowledge. This too is indicative of qualitative research approaches. (Ibid. 176, 184)

Researcher's Role

As stated in the introductory chapter, as a church member, and musical director with the

responsibility of introducing new styles during the time of this change in liturgical polity (and

often without support from some local clergy), I witnessed what I perceived to be a decided

absence on the part of some white membership of an appreciation or concern for the Biblical

principals incorporated in Christianity's "Golden Rule" found in the seventh chapter and twelfth

verse of the Gospel of Mathew: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to

you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." I personally observed behavior that appeared to

me to have had little to do with loving one's neighbor as one would him/herself, another

foundational principle voiced by Jesus and recorded in Matthew, chapter twenty-two, verses

thirty-four through thirty-eight. While directing a choir and orchestra (sometimes numbering

over a hundred participants), I witnessed, and was additionally informed that some members rose

from their seats and exited the meeting hall during a certain special musical offering in order to demonstrate their disapproval of the newly-introduced music styles. I overheard and was informed of negative and at times vitriolic commentary regarding the nature of new music selections. I or clergy (mostly clergy) were the recipients of complaints regarding these new, and for them unacceptable, musical styles. Again to reiterate, the new musical styles were not a replacement of historical musical styles, but simply an addition. In the case of liturgical changes in the Worldwide Church of God, it seemed apparent that for some members within these churches, the 'Golden Rule' and 'loving one's neighbor as oneself' did not seem to be applicable when African-American influenced music was included alongside European-American styled music in the worship context.

The researcher being the primary collector, compiler, interpreter, and reporter of data related to this problem, warrants disclosure of the researcher's connections to the participants of this study, along with biases that may inform the research. As stated earlier, as a member of the denomination of the churches from whom I will interview participants, I am familiar with the phenomenon that took place. And as one of the churches music directors at the time of this change in liturgy, I am more than casually aware of the tension, anticipation, and ramifications of implementing said changes. My connection to some whom I plan to interview was, at the time these liturgical changes took place, one of musical director to musician or vocalist. I was an unpaid volunteer as were all who served in music ministry. I held no monetary or promotional influence over anyone at any time during the course of my position as a music director. I directed rehearsals and church musical performances, and additionally composed and arranged music in multiple styles. Having come from an eclectic and diverse musical background, I enthusiastically embraced the new liturgy of increased stylistic inclusions. This fact in some respects grants me

an audience with the participants in this study in a way that others less intimate, supportive, and participatory in this musical dynamic might have. Philosophically, my Christian worldview is one based upon an altogether inclusive model informed by basic Christology emanating from the recorded narratives of Jesus and others contained in the Bible.

The Study

The setting for this study will include a venue for one-on-one and possibly group interviews in several locations conducive and agreeable to the participants involved from each congregation. A home environment or a public venue is acceptable, as long as it is not only convenient but favorable to those participating. Their comfort is the primary determinant as to venue. An additional setting will include the actual venues where participants meet for corporate worship. It is in these venues where additional data obtained via observation will take place.

Participants

As stated earlier, several church-goers from each of the five applicable congregations will be recruited to participate in this study. For this study recruitment will be limited to African-American church members with whom I am acquainted mostly through my previous service as a church music director. Although I no longer serve in any regular musical capacity with this denomination, I retain membership and maintain friendly relationships with those whom I will seek as participants in this study.

Events and Processes

Using a number of open-ended questions, then leading to more specific questions formulated in advance according to the possible directions interview discussions might lead, will take place in a comfortable setting. The events will take the form of one-on-one and face-to-face meetings, and possibly subsequent face-to-face group meetings, and perhaps follow-up phone meetings with those willing, but due to scheduling conflicts, are unable to meet within the group setting. These meetings will be conducted following qualitative interviewing techniques where participants are given free latitude to share their experiences and tell their story. Subsequent and intermittent questions posed by the researcher will be predicated on the emergent direction of the interview meetings, and as such may not be posed verbatim as listed in chapter four, but according to the researcher's intuitive sense based on the one-on-one or group meeting dynamics. To add dimension to the study, visits to the churches represented in this study will be experienced by the researcher in order to gain further insight and to aid in the collection of observable data while participating during their worship service. This will also serve to add validity to the analysis and interpretive portions of the study.

Ethical Considerations

The utmost consideration and respect for participants in this study will be afforded. And while it is understood that interviews are in and of themselves invasive and time consuming for the participant, every effort to promote a relaxed, comfortable, and enjoyable environment and interview experience will be made. Food and drink will be made available for any interviews conducted in a public venue or in my home. Any breaks and the length thereof will be

determined by the participants. It is my belief that the opportunity for participants to share their thoughts and experiences in a manner that allows them to be the focal point will enhance the beneficial or desirable aspect of an otherwise intrusive interview process.

Data Collection

Data will be accumulated based on the researcher's taking of notes during the interview process and any subsequent worship service events I may attend. I will seek consent to record interviews, with the agreement of confidentiality, so that I may jot notes rather than copiously write while listening to participant's responses. This will afford me the ability to more personally focus and interact with participants during the interview process. During a later process of review and analysis I will use recordings to enhance or support my jottings of responses and reactions that resonated with me as significantly noteworthy. A protocol script will be utilized to aid in the process of quickly notating categorically according to a template, which will include a miscellaneous category for any emergent data that may be offered and not anticipated in advance.

Data Analysis

Color-coded categorization methodology will be employed to organize all data into cohesive and analyzable segments. For example, green will represent recurring themes amongst multiple participants, red will represent conflicting implications discovered, orange will represent unexpected themes or perspectives not anticipated in advance but easily categorized, and yellow

will represent themes or issues not initially easily categorized. Data will at first be reviewed to obtain a general sense of direction of participant's responses. Recurring themes, dichotomies, unexpected developments, and other possible categories, will be reviewed continuously in order to compile a body of categorized data from which to develop apt interpretation finally leading to narrative reporting. Due to my years in computer program design for a large New York banking institution, along with many years of musical composing and arrangement for small, medium, and large aggregations, I am very comfortable organizing large amounts of detailed data into categories for later interpretation and reporting/musical performing. I may explore the possibility of a PC software program to aid in this regard, but may simply proceed based on my intuitive programmatic and musical arranging skills.

Verification of Findings

Listed below are several means I will employ to provide a process for validating my findings.

1. A triangulation of the data collection process as a system of checks and balances: One-on-one interview data with follow-up discussions, data obtained from within the group interview dynamic, and data obtained from observation during participant practices during a worship service. This three-fold process of data collection will serve to verify collected data, and to identify any conflicting areas that may require additional investigation in order to obtain valid interpretation prior to reporting.

2. Data interpretations by the researcher will be shared with participants for validation prior to reporting, and thus allowing for pertinent revision. Any areas of discrepancy will

be addressed accordingly. They will either be resolved or reported as a disputable item requiring further study to obtain more definitive conclusions.

3. I will seek verification of my results through sharing them with a student and/or graduate who has gone through a similar or closely related process and is thus familiar with the verification expectations in a qualitative study.

Reporting of Findings

Results of this study will be reported in detailed narrative fashion. Themes common amongst all or most participants will be reported in greater detail. Areas that cannot be adequately agreed upon will also be fully disclosed. Informing the final written narrative will be primarily the experiences of the participants, written according to their perspectives, but filtered to some degree also from the philosophical bias inherent in the researcher.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Author's Commentary on the Interview Process

Meeting with and interviewing participants in this case study proved to be an entirely unique experience. While I have known these men and women in the context of our shared denominational culture, as well as our regional experiences, and sometimes within the church music arena, I was not aware of much of what participants experienced on a personal level or in their respective congregations. The seriousness and comprehensiveness with which participants considered their roles as providers of valuable and pertinent information to this study was astounding. Some participant's had earned masters or doctoral degrees and had conducted thesis or dissertation research in their respective fields and so were familiar with the overall research process. Others are currently in the process of earning their masters and as such were also familiar with the process, while others were simply committed to being an important part of this study. Most if not all were keenly aware of the nature and implications of this research and were very forthwith in offering their detailed and personal commentary and analysis of the research problem (i.e. the inclusion of black musical styles in liturgy heretofore restricted to white musical styles), along with providing detailed data regarding their experiences. It was in this personalized realm that the depth of the impact of the problem informing this study was made sharply clear. I have known some of these folks for many years (some for more than two decades) and had actively worked with some on a regular basis in music ministry. Yet, I was not aware of details and circumstances of some of the more profound experiences that impacted them deeply as Christians of color in a white-dominated church culture.

I was struck by participants' willingness to talk about and discuss their experiences and observations for hours at a single sitting, whether in their homes or elsewhere. There were multiple occasions where I would meet with someone in the lower concourse level of Grand Central Station in Manhattan. This very large area is home to many food venues where customers can sit and be served in restaurants either removed from the pedestrian traffic, or seated outside the eatery's enclosed confines in an underground rather al fresco-style setting. Other establishments offer take-out dishes, where patrons can purchase their selections and then locate numerous varieties of seating where they may enjoy their meals or refreshments. While this may not seem a suitable environment for serious discussions for many people, it actually was the preferred environment for some of my New York City participants. As one who lived for many years in Manhattan, as well as traversing through Grand Central Station over a long period of time following my move to White Plains in 2003 and traveling daily to work in the city, this presented no problem for me. My participant and I would find a suitable table apart from the main avenues of pedestrian traffic and set up our discussion camp for hours without interruption, except for occasional cleaning crew personnel or a few cranky children wishing to be elsewhere. The constant hum and buzz of thousands of people traversing and conversing can in a sense provide a comfortable backdrop, and even encouragement, for serious conversation among die-hard New Yorkers.

Following the accumulation of tens of hours of hand-written and digitally recorded interview data, the painstaking task of compiling and categorizing said data ensued. This consumed many more hours than I had anticipated. Even with my numerous years of experience in data processing gathering, categorizing, analyzing, and reporting on compiled data while working for a large New York financial institution, data extraction from flesh and blood people proved

altogether different and more challenging than impersonal bytes of data gathered from impersonal communication and interaction with information warehoused in databases. Where complexity arose was in the area when data did not neatly fit in only one specific category. To artificially force such strict categorization criteria would require the creation of more data categories then would reasonably be required for effective analysis leading to meaningful reporting. I determined that working with data of the type associated with personal and human experiences, it was best to make entries in any applicable category for any data that could be processed from more than one categorical area. This would enable me, when analyzing for the specific purpose of reporting, to have applicable data at my fingertips without enforced limitations based on artificial restriction of data categorization.

Following the data compilation and categorization stage, many additional hours were spent during the analysis phase of this study discovering data trends. It was during this process that themes emerged that could be incorporated in my narrative to create a story flow that would present the research findings in a manner that the potential reader could readily process. By this I mean presenting a readable story-like account of my findings that naturally flowed while preserving the scholarly integrity of the research. My goal was to produce the results of my study in an easily readable and narrative-friendly style. In working through this phase of my research, what emerged was ample reportable data that could be fashioned into a story-like narrative in a logical and progressive sense, while simultaneously capturing the personalized experiences of my participants. It is my hope that I have been successful in this endeavor.

Reporting Approach

During the data collection process a series of questions were posed to each participant of this study in a semi-formalized manner. Not all questions were presented in necessarily the same chronology (especially following initial questions), and not all were necessarily posed in the same manner (e.g. what may have informed the question and how it may have been framed). Not all questions were necessarily explicitly asked or framed verbatim, since some may have been answered in the course of other questions being discussed. Some questions led to subsequent sub-questions being asked that the researcher had anticipated, while others may have informed new sub-paths which were then spontaneously traversed. Some of these newfound questions were then included in subsequent meetings with participants not yet interviewed.

After detailed and repeated analysis of participants' responses to either questions posed, or in response to situations and experiences raised by those interviewed, along with the subsequent opinions offered during the course of each one-on-one interview, there emerged six general categories that would serve as the basis and chronology of how findings are reported. Additionally, other pertinent questions were raised and explored during follow-up group meetings or phone conversations that added further perspective to the findings realized based on the original individual face-to-face meetings. Following is a listing of questions utilized during the course of the initial individual meetings. Again, these questions were not all necessarily asked in this order, nor were all necessarily explicitly asked, especially if they were answered during the course of discussions regarding other queries. It is important to note that the dynamic of each one-on-one meeting was a collaborative endeavor. While I conducted semi-structured meetings, I strove to be sensitive to each participant's sense of conversational flow. In some

cases less prompting via the explicit introduction of questions was required than for others. At the same time, I endeavored to cover what I considered to be topics important to my study, and therefore at times aimed to steer discussions in such a manner as to learn participants' thoughts on those issues critical to my research. Below are these questions, in no specific order of interview presentation or importance.

1. Do you like music?

2. Do you consider yourself musical?

3. Do you play an instrument or sing?

4. What in music is important to you?

5. Do you think what is important to others might be similar? Different? How?

6. When did you come into your church?

7. Did you like the music used in church in the past? What about it?

8. Did you feel a part of the music? Did it connect with your sense of musical aesthetics?

9. What are your thoughts and personal feelings regarding musical styles associated with black culture?

10. Can you think of any reason(s) why such musical styles should not be represented within church liturgy?

11. Did you feel included in the fellowship of your congregation when music was utilized?

12. How would you define multiracial worship, and how would it be identified?

13. Did you feel special? Marginalized? Anything?

14. How would you define racism or racialization?

15. How did the changes in liturgy affect you - what did you experience personally?

    a. How/when were they introduced?

    b. What were people's reactions?

    c. Were there black perceptions about white's reactions?

    d. How did blacks respond?

    e. What role did church leaders play in this process?

    f. Were the denominations decisions regarding musical changes clearly explained?

    g. Was Biblical support given for the changes in liturgy?

    h. What were the responses of local church leaders to complaints about said changes to liturgy?

    i. What were denominational responses to any complaints?

16. What would you have liked to have seen done differently?

17. Are you proud of your heritage?

18. Would you consider others not of your heritage respectful of yours?

19. Would you consider yourself respectful of other's heritage?

20. Do or did you feel that another's heritage was respected more than was your own?

21. Do you think that your tastes in music are more broad or enlightened than others' tastes?

22. How important is your religious philosophy or convictions to you?

23. To what degree do you think your religious convictions inform your respect, appreciation, and tolerance of others from backgrounds different than your own?

24. Do you consider yourself centric-minded in regards to ethnicity, culture, or race?

25. Do you think you could ever be considered centric-minded by others?

26. Do you think that relationships between blacks and whites in your congregation have improved, remained about the same, or worsened since the change in liturgy?

27. Is there anything else you'd like to share regarding your personal thoughts/experiences related to this topic?

As stated earlier, following interview-data analysis, six categories emerged as being beneficial and suitable for reporting details and chronology. They are:

1. Study participants and their heritage (Note: For purposes of this study heritage is understood to entail those aspects of the participant which have been transmitted from the past or handed down by tradition. Additionally, the focus here will be more on racial/cultural and religious elements)

2. Study participants and their perceptions of and interactions with music in general.

3. Study participants and their perceptions of and interactions with music in their church before doctrinal/liturgical changes. (Please refer to chapter 1 for details of these changes)

4. Study participants and their perceptions of and interactions with music in their church during doctrinal/liturgical changes.

5. Study participants and their perceptions of and interactions with music in their church currently.

6. What study participants would have liked to have seen done differently, insofar as the process of transition from the onset of said doctrinal/liturgical changes to the present.

Additional to note is that the narrative style I employ in reporting my findings is fashioned in such a way as to not explicitly identify what specific congregation a participant is commenting about or where they currently or formally attended. My reason for this is two-fold. Firstly, it is not my intention to link any specific commentary from any participant with a specific congregation or particular church leader, who may still be functioning in some capacity for the congregation under discussion, or for the denomination in some formal capacity. Secondly, I believe it is more beneficial in regards to this study to view the congregations represented here as not necessarily individually but rather collectively representative of what was experienced by participants in this particular geographical church region of this denomination. Many participants attended more than one congregation over the years according to the denominational practice of members attending the congregation closest to where they lived. When members relocated, they sometimes moved to an area associated with a neighboring congregation. In chapter five, I will include further findings based upon subsequent group meetings and follow-up communications,

along with reporting of my participatory observations while attending corporate worship services of the congregations represented in this study.

Reporting of Findings

Reporting Category 1: Study participants and their heritage

All participants were unanimous and forthwith in expressing pride of their racial heritage, some offering qualifying words of "very" and "absolutely" when describing their feelings. Responses often included references pertaining to the accomplishments, talents, and contributions of African-Americans within our society, even while often achieved against the odds of what they felt was systemic racism and what some defined as an unlevel playing field. It is noteworthy that all participants were not new to this denomination, and that all have been in attendance for a minimum of twenty-five years. The concept that all racial groups should take proper pride in their heritage was offered by some, in light of their belief that God is the creator of all races. Some also expressed the idea that in spite of perhaps some shortcomings – a human condition common to every racial population – black racial heritage in America is certainly not something to be ashamed of. Those who came before them, and on whose "shoulders we stand," is embraced as a source of respect and pride. The concept of racial pride was not only viewed as something reserved for people of color regarding their own race. Respect for the heritage of others is also held as a positive concept rooted in a learned personal and/or religious value system. One respondent summed it up by stating that "All people are God's creation; who am I to not respect others?" While some expressed that it is not always easy to understand others'

thinking or behavior, they sought to try to appreciate and enjoy differences. One particularly poignant comment – given in an attempt to relate fairly to some others not of her race – was expressed as follows: "When hurt, I sometimes respond out of my hurt." When asked to elaborate on this statement, it was explained to me that the hurt she has experienced has not been based on a singular or several unrelated instances, but rather upon an accumulated large number of hurts suffered throughout her over four decades as a member in the Worldwide Church of God since childhood. For this participant and others, the burden of continually employing the Christian principles of not repaying evil with evil, and forgiving others even when they do not offer apology can at times become challengingly difficult when hurt upon hurt is added to an already abundance of hurt based upon what is perceived and experienced as racially informed behavior.

Responses were not so nearly positive or unanimous when considering if others were respectful of their race. There were no emphatic responses to the affirmative as evoked from the prior question, and most ranged from a simple "no" to "mostly, but not all." Several replied that respect for their race from others not of their race was often a matter of individual rather than group position. Insofar as respect for these participants from within their church context, there was general agreement that there was at least some institutionalized racism informing their experiences. Several mentioned how they were not given equal opportunity to attend the church's unaccredited academic institution, Ambassador College. Others spoke of the corporate segregation of congregations during the period in the 1960s when race riots occurred around the country. Some lamented how they were either told or made to feel that they "were lucky to be grafted into Christ."

Leadership opportunities were another area where it was felt that systemically more opportunities were afforded whites than blacks. One younger participant recalled how amongst adults in the church there existed a decided belief and/or practice that "white was better," but that amongst church youth this was not the status quo. She attributed this dichotomy in part to the fact that younger generation church goers "listened to each other's music." Additional comments offered were that while there may have been some degree of respect towards their race, it was not equitably apparent, and, that there existed a "different level of appreciation for other's [black] culture." This perception was shared by all participants as demonstrated in their unequivocal responses in the affirmative when queried as to whether or not others' racial heritage was more respected than theirs. This was attributed to how "some in the church felt that Israelites [i.e. white Anglo-Saxons and northwestern Europeans] were on a higher plane," and that this thinking was an integral part of church theology. One participant stated that "All were required to come into one cultural box; to do things properly – W.A.S.P." Another stated how "Types of music used during worship service were Euro-centric." These comments, along with additional experiences that participants relayed to me, point to a church culture that demonstrated a favored status for some, and as a result, a not favored status for others. People tend to know when they are not valued as highly as others. This is true of humanity in general. A child will perceive when a sibling is afforded more positive attention by parents and relatives, and thus will eventually conclude that the other child enjoys a favored status. The same is true in the group context. In the context of this study African-American churchgoers perceived and then concluded, based on continual experiences, that European-Americans enjoyed favored status. Conversely, they concluded that they were perceived as being considered unfavorable. In short,

whites were seen and treated as special based solely on their race, and conversely, blacks were seen and treated as not special, based on their race.

When asked if they personally were Afro-centric, most participants responded that they were not, or perhaps only to the extent of realizing that to better understand the perspectives of others unlike oneself, it is advantageous to first understand yourself in regards to your race and culture. Others replied with sentiments that can be summed up with what one person commented; "one must balance natural inclinations with [Christian] religious principles," and that "Mine is not better than other's but its good. We're all part of the human family, perhaps with different skills." Participants were in agreement with the concept that God created humanity equally, and that one person or group by design is no better or worse than another. When asked to expand on this concept, it became clear that what was meant was that what a person or group subscribed to as an ethic to live by, along with how they lived according to that ethic, was what determined the character of the person or group, and not their race. Some spoke of how thinking too much in ethno-centric terms can be limiting and even counter-productive in terms of living as a Christian. One person commented that "The thinking that leads people to say 'I'm better than you,' or 'my church is better than yours,' lends itself to 'creating a playground for Satan.'" Still another lamented whether or not she was centric-minded, offering: "Not necessarily. Yes and no. I don't know. It depends - sometimes." Her responses struck me as how complex issues of humanity can be when attempting to understand one's own precepts and motivations of themselves or their particular group. We (humanity) at times, and perhaps even often, presume that we are correct in our understanding of any given topic on the basis of our thinking so. Perhaps what we don't often enough consider is that we may not have properly or contextually analyzed how we came to our conclusion. If not held accountable, we may simply assume that our unanalyzed opinion is

factual and true. We sometimes may have a tendency to view ourselves or our particular group (racial, ethnic, cultural, etc.) as more righteous than others. When Christians do not view themselves with the humility encouraged by its' founder, they can be susceptible to thinking of themselves more highly than warranted.

It became clear that most participants did not think that others would view them as Afro-centric; however a few responses are notable. One offered how at times he is "challenged for not being black enough," and that he is occasionally made to feel that he should "like only certain music" and subscribe to "only certain political views." Another felt that they may be perceived as Afro-centric, however those perceiving them as such "may misperceive my actions." When asked to elaborate, he offered an example of how his enthusiastic response to music infused with an African-influenced beat (e.g. facial happiness, body movement, or verbal exhortation) could be perceived by those who don't know him well as Afro-centric behavior. Still another expressed that "some positions I may be adamant about could be considered centric," but that "some may not discern properly." And still another declared that "at times" she could be perceived as centric but "I'm working on embracing other's opinions." It would seem that from these considered responses that all churchgoers would benefit from demonstrating a willingness and greater effort to learn about each other. This can be particularly relevant when considering the fact that different races share the same church ideals and the same space during corporate worship gatherings. If people understood the motivations informing others' behaviors or thinking, then erroneous (or at minimum only partially true or untrue) assumptions might not as often be made.

Reporting Category 2: Study participants and their perceptions of and interactions with music

Without exception everyone interviewed confessed their love for music. Mostly everyone felt they were musical in the sense that they interacted directly with music through instrumental, vocal, or dance performance. Many have been involved in music participation most of their lives, while all have been involved from an early age through listening. Most have performed as part of organized musical aggregations, and some have or continue to perform on a professional or semi-professional level. Participants' overall involvement with music at any level spans multiple idioms, encompassing the genres of European classical, jazz, gospel, R&B, Caribbean, rock, and Latin, including sub-genres within each of the broader aforementioned categories. Many were influenced from an early age from within their home environments. Some recalled listening to the greater New York metropolitan area classical, rock and roll, and jazz radio stations. Others spoke of their parent's influence on them. One mentioned that "My dad played the trumpet and listened to Dizzy Gillespie. My mom played the piano and often listened to top-40 radio." Another recalled how her "father played jazz on the alto sax," and thus how special jazz and saxophones are to her. Still another spoke of her father's love for jazz and how his "playing the sax" influenced her tastes and later appreciation for R&B groups who utilized a horn section that played jazz-inspired lines.

When discussing music's effects on them and what they consider to be important functionalities of music, participants' responses were thoughtful, considered, and by no means superficial. "Listening to, or dancing to music takes me to a better place," was how one lady described her relationship with music. She added how her need for contemplation is often

accompanied by mood-evoking music that aids in her ability to be carried to a more meditative frame of mind. Another woman offered how music "connects with my spirit and sense of aesthetics," and how drums for her can serve as a means of achieving a real sense of focus. Another described how "music speaks to me." Still another expressed how "music transports me" to a better place. And another emphatically exclaimed how "music lifts me up!" One woman simply and reverently expressed how "music touches my spirit." One gentleman shared how for him music "communicates hope, or angst, or despair," and that it enables him to "feel and understand" the essence of what the composer or artist is seeking to convey regardless of the musical style. Another spoke of the passion and expressiveness of varied musical elements and how they evoke different emotional responses. Still another described music's combined elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, and lyrical content as the catalyst for "connecting with my soul." And still another spoke eloquently of how "pastels, colors, shades, and hues – all from God" served to transport him to a special place of contemplation and creativity.

All participants spoke of the role music played in connecting them emotionally to their creator. For them, worship music had the ability to bring them closer to God in a way that was unique and special. Some spoke of how their prayer life was enhanced through the listening of certain music styles. Keywords employed to describe participants' interaction with music and its capacity to transmit emotions included: "inspiration," "passion," "expressiveness," "sincere communication," "uplifting," "positive impact," "joy," and "celebration." From discussions on how music affects them, it would seem clear that music serves a very important function in their spiritual lives. As a composer, musician, performer, and fellow Christian, I share in their need to connect with a higher source. To accomplish this strictly on an intellectual basis would neglect what is innately built into humanity as a whole – the ability to feel and experience emotionally

the joys, sorrows, hopes, pains, love, anger, etc. that is part and parcel with our existence. What I learned from their responses was that to withhold the opportunity to hear music that connects with their heart and soul, is to withhold the catalyst that aids in connecting them with their God. When this opportunity became possible following doctrinal changes, and was subsequently withheld, the disappointment experienced by many participants was painful and heart-crushing.

When asked specifically about their thoughts or feelings regarding musical styles associated with black culture, responses were forthwith and clearly articulated. Most replied immediately with comments that can be summed up as being totally favorable. "I identify more with rhythm and pulsation. These things are a linkage to my soul," was how one man stated his position. He later added that "rhythm is culturally appreciated, but not always cross-culturally appreciated." This statement alone speaks succinctly to the research problem of this study. When one culture is esteemed more highly than others, the possibility for diminishing the attributes of others increases. This would include the arts in general, and music specifically. In Worldwide Church of God culture, black music was viewed as emanating from a race and culture that was not esteemed on a par with white culture. By church design, rhythms associated with black culture were not cross-culturally appreciated, and as a result of such marginalization, when denominational changes sought to remedy this paradigm, resistance was wide and stubborn.

Continuing with participants' thoughts regarding black musical styles, one woman expressed the idea that "percussion is the glue that binds" black musical styles together. Black musical styles are "the cornerstone of popular music," declared another lady. Another explained that "We naturally want to enjoy music," and that expressiveness, (e.g. hand clapping, raising of hands) are an extension of that natural inclination. Others offered caveats to an otherwise comprehensive endorsement. One man noted that while many genres of black music exist, he in

fact likes some more than others. Another stated he "liked black music, but not gangsta rap," or anything "laced with profanity." And another simply stated that black music to him is generally acceptable, but that some sub-genres have no lyrical compatibility in the church context. Some comments centered on the belief attributed to certain elements from within white church-culture that equates black music to Satan. Comments such as "there is a fear of blacks rising in stature," "some are fearful of black expressiveness," and "some whites feel there is something inherent about black's sinful nature" are a few such comments. White fear of blacks as posited here may be associated to some degree with equating blacks with sin and Satan. It could be argued that for some whites, having been indoctrinated with concepts of music that assigns evil with certain rhythms, (and especially rhythms associated with black culture), it isn't a far stretch to understand how these whites could equate acceptance of black music with allowing evil to creep into their church. This is a topic that I am quite certain would benefit from further study as it pertains to the former Worldwide Church of God. Despite some participants expressing their reservations concerning some subgenres of black music, all were in agreement that within the church context there is no justifiable reason for the exclusion of black music in congregations that include black constituencies.

Asked whether they felt their musical tastes to be perhaps more enlightened than some others, responses again were quite considered. "I may possess a broader perspective than some others due to exposure and listening habits," is how one gentleman answered this question. One woman offered that she was probably more enlightened in her musical tastes than "most others" due to her extensive "travel and exposure to many musical styles." Another world traveler held the same view. Still another expressed the view that based on "her family rearing" she felt broader and more enlightened in her musical tastes than some others. Others shared that they had an

appreciation for various idioms of music, but expressed the frustration inherent in being broad-based in appreciation of diverse musical styles and then encountering those persons who are less so. "At times I get upset at others' lack of broader appreciation," "I am frustrated with others not able or willing to appreciate different music; it seems rooted in selfishness," "It bothers me when people are not curious enough to consider other music, or when they are allowed to be comfortable in their ignorance," and "I am respectful of other genres, why can't people be respectful of mine?" are a few such notable comments. This frustration is understandable in general, but more specifically when considering the Christian beliefs associated with these participants. When they actively subscribe to the teachings of Jesus and other New Testament writers regarding how Christians are to view and actively treat others, and in turn witness the patent non-adherence to these same ideals by others in their own congregations, the absurdity of this dynamic looms increasingly large. For them it becomes a perplexing conflict beyond their ability to navigate within their own church environment. They ponder: How can Christian teachings apply to some and not to others? When two standards of compliance coexist within the same organization, then it is reasonable to expect that some will perceive this as hypocrisy.

Reporting Category 3: Study participants and their perceptions of and interactions with music in their church before doctrinal/liturgical changes

Having reported on the findings related to participants' racial/cultural heritage and their personal interactions with music in general, reporting on their interactions with music specifically from within their church context now ensues. Beginning with what these church members perceived and experienced prior to doctrinal and liturgical changes, while a diversity of

opinions exists as pertains to the degree of the personal relevance of church music before said changes, common threads of opinion and experience emerged. In describing reactions to song selections for corporate congregational sings, words such as "limiting," "restrictive," and "safe," were often utilized. Regarding whether or not these same songs were liked by participants, falls under a different category and results varied. Most of the few who said they liked the music also qualified their statements with words to the effect that not all selections were liked, or that liking them "doesn't mean I wouldn't have liked other song styles" as well. Some who liked the music also qualified their liking it with the fact that they were involved in preparing, performing, or leading said songs. One person liked most of the songs and thought they were beautiful, especially as they pertained to their lyrical connection to the psalms. Another echoed this view when saying he liked some of the songs, but more for their lyrical content than their musical appeal. Other responses were less positive. One offered that she had "no feeling of liking or disliking the songs," and that the "music's validity was formulated by Worldwide Church of God philosophy." Several others offered very similar views in neither liking nor disliking the songs. "It was what it was," "some were odd," "some were okay, some not," "yea, some were okay, but…" were words used by more than a few participants. One lady commented how the songs "didn't really move me, but we had to accept what was given," later adding that "they were not really worshipful." Another responded that she felt the body of music offered was "forced on us." Love was a word used in describing one's feelings towards said songs, except once by one participant when referring to psalm lyrical content. From this collection of responses, it was fairly easy to understand that participants generally were not enthusiastically moved or motivated by congregational songs used for collective sings, particularly when it came to musical appeal. What should be remembered is that Worldwide Church of God (WCG) members were bound

more by church doctrine than by choosing to attend for reasons of liking the music provided, or for that matter anything else. The doctrine of being the one and only true church of God dictated that artistic preferences were not the primary reason for membership, but rather the belief that there was no other church to be a member of, since the WCG at the time was all there was.

It should also be noted that prior to 1996 the body of songs available for song leaders (they were not yet dubbed worship leaders) to choose from for corporate worship were exclusively selected from a collection of psalms written to music by the then denominational leader's brother. These works were almost entirely scored in traditional four-part common practice harmony developed over a few hundred years up until the early classical era of Bach. To be fair, many hymn books across multiple denominations were penned according to these same rules. However, to be restricted to this style of song expression, as was shared by many of the participants of this study, was quite limiting to say the least. A new hymnal was introduced in 1996 which while retaining some of the songs from the former hymn compilation; many new songs were added, including a fair amount written by the church headquarters' music director at the time, along with a few songs composed by authors not affiliated with the denomination. While not as limiting as the former hymnal, many felt that the new offerings were still restrictive, and offered little in the way of non-European style musical expressions. Notable is the fact that hierarchically the top-down organizational structure of the church demanded membership to acknowledge that since the headquarters music director was selected personally by the church founder Herbert W. Armstrong, who in turn was personally selected by Christ, that said music director enjoyed the respect, deference, and adoration afforded someone hand-picked by the head of the one true church of God. Even following the major doctrinal overhaul experienced by this denomination, the indoctrinated mindset of many members regarding their leaders remained

intact. Similar to the belief that what the human head of the church posited was correct, and that

what he didn't wasn't correct, what the chief music minister wrote and performed was also

viewed by many as correct and right, and conversely what he did not write or perform

(stylistically speaking), was not construed as being proper by many members. This new hymnal

ceased to be used exclusively after several years in some congregations, and today songs from

this hymnal are rarely utilized in the congregations represented in this study.

When describing their thoughts about feelings shared in the context of music offered during

the worship service, some indicated that there was a shared camaraderie while rehearsing for

church performance, especially in the area of what was referred to as "special music," such as

solo or group vocal or instrumental performances. It was during these rehearsals that certain

rhythms and other forms of expressiveness could be realized to a certain extent, but would never

be deemed acceptable during the actual worship service, where any special music had to be

performed in the classical tradition as per church culture. Others felt included to the extent that

the lyrical message of some of the songs connected with them regardless of musical style.

Space will now be given to offer some of the personal experiences and deep feelings held by

participants in this study about their church environment before the doctrinal and liturgical

transformation. One person offered that "Music used in church [before the changes] did not

transport me to a higher plane or worshipful place. At home I listed to other music, including

secular music." Another reflected on the lack of "rhythm," and that while "I appreciate Euro-

classical music I culturally identify more with Africa. Even though our church makeup was

culturally diverse, music was not culturally diverse." Still another sadly lamented that "blacks

suffered a lot in our church, and whites suffered from a false sense of reality. There exists a

general ignorance of musical history." One gentleman stated that "we weren't really a musical

church, but more of a listen to a lecture [sermon] and take notes type church." He further added that "we just didn't understand worship music. Congregational singing allowed for late-comers to be seated, offertory music allowed for money to be collected, and special music allowed for people to go to the bathroom." When asked whether he at all felt connected to the worship service through the music offered, I received a forthwith "Absolutely not. It was simply what we did. It was mandated. It didn't allow for any sense of anticipation or connection." A woman who attended the same congregation spoke of how "expressive music was suppressed. It was highly suspect." She additionally spoke of how she felt that "black people were led to believe they were innately wrong as black people, and music and rhythm were a part of this. We even got this from black ministers to the point of our hearts were perverted. " These were painful recollections for this woman and it was difficult for her to share this and difficult for me to experience her hurt to the degree that I can. She concluded her thoughts stating how "We were not allowed to be who we are, and this was lived in our liturgy as emotionless worship." One man from a different congregation who was and continues to be very involved with the presentation of music in his church noted emphatically that during this period there existed an "understanding, often unspoken, that no surprises musically would be tolerated," even though no explicit musical rule book of parameters existed to his knowledge, or to mine either. He added that "ministers had personal preferences which influenced what [music] was performed." When considering the restrictive musical climate in her church, a woman from the same congregation pondered and exhaled before exclaiming how the musical dynamic in the church has deep roots, and that there was an "indoctrination of blacks to not clap, raise hands," or to display any other form of emotion or expressiveness. When explaining to black people why they could not do certain things, they were told by ministers that "your reward is in the kingdom [heaven]." From her

experiences from the time she attended church as a toddler she is convinced that "A fear of feeling" existed, and still does amongst some in some congregations, and that the church was responsible for what she termed as psychological oppression. Another churchgoer who had attended three congregations during her decades as a member of this denomination commented that "Gospel music was a sin in the WCG [Worldwide Church of God]." She further elaborated that the officially approved contemporary music offered by the Young Ambassadors, from the denomination's headquarters Ambassador College campus, was simply corny, and had little relevance to blacks or to most teens in her church area. It is noteworthy to mention that others held similar views as to the irrelevance of this group's musical repertoire for many blacks in this area. Another member spoke of the state of musical repertoire in the church using a play on a Biblical verse from the book of Jude, verses three and four that states: "I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." This admonishment was slightly altered to read "the music that was once delivered." This analogy was used to indicate the never-changing attitude towards music held by the church and its ministers.

The above play on scripture fits neatly with the church's (at the time) desire to only sing songs that were translated directly from the Biblical book of Psalms, along with a few approved songs from other Biblical books, or perhaps a national anthem or two that were congregationally sung. Others mentioned that when it came to music in the church, "Variety was never considered or publically addressed," and that what was continually provided was simply one-sided and Euro-centric. From the responses noted in the previous paragraph, it is not difficult to understand that there was no inclusive musical culture. Participants were in agreement that this was in fact part of the plan, and the culture of the church. One man summed up this philosophy succinctly

by stating "In the past you accepted what you got – there was nothing to compare it to, and there was no real choice." He concluded his thoughts by saying "Our theology was our bond, not musical diversity." The feelings expressed by African-Americans pertaining to the state of music in their congregations prior to denominational changes for the better were painful to listen to. I in turn felt that it would be un-Christian to not experience on at least some vicarious level the hurt they held in their hearts. Blacks were pointedly made to feel less worthy than whites. They were marginalized and coerced into thinking that they were innately less valuable than whites. They were encouraged by words and actions to deny aspects of their culture that found no defense or support in the writings of books accepted worldwide as the authoritative collection of books (I.e. the Bible) deemed representative of New Testament Christianity.

It is significant to note that the overwhelming majority of participants in this study have been members of more than one congregation in the geographic area represented here. There were congregations in the metropolitan area on both sides of the New York/New Jersey Hudson River as well as multiple congregations in the boroughs of New York City. When people moved they were automatically assigned to the congregation closest to where they resided. In the context of this study it is important to understand that much of what is shared here from individual participants is reflective of the more than one congregation where they attended prior to the major changes the denomination experienced.

Reporting Category 4: Study participants and their perceptions of and interactions with music in their church during doctrinal/liturgical changes

Most of the church member participants in this study expressed some degree of positive response stemming from their congregation's transition (albeit in many cases all too slow a transition) towards a more inclusive liturgy representative of local demographics. Comments such as: "Our theological changes informed our new musical perspective," and "Artistic creativity suppressed in the past could now come alive," were typical. Participants expressed their excitement stemming from what they perceived to be the opening up of new and long-awaited-for opportunities of artistic expression from within the worship context. Some were overjoyed that the possibility now existed to utilize songs for congregational singing that were written by others outside the organization parameters of the denomination. Some spoke of how their local choir directors began to introduce musical diversity within the worship liturgy, and how refreshing it was to be a part of it. One woman recalled observing "older blacks with tears running down their faces" during the introduction of a gospel-style special music presentation, and how she had prayed so long for this day to come. A woman who was still in her twenties when these changes were introduced described her reactions as "Shock and awe. I was positively shocked. I'm still shocked!" Musicians and singers remarked they finally would be allowed the freedom to express their praise in a manner heretofore disallowed, i.e. with heart-felt emotion and joy.

These initial positive reactions, as heart-felt and genuine as they were, more often than not would give way to the realities of set-backs, disappointments, disillusionment, and additional waiting for what some had thought would be more immediately or soon forthcoming. "At first

this was so refreshing" but then it became clear that "we were only at the first incremental level" was how one member described her realization regarding the time it would take to fully implement such an inclusion of diverse musical styles. Another member told of her personal observations over a short period of time. "I noticed a mix of reactions. There was joy by some, acceptance from others," and what was described as an "I'm not sure about this – I'll wait and see" attitude. And finally, and unfortunately, reactions were observed that she described as visual "repulsion." This member, along with others, sensed that at least some whites had misgivings pertaining to this inclusion of black styles of music in the worship service context. They mentioned that those whites seemed to feel betrayed by the denomination that reared them into a way of understanding that held them in high regard. Expressing a similar concept, a woman from a different congregation offered that these changes "stripped the position that whites were placed in" through historical church teaching. Participants acknowledged that there heretofore existed a decidedly presumed superiority and sense of privilege among many church-going whites, and that they felt that many whites were drawn into fellowship with the church more for this reason than for other more valid (to their thinking) reasons. As a result of these new and unprecedented changes, what was now for the first time being experienced by whites was something that just didn't fit their understanding or expectations. Some participants noted how there seemed to be an ever-growing chasm between those who embraced these changes and those who obviously did not. One woman pondered how "African-Americans for decades had to endure [what many felt to be] unfriendly music," but that many whites appeared to her to have never given the liturgical change a fair chance, as many routinely exited her congregation. She went on to say that the doctrinal changes away from Sabbath and Holy Day observances was monumental, and that this additional introduction of new musical styles led to what she described almost as an "attempt to

comingle oil and water." Another spoke of the church's historical "strong bias against anything Pentecostal or emotional" when pertaining to music. He thought that for many whites the new musical styles that some tried to introduce were associated with what they were taught to distain. These remarks rang true to my ears, as I recalled observing and witnessing similar negative responses from some. Derogatory terminology was used to refer to these musical styles not to their liking, often dubbing it as "devil music," or simply as "that music," with an audible ring of distain attached to the phrase. From what was heard, observed, relayed, and personally experienced by participants was something of a nature that would not easily find resolution. It became obviously clear that deep-seated hatred of certain musical rhythms and styles stemming from African-American culture would not be tolerated by an audience steeped in negative indoctrination regarding this music. In hindsight, participants noted how due to the decades of official misinformation from those they felt were not qualified to provide defendable discourse on such musical and cultural matters, little more could be initially expected, especially without a plan for helping entrenched members to unlearn theological and doctrinal error.

It was interesting to discover that some participants noted that the introduction of a diversity of musical styles representative of their congregations' demographic makeup was isolated. They stressed that no such musically inclusionary undertaking was discernible in their church. One member declared that he was not really aware that denominational efforts to include other musical styles during the praise and worship portion of the corporate meeting were in play. He would only discover such efforts several years later, when beginning to attend another WCG congregation in the same area where such liturgical enhancements had been developing. Similar experiences were shared by others from a different congregation on the opposite side of the Hudson River until they too left their home church and began attending a newly-formed

congregation that intentionally modeled the new liturgy that the denomination embraced. Some recounted how when they approached local church leadership to discuss the possibilities of including black musical styles in their liturgy, they were told by the congregation's leader to give him more time. Unfortunately for these members the time never came, and as a result they eventually left.

Another member who served as a worship leader in his congregation lamented how congregants "chose sides based on the music one subscribed to." In his estimation the music employed in church for some became a litmus test of how much or little they would embrace the church's overall doctrinal changes. This member found it "very discouraging to learn that some didn't respect the [musical] tastes of others," and that the practice of attempting to "blend new styles with historical styles" failed to encourage some to accept a new denominational worldview. His congregation eventually lost ninety percent of its members. This member is certain that if church leadership (i.e. local senior pastors) genuinely shared the Biblical reasons demanding the changes with the membership, then many would have remained and the infrastructure would have not disintegrated to such a devastating degree. Genuine instruction provided to members as to the basis and reasons for change is a major area that will further be explored as we proceed.

What many of those interviewed felt to be an important aspect of their congregations' struggles with progressing forward based on the new denominational paradigm was the perceived lack of what they described as congregational education. Members perceived what they thought to be a very notable lack of pastors genuinely explaining and implementing the denomination's changes. One woman described how some pastors seemed to fit the metaphor of how one attempts to ignore the eight-hundred pound gorilla in the room. Worship leaders'

laments were echoed from different area congregations. "Local ministers could have taken a more active part in facilitating implementing the changes," was how one man expressed his thoughts. He concluded that "If more were instrumental in helping others to understand the changes, we would have retained more people." Another from a different congregation exclaimed that "Any change requires education." According to her, little if any Biblical support was applied to teaching the denomination's changes. She concluded that if there had been, it surely would have contributed positively to at least some members growing in their knowledge of the need for change, especially those who seriously consider themselves to be Biblically-based Christians. One pastor was held forth as a leader who did in fact provide Biblical support for the use of dancing to music within the worship service context. Unfortunately for his congregation, I was told that reactions to the reality of praise dancing actually occurring in said congregation were often split along racial lines. Another participant shook her head and stated that "nothing from the pulpit" was provided to explain the new encouragement of different musical styles, including black styles, for use during worship gatherings. She recalled overhearing some whites expressing the opinion that "If that's what they want, then we just won't sing." It should be noted that a similar attitude was also observed amongst some black members. Several spoke of how they felt negative black response was related to past negative indoctrinations equating black music with the devil. It was also stated by more than one member that congregations did not receive all of the details of the overall changes, and how they affected the worship liturgy. They seemed to feel that only parts of what had changed were shared with congregants. One member emphatically stated that his congregation received "no education – none at all," regarding the changes, except on the rare occasions when the denomination's leader mandated the showing of a video sermon from Headquarters. Others expressed their belief that "The ministry didn't like

the changes," and that that was the primary reason that proper education and teaching was not provided. Others felt that pastors in effect ignored the changes, which resulted in them not being implemented. This situation is related to another member mentioned earlier who was not aware of said changes until he began attending another congregation where the pastor was supportive of the changes, thereby providing instructional sermons that aided the membership in coming to terms with major doctrinal change. Some attributed the lack of genuine education to help members navigate said changes to ministers thinking they would lose their authority. One participant described this ministerial concern as being informed by what he termed the "Culture of ministry worship," surmising that the changes could threaten pastors' historical lofty and unchallenged positions of authority. This member felt strongly that "The ministry absolutely wanted to retain their privileged status," and as a natural result, proper education was not provided their congregations by them. From statements such as these, it should not be difficult to imagine how pastors might undermine implementation of denominational changes if they were not convinced of the veracity of their denomination's journey from the unorthodox to the orthodox. The membership was not versed in thinking independently or critically when it came to matters of theology, but rather coerced into acquiescing to whatever the organization's line was on any matter. The local pastor was the boss, and the boss was not to be questioned or challenged. And when this did on rare occasions occur, the one questioning authority would learn quickly the authoritarian culture of the denomination. As a result of this paradigm, members were not equipped to navigate situations where the pastor was not compliant with the spirit or letter of the denominations' direction, especially when such pastors maintained their privileged and unchallenged positions. Some participants noted how some pastors became adept at pretending to comply with church headquarters guidelines, while not in reality doing so.

Situations like these were seen as being exacerbated by the denomination's reluctance or inability to hold incompliant pastors spiritually and administratively accountable.

While education emanating "from the pulpit" was universally seen as at least being too little in some cases, and totally lacking in others, one person commented how he had "several conversations" privately with his pastor and found him to be thoroughly "educated" concerning the changes. This pastor was able to "explain in detail" the denomination's new teachings and at times did elaborate on aspects of them during the worship service. Another explained that occasionally Biblical support for the denominational changes was offered "if you were paying close attention." Some from the same congregation along with others from different congregations expressed differing views, in that they felt substantive public explanation pertaining to the changes were intentionally avoided. Others commented that the best that some pastors came up with in trying to help church members to accept new music was to sponsor a visit by a former music director from church headquarters so that he could demonstrate new styles acceptable for worship. The problem with this approach was that some did not consider this helpful in "educating people" as to the validity of black musical styles, since what was modeled during these "guest appearances" included no black musical styles. Many felt that whites in their congregations were unwilling to accept black music because they only "wanted their preferences to be considered." This belief was expressed in a variety of ways by many, but fundamentally seemed centered on a stubborn and deeply-held reluctance to include anything considered musically black in the liturgy. Additional sentiments could be included here but suffice it to say that they for all intents and purposes are in agreement with what has already been reported.

When asked if there existed in their minds any reasons for not including musical styles associated with black culture into the worship context, responses were unanimous in that participants felt there were no justifiable or mitigating reasons that should lead to the exclusion of such styles. Despite some participants expressing their reservations concerning some subgenres of black music, all were in agreement that within the church context, music styles should be reflective of the constituencies being served as long as the focus was centered on praising and worshipping God.

Reporting Category 5: Study participants and their perceptions of and interactions with music in their church currently

The thoughts of participants concerning the current state of their congregations were varied. Diversity of opinion was not so apparent from within a given congregation, but rather depending on which congregation was under consideration. A worship leader serving in a congregation with multiple worship leaders commented that it took awhile for some to cease using exclusively Worldwide Church of God songs for corporate worship. This particular leader was more inclined to study church literature provided by the denomination, along with attending worship music seminars sponsored by Integrity Music, one of the larger Christian music publishing organizations. For him "it felt like being pulled back" when only the pre-changes songs were utilized. Fortunately today this practice is no longer utilized in his congregation. However, others from this congregation, including another worship leader, still experience what they see as a racial battle of sorts being waged on the church music front. One person who had attended this congregation before eventually transferring to another spoke of how liturgy changed to the extent

of allowing for the "inclusion of CCM" [Christian Contemporary Music], a style more rooted in white culture than black. This limited expansion of allowable music styles was also noted as something that occurred in other congregations and to some extent still today.

In addition to issues centered (or seemingly so) on music, the matter of "whites receiving too many accolades" when compared to the recognition afforded blacks for any church service or other outside achievements was raised. This sense of perceived "favoritism" serves as a source of continued distress for some African-Americans. One talked about how he viewed this attitude as one of selfishness in the group context, predicated on the need to serve one's own kind as differentiated by the desire to serve all kinds. Additional thoughts related to selfishness were offered by others. One person described this phenomenon by stating that "Music creates havoc because the people involved don't want to give up their preferences." Elaborating further, this member spoke of how "Music has been a very divisive component of my church," adding that "Some really dislike other styles not their own." It was pointedly felt that pastoral efforts in several congregations to avoid confrontation, only led to a climate where "important issues are pushed to the side." This manner of conduct to some members seemed to "allow some to continue in their ignorance," or "in their hard-heartedness" concerning other musical styles near to the heart of many African-Americans. Some also see this strategy as "acquiescing to bullies." One musician exclaimed that "I don't have an attitude of 'I must always have what I want' when it comes to musical styles." He continued by asking why shouldn't tolerance be extended when considering another's preferred musical styles? I find this a very salient point. If Christians understand that they are to be concerned with the well-being of others, then how can one not be concerned with his brother or sister in the context surrounding this study? While it was shared that congregations today may be better in some regards, there remains in some participants'

minds the feeling that words alone do not suffice, and accordingly, actions accompanying words would be a refreshing change from the lip service offered. Some felt that positive forward action is still to a meaningful extent not something realized even today. One woman spoke of how even now ignorance in some respects still reigns, asserting that "They [whites] need to understand what was done to a people." This feeling is understandable, in that when acknowledgement of past wrongdoing is perceived to be perpetually withheld, (especially when it is also perceived that real progress forward has not taken place) then the relations between people and groups remain stalled. Christians are taught to confess when they fall short of the ethical standards posited in the Bible. When wrongs have been perpetrated against a people group, and the denomination acknowledges such wrongs, but fellow Christians within the local congregations under study do not, it should be no surprise that participants in this study feel a real void. One member spoke poignantly when saying that he feels "sorry for folks who still drag their feet," but that it additionally and unfortunately also "drags the church down and prevents progress." Preventing progress is something that has adversely affected the well-being of participants, and perhaps many others as well. I believe church authorities along with all members should make honest note of the progress that could have been enjoyed had acknowledgement of wrong-doing been publically given, and still might be realized even at this late juncture.

A member from another congregation spoke of how "music is still not being utilized as the worship vehicle it could be" in his church, adding that he thought that many still believe that music is simply something we do, instead of appreciating the role music can play in a persons' relationship with God." However, for him and others where he attends, praise and worship songs have real meaning, and he expressed how he is touched deeply through the experience of hearing them. Fortunately for some, it is felt that a certain freedom exists that allows for expressive

responses in how music may inspire them. In these congregations the lifting of hands or rhythmic clapping are common place and no one seems to think anything of it.

When asked specifically about whether or not they felt relationships between blacks and whites had improved, responses were mixed but generally not very positive. After contemplating this question a long time, one person replied that he "Would like to say things have improved" in some areas but that "in some respects [they have remained] the same." On a positive note he did conclude that there now exist a more openness between the races. Another offered the same guarded opinion in that relationships "have somewhat improved," in the sense that there is now some diversity in leadership, and that members can serve in more ways than in the past. A somewhat similar but slightly more cautious view was offered by another who said that relations have "improved somewhat," and that "There is hope." Still another opinion reflected a further descent from the positive perspective on black/white relations by stating it has "only slightly improved," perhaps due to the fact that "attendance by disgruntled whites had fallen," and as a result the odds decreased for negative relations.

Continuing along this train of thought, it was further posited that "You don't see blatant racism" anymore because of a now nearly eighty/twenty percent ratio of blacks to whites in his congregation. He noted additionally that "White negative reactions to black styled music" is rarely observed anymore. Another woman flatly declared that "relations between black and whites have worsened," in large part "because the door has been closed to potential [racial] bonds due to white flight" from our congregations. Another man spoke of how things have "improved for African-Americans in terms of freedom of expression." However, when viewed in conjunction with the diminishing ranks of what he described as the willingly uninformed, it may be difficult to conclude that black/white relations have actually improved much in any degree.

One woman lamented that much of what appears improved in her estimation is superficial. She explained that it is easily observed during Pot-luck meals that a voluntary seating segregation exists. And while one could argue that this can be attributed to people's comfort level, she felt it was indicative of a greater issue that "speaks to what's in the heart." It is obvious from these remarks and observations that relations between blacks and whites, while improved in some instances, remain perhaps strained in others. The fact that so many whites have exited the membership ranks of these congregations makes it all the more difficult to measure the degree of genuine improvement. To transition from assimilated congregations to ones more pluralistic and ultimately relationally integrated churches may be now less readily probable due to the current black/white ration in attendance. However, it is probably beneficial for church leaders to have in mind the goal of attaining truly integrated congregations based upon local community demographics, along with relationships amongst members not simply or only based on group identity or present preferences, but on the love for one another that Christians are encouraged actively demonstrate in all of their relationships.

Reporting Category 6: Study participants and their expressed desires of what they would have liked to have seen done differently, insofar as the process of transition from the past (i.e. pre doctrinal/liturgical changes) to the present

   While one participant was not sure that anything "could have been done differently," all of the others were in agreement that some things could have been handled in another manner. From the perspective of musical performance, one worship leader and musician felt that more regular use of live music would have contributed to the worship experience for those in the

congregation. He believed that live expression encourages the immediacy of the praise and worship experience, in that it allows for less dependence on recorded accompaniment and more on a "visually engaging spontaneity" that can emerge due to the "flexibility of form" musicians can integrate during a live performance.

In one particular area, all participants responded along a singular thread of thought – that of leadership's lack in ensuring intentional education for members so that they could understand the changes. Most participants felt that "confusion was allowed to reign." For these members, "Music was a reflection of our new theology," and that "without clarity from pastors, people were not encouraged to understand or comply," was how one member presented his thoughts. Another declared that "Local ministers could have taken a more active role in facilitating the changes," and that they could have been "more instrumental in helping us understand the changes." If this had been done, he concluded, "We would have retained more people – not as many would have left." A woman reasoned that "Any change requires education," since change can cause "anxiety and confusion." And so to reduce confusion, ministers should have "talked to people, include folks, and deal with how music in church is changing too." Another spoke about how helpful it would have been to hear "sermons by senior pastors about how God is the creator of music," and how we should have an open mind about different styles of music. One man recalled that "We never heard ministers explain and support praise and worship music," and if they had, things could have progressed more positively. A woman explained that she felt people could have been more "amiable and open to change," and that "even though documented support for the changes were published," denominational leaders perhaps "ignored the hardness of the head and heart" that existed amongst its clergy and membership. Participants felt that this could have been dealt with more effectively. "Education should have been given, but there was a fear

of losing people," one man stated. This view was expanded by another from a different congregation when he said that "there was fear of losing money." Still another spoke of how the information about doctrinal and liturgical changes "didn't trickle down – perhaps because ministers didn't believe in it." He went on to say that "the Golden Rule should have applied to music." Another felt strongly that "All ministers in the field should have been taught, trained, and held accountable" for educating their constituencies. He added that there should have been denominational "follow-up," and that "congregations should have been observed," and "budgets scrutinized." And finally one man asserted that "Denominational leaders were naïve in thinking that local leadership would implement new doctrinal and liturgical changes without clear accountability and compliance standards." From these statements it would seem obvious that many from these congregations would have appreciated a more intentional response from their local leaders, and that education was something deeply longed for but never quite realized.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Follow-up Group Meetings and Church Visits

Upon completion of all individual face-to-face meetings, subsequent data analysis, and documentation of my research findings, I endeavored to meet with the entire group as a follow-up to our one-on-one interviews for the purpose of sharing with them a summation of my discoveries. As stated earlier in this paper, any such group meetings would render the confidentiality amongst participants' as no longer in effect. Their participation would remain confidential with me, and I would encourage them to honor the confidentiality of each other. If they chose to disclose their personal participation in this study, they should do so only based upon their individual role, and should not disclose the identity of any other participants in attendance at any follow-up group meetings. This prerequisite was explained to each individual participant during the course of all one-on-one meetings. Without exception all participants stated that they understood the aforementioned terms, and additionally expressed their interest and willingness in attending follow up group meetings.

Agreeing on a group meeting date when all participants could attend proved to be an unobtainable goal. I therefore arranged for several meetings throughout the course of about a month, the last one taking place on June 2, 2012 during a denominational church conference where many of the participants would be in attendance. At all four group meetings I shared my summary, conclusions, and recommendations as outlined in the next three sections of this chapter. Participants at these meetings were unanimous in their agreement with what I had reported to them. Commentary followed and included additional personal thoughts and

recollections triggered by my reporting, and further comments were offered in response to other participant's responses. There was much interactive discussion, along with their stated approval of the study, along with the need for it to have been undertaken as a means of documenting what had heretofore gone undocumented. All participants expressed their pleasure at having participated, and I expressed my pleasure in having their cooperation and time in sharing their valuable experiences with me in order to produce said documentation. There was a general feeling of lament that more had not been done to aid the process of inclusion of musical styles generally associated with their culture (e.g. those idioms which would be readily understood by most Americans, regardless of race, as emanating from the black musical genres of traditional and contemporary gospel, and which contain elements of the blues, rhythm & blues, rock, jazz, and other hybrids utilizing more syncopated rhythms), and that so many were unable or unwilling to embrace a plurality of musical styles within church liturgy. It was also expressed that in some congregations there still remained an unsettled atmosphere regarding black musical styles.

When visiting individual congregations, and attending the aforementioned denominational conference (where three of the representative churches in this study offered their brand of musical praise and worship on three different days and within the corporate worship setting), I was able to observe first-hand their evolvement and make what I believe are appropriate comparisons to how praise and worship music had been facilitated in the past. Firstly, without exception all congregations offered a more contemporary-styled blend of songs than what had existed prior to the liturgical changes. It was also observed, however, that in terms of integrating styles representative of black culture (and be it noted that black representation was and continues to be substantial), some congregations seemed to have navigated this process more effectively

than others based upon what was presented when I was in attendance; which depending on the congregation, consisted of either songs mostly associated with white culture, songs mostly associated with black culture, or a slate of songs representative of multiple cultures. One congregation that is fairly racially balanced in its constituency performed what would be representative of the genre referred to as CCM (Christian Contemporary Music), and did not include any selections containing black stylizations. This praise team consisted of keyboards, drums, guitars and several singers, a fairly common configuration in contemporary Christian music presentations. Another congregation with a majority black constituency, with perhaps about 15 – 20 percent white representation, also offered all CCM-styled selections supported by pre-recorded music played through their audio sound system, and included power point lyric projection. Another church that was nearly all black also presented pre-recorded music on CDs. This church offered quite a blended mix of styles; spanning CCM, Caribbean-flavored gospel, traditional black gospel, and standard hymns penned decades or even a century or more ago. A smaller church of about twelve that was fairy racially balanced presented a similar mix of musical offerings, performed either to live keyboard or to pre-recorded CD accompaniment. And the largest of the congregations represented in this study, and one consisting of an all (at the time of my attendance) black constituency, offered selections via CD accompaniment that were mostly representative of various contemporary black styled Christian selections. Three of the five congregations generally or enthusiastically appeared pleased with the selections provided by their musical leaders. The two that presented only CCM styled selections when I was in attendance seemed less enthusiastic as a whole with what was provided. What was presented seemed to please some while others did not appear particularly moved, based upon visual observations of their participation.

What is lamentably striking about these churches today is the amazing loss of membership. What were once congregations consisting of hundreds in weekly attendance, now are fledgling churches populated by only a fraction of the numbers that were in attendance prior to the changes. With the exception of a congregation that was an intentional church plant with the express purpose of moving progressively forward under the new denominational guidelines, all of the other congregations have suffered enormous loss of membership. The geographic area represented in this study once consisted of over 2000 in regular attendance prior to the denomination's doctrinal overhaul. Today in this same region only about 200 (just 10 percent) are in attendance during weekly gatherings, spread throughout 5 congregations. These figures are based on personal knowledge and observation, along with information provided by members who were and/or are in possession of such numbers. It is notable that black constituency today far outnumbers that of whites. Hispanics also represent a higher percentage in attendance than that of non-Hispanic whites. From my personal observations along with discussions with participants, whites in weekly attendance today numbers only about 20 – 30. While I am confident that white loss of membership is to some degree attributable to changes in musical liturgy, I am also aware that there are other reasons for their departure, not the least of which is fundamental doctrinal transformation to Christian orthodoxy. It would be a very large undertaking to research the multiple and complex reasons informing such exodus, and perhaps a valuable one that would lend insight, and also yield pertinent knowledge in the realm of human perspective as pertains to group identity, ethnicity, race, and other factors. However, as stated at the onset of this paper, the scope of this study was designed to be limited to one facet of an overall larger phenomenon; what some African-Americans experienced during liturgical changes

in the context of corporate worship that now allowed for once forbidden musical styles associated with their culture.

Summary

Participants in this study did in fact experience positive reactions from some whites upon the inclusion of newly-approved musical forms emanating from styles associated with black culture. However, when considering that participants also observed and experienced what they perceived to be at best a lack of sensitivity towards, or genuine consideration of musical styles associated with their culture, and at worse blatant distain or animosity, it is not hard to understand how African-American churchgoers could conclude that some prejudicial and racist attitudes informed how music ministry was directed in their church. When the Worldwide Church of God's doctrines changed dramatically and fundamentally from the unorthodox and exclusively tailored culture of a European-American centric worldview of Christianity to one more orthodox and inclusive, (and particularly related to the inclusion of musical styles in her liturgy readily associated with black culture) what participants in this study experienced when said inclusions were presented, include some reactions which fall clearly within the realm of racism. And while this study is conceded to be one-sided, I wish to reiterate that my intentional limitations of participants to people of color is foremost due to my firm belief that to include whites in this study would serve to obscure my stated intention, and perhaps lessen the credibility and validity of what black folk experienced. As mentioned previously, I have personally observed the tact of using viewpoints of those opposed to new denominational understandings to counter opinions of those in agreement with their church. After introducing new music styles as per denominational

support and encouragement, I as a musical director was subjected to local ministerial reprimands based on the premise that "many have said" that the styles introduced were offensive to them. Upon further questioning on my part I was informed that at minimum "some have said" something or other about their sensibilities being offended. Attempting to ascertain actually how many and who the "many," now "some" might be, proved futile. Whatever the actual numbers or percentages of total congregational populations were unfavorably impacted by these changes, it was plainly observable to me, along with participants in this study, that "some," and perhaps "many" indeed were offended by musical styles particularly associated with black culture being incorporated within church liturgy. That stated, this alone should not be cause to continue the exclusion of such musical styles when they were now clearly rendered appropriate.

It should be noted that Worldwide Church of God culture for the decades of its existence prior to doctrinal overhaul, beginning in the mid to late 1990s, included a tendency of holding ministers in such high esteem that unbiased observation would conclude that they were to some degree held in such high regard without the benefit of spiritual accountability. For congregants, doing what pleased the minister (i.e. local pastors) was always understood (if not documented) to be a worthy endeavor. This minister-adoration mindset was informed by the top-down hierarchical structure the church adhered to. Christ was the head of the church. Fair enough. But this was presumed to reason that as such He would personally appoint his earthly ambassador (i.e. the head of the denomination), and the head of the denomination would in turn appoint those in positions of lesser authority. Based on this reasoning, church culture demanded that local ministers be deferred to in all regards as men (for women were not ordained as ministers until 2007) within an organizational chart leading up the line to Jesus the Christ, and thereby enjoying their positions with Christ's express approval. Unchecked this could, and in my opinion did, lead

in some cases to the adoration of some ministers bordering on the level of a personality cult dynamic. It was also painfully clear to those who allowed themselves to think independently that some ministers enjoyed and even encouraged such deference and adoration. In this regard, when local pastors did not lend support, let alone acceptance, of new musical styles within the worship context of their congregations, membership would naturally be inclined to hold the same opinions publically, even if some might have disagreed privately. I will summarize here the more negative and opposing reactions to musical changes experienced by participants, along with some of their perceptions associated with said reactions:

- Visible repulsion on the part of some whites, observed from facial and body responses, including but not limited to frowns, arms crossed, and the abrupt exiting from the meeting hall.

- Disapproval of bodily responses to music, either demonstrated by musical presenters or congregants, including hand clapping, lifting of hands, swaying from side to side, and dancing. Said disapproval was expressed by observable facial frowns, arms folded across the chest, abrupt and disruptive exiting from the place of meeting as demonstrated by exaggerated bodily movements and/or verbal remarks indicating disapproval.

- Verbal ridicule on the part of some whites, including but not limited to castigation of the music and the performers.

- Whites' refusal to sing new hymns performed in styles associated with black culture.

- Bitterness over perceived loss of white special status.

- Statements that black musical styles were wrong and of the devil.

- Presumptuousness of white superiority pertaining to musical styles.

- Deepening chasms between whites and blacks over musical styles.

- Music became a litmus test of rejection or acceptance of other doctrinal changes.

- Routine exodus of many whites.

- Black angst and disappointment at white rejection of their heart music.

- Black feelings that whites were selfish in only wanting certain musical styles included in the worship service.

- Inclusion of black musical styles isolated – not instituted in all congregations where substantial black populations worshipped.

- Stalled or non-existent progress towards inclusion of black musical styles on the part of local pastors.

While music can be understood to be culturally informed and having deep roots, Christians are mandated to demonstrate active love (and not simply as a heart-felt emotion) towards others, including those unlike ourselves culturally, racially, religiously, financially, generationally, sexually, etc. Biblical examples considered foundational in support of this way of life were included in the introductory chapter of this paper. In summary they were: 1. Matthew 7:12 The Golden Rule – Jesus' teaching on treating others as you would like to be treated; 2. Luke 10:25-37 The Good Samaritan – Jesus' explanation of the expanded Torah principle of loving your neighbor as you love yourself, and how this is extended to people not of one's particular group; 3. Acts 10:34-35 On Favoritism – Peter's epiphany following his vision of unclean foods, demonstrating that God does not show favoritism, but accepts all believers; 4. James 2:1-9 Favoritism is Sin – Jesus' brother James declares that the human practice of discrimination and favoritism are incompatible with the principle of loving your neighbor as yourself; 5. 1

Corinthians 13:4-5 Love is not Selfish - Paul's teaching on the non-self-seeking nature of Godly love, and how it is best manifested through exercising patience and kindness; 6. Galatians 3:28 We Are One in Christ – Paul's summation that all barriers and hostilities that exist between people are invalid, as in Christ we are all one people. 7. Revelation 7:9 Inclusive Musical Worship – John's vision of multinational, multicultural, and multiracial worship as a heavenly ideal.

From these teachings it can be understood that Christians should be encouraged to be empathetic to the tastes and responses to music of others when such tastes and responses do not clearly violate fundamental tenets of the faith. In the preceding chapter I wrote that some participants spoke of sacred music's effect on them. Comments such as "Listening to, or dancing to music takes me to a better place," "[Music] connects with my spirit," and "Music transports me," sums up what many participants shared were their responses to music that touched their heart and soul. The physical manifestations to their responses to such music was varied, but included such bodily movements that could suggest that they were indeed transported to another spiritual or mental state. Such manifestations could include the barely noticeable closing of the eyes and gentle movement of the head back and forth. They could also include enthusiastic hand clapping accompanied with exclamations of "Hallelujah," "Praise God," or "Amen." Some are inspired to dance their praises before their God as a form of adoration or submission. In any case, those taking part in this study expressed their sincerity in explaining that they were moved and motivated to respond to music that touched them deeply. It was relayed to me that some detractors argued that such responses are observed when some people respond to secular music, and as such equated churchgoers who engaged in such behavior as being worldly. That some people are moved to respond similarly to secular music may be true, but would that alone serve

as legitimate cause to disallow what may well be a human response to something aural that positively connects with their sense of musical aesthetics? Should Christians refrain from singing an inspiring and up tempo congregational song with enthusiastic gusto because patrons in a non-church venue may sing a secular song with the same enthusiasm? Should Christians be discouraged or prohibited from exclaiming praise for their God in the corporate worship context because others at a sports stadium event may exclaim praise for their team or hero? It was mentioned by several participants that some who had argued against such responses in the church setting were accepting of similar responses at a sporting event. This dynamic may be culturally informed, or perhaps based on one's mindset as pertains to church life. But in any event, to make a case against the allowance of responses to music in corporate worship on the bases of it being incompatible with the principles of the faith in my opinion would not hold up under honest and intelligent scrutiny.

Additionally, Christians are encouraged to represent Jesus in the same manner he presented himself to others, including others unlike himself. In a letter to a church in Philippi, the first documented church planted on European soil, the apostle Paul writes: "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion…Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:1-3) This can indeed present a challenge for human beings when considering our natural inclinations towards viewing ourselves or our particular group as superior to others. Paul continues along this line of thought by adding: "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:4-5a)

It would appear to be rather clear from this teaching that Christians, and therefore Christian churches where Christians associate and assemble, are obliged to adhere to a higher standard of ethics and compassion than normally and readily found within our human nature. As such, the negative and very uncompassionate words and actions offered by some in response to the culturally-informed musical tastes of others heretofore not represented musically within church liturgy would by their very nature fall outside accepted standards of Christian thinking and behavior. This in fact summarizes what participants in this study perceived and reasonably understood regarding the reactions of some of their fellow congregants to the introduction of, or the attempted inclusion of black musical styles in the worship context of their church life. Some participants shared that their local pastors explained to them that their patience with some members not embracing newly acceptable musical practices was based on the Biblical principle of love. However, many participants saw this application of love as being practiced in a one-sided manner, as those who embraced said changes were not shown the same degree of love, even when they were the recipients of words and actions clearly not offered in a spirit of Christian love. This never-ending extension of love towards those not accepting denominational change was perceived by participants to have led to continual angst amongst church members and ultimately led to the disintegration of their congregations. It was additionally felt by participants that the bad behavior expressed by some white church-goers would certainly not have been tolerated had similar behavior been displayed by black members.

What participants would have very much liked to have experienced (in addition to a more recognizably favorable response from greater numbers of their white brethren) was an intentional and genuine educational process designed to elevate constituency understanding of fundamental Christian ideals associated with key documentation from within the pages of the New Testament.

The lack of education and support for inclusionary practices pertaining to music was something participants raised over and over again. This led to great disappointment amongst members whom I interviewed. Participants could not understand why local authorities were so unwilling to honestly engage their constituencies on these matters. This issue still remains one that causes those in this study to be perplexed and hurt by the intentional stymieing of forward progress in this area of denominational polity. They would have appreciated unambiguous support from their local clergy for said changes in church liturgy. Again, the lack of education and support for inclusionary practices pertaining to music was something participants raised repeatedly during the course of my research.

Conclusions

Based upon the findings reported extensively in chapter four, it can be concluded that participants' appreciation of music, along with how they personally interact with it, is certainly pervasive and emotionally deep. It is additionally my conclusion that based upon the recorded evidence of their experiences related to the reactions of some whites in response to the introduction of black musical styles, racism (intentional, unintentional, subtle, or blatant) was evident in the Worldwide Church of God. This was brought to the fore when music deemed as black was presented in the church setting during worship services. It would appear that for some whites it was acceptable for blacks to be included in the ranks of church membership providing they adhered to white cultural standards, and in the context of this study, specifically to white preferences or tastes in music. However it seemed quite another case for blacks (or whites, for that matter) to express worship and praise for God through the use of musical styles associated

with black culture. Intolerance, and at times anger, was often what participants perceived as the reaction to such music from their white counterparts. It appeared to them that some whites seemed to be content affiliating with a church whose culture allowed them to enjoy a privileged role based upon their race. The president of the denomination at the time of this transition (and now as well), Joseph Tkach Jr., conceded as much in his book when writing of the once prominent (and now recanted) doctrine of British-Israelism, discussed earlier, that served as a "central plank" of the church. (Tkach 1997, 130) It became obvious to participants of this study that this belief, which held people of European extraction (and especially those of northwest Europe) in special and higher regard, would not readily yield to New Testament Biblically-based refutation. For these whites loss of prestige was not something to be embraced for Christ's sake, even in light of Biblical truth and denominational education to the contrary. Head and heart transformation was additionally hindered due to either overt non-compliance and/or obfuscations of new denominational polity by pastors serving at the local level.

I am convinced at this point that the overall concept of inclusion in the Christian context is something that for some, or perhaps many, can only be understood, appreciated, and practiced as a result of purposeful education along with the critical component of spiritual submission to Christian standards posited throughout the pages of the New Testament. This may be especially pertinent for those not raised in demographically diverse surroundings or perhaps not taught at home or school at an early age of the value God places upon all of humanity.

Recommendations

As stated in chapter three on methodology, I am in possession of an advocacy worldview associated with an action agenda. Within churches represented in this study the at best marginalization – and at worst hostility and exclusion – of African-Americans, pertaining to the inclusion of black musical styles within church liturgy, portrays an acute issue of social injustice within the church context that cries out for a rectifiable solution. Associated with my action-based advocacy worldview is the belief that Christianity, when predicated on the Biblically recorded teachings and actions of its founder, Jesus, along with principles espoused by additional New Testament contributors (as developed in chapter one and again outlined in the summary portion of this chapter) supports this approach in addressing said injustices. Said teachings and principles are listed here again for ease of reference. They are: 1. Matthew 7:12 The Golden Rule – Jesus' teaching on treating others as you would like to be treated; 2. Luke 10:25-37 The Good Samaritan – Jesus' explanation of the expanded Torah principle of loving your neighbor as you love yourself, and how this is extended to people not of our particular group; 3. Acts 10:34-35 On Favoritism – Peter's epiphany following his vision of unclean foods that God does not show favoritism, but accepts all believers; 4. James 2:1-9 Favoritism is Sin – Jesus' brother James declares that the human practice of discrimination and favoritism are incompatible with the principle of loving your neighbor as yourself; 5. 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 Love is not Selfish - Paul's teaching on the non-self-seeking nature of Godly love, and how it is best manifested through exercising patience and kindness; 6. Galatians 3:28 One in Christ – Paul's summation that all barriers and hostilities that exist between people are invalid, as in Christ we are all one people. 7.

Revelation 7:9 Inclusive Musical Worship – John's vision of multinational, multicultural, and multiracial worship as a heavenly ideal.

I am of the opinion that if the above principles served as the standard by which corporate worship practices were informed, then music representative of a particular congregations' constituency would be indeed be included. Pastors and Music ministers would be taught the inclusionary principles of Christianity. Love expressed towards God and neighbor would be the guiding force, without preferential accommodations afforded some at the exclusion of others. A mindset of genuine out-going concern for others would be modeled by leaders, and hopefully and eventually manifest in all worshippers, with everyone learning to experience the joy that comes from the knowledge that all races were lovingly included in the church liturgy. Congregational leaders would model this approach and allow for responses that demonstrate peoples' involvement in the worship service. Where different cultures exist within the same congregation, tolerance and appreciation of cultural-specific responsorial manifestations (e.g. hand clapping, hand raising, bodily swaying, and vocal exhortations) would be deemed acceptable, and their appropriateness would be taught by pastors using applicable Biblical references.

Action recommended pertaining to all parties associated with the denomination and congregations specific to this study are several. Firstly, denominational mandating of the inclusion of black musical styles where said population is represented in church attendance should be enacted. While this may seem a rather strong approach, understood in the context of a special event recorded in the Biblical book of John, Jesus is reported to give a mandate to those who will spread the message of this new worldview that will become in time known as Christianity. He declares: "A new command [from the Latin *mandatum*] I give you: love one

another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this will all men know you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13, 34-35) It is reasonable to expect that this same pervasive and commanded principle, which is also echoed in Jesus' foundational teaching of loving one's neighbor as oneself and explored in chapter one, should be applied to a musically inclusive church liturgy representative of a congregation's demographic. I noted in chapter four several participants' concerns regarding congregational visits by the music minister representing the denomination. These special visits consisted of musical sermons where the music minister would speak of inclusionary concepts pertaining to music in the church context. During the presentation he would integrate different songs and styles of praise and worship music in an effort to educate the congregation as to the possibilities of what could be incorporated into the praise and worship portion of a church service. Participants of this study noted what they perceived to be a glaring absence of musical styles that were representative of their culture. This very recognizable omission demonstrated two things. Firstly, it served to marginalize the musical preferences of a substantial segment of the congregations' population. Secondly, it served to perpetuate the already problematic perception among white congregants that their musical aesthetic stood as the standard for musical expression within the worship context. This is what many participants view as typical of the denominations' and/or their local church leaderships' at best lack of appreciation and understanding of the problem, or at worse the intentional continuation of racist attitudes. As such, denominational and congregational leadership should recognize this dilemma and cease to promote this sort of exclusionary dynamic. They should then redirect attention to the inclusionary practices and understanding they claim to possess. While the intentions of the denomination, local church pastors, and the visiting music minister

may well be honorable, to not properly discern the socio-cultural and racial implications at stake is to revert to an assumed sense of white artistic superiority.

Denominational encouragement and support should be provided on a regular and consistent basis via a number of means. It was reported by most participants of this study that education regarding denominationally changing positions was not clearly and/or regularly provided to congregations. Where still needed now, as reported by several participants, and for future doctrinal changes, the denomination should hold congregational pastors and leaders accountable for disseminating accurate information. Rather than rely on pastor' reports alone, either documented or oral, the denomination should additionally query laity with carefully worded survey questions to accurately determine what has occurred at the congregational level from the perspective of its constituency. Said surveys should not be administered during corporate gatherings facilitated by pastors but mailed directly to members. This approach would serve to lesson pastors' authoritative influence in affecting the outcome of their congregation's responses. The denomination should also update regularly and comprehensively their members via letters that clearly outline the reasons for the changes, along with the denomination's expectations of clergy and laity. Such methodologies were employed to some degree but lacked discernible means of measuring results or the reporting of such to members.

Secondly, pastors should comply with denominational teachings and any associated requirements to assure that their congregations are educated as to denominational polity. As reported by many participants in this study, denominational information was withheld or not given genuine attention. Pastors should strive to understand and share their denomination's teachings with their congregations in a forthwith manner, and take care to not neglect doing so in an effort to slow the educational process or to unnecessarily placate dissenting populations

within their congregations. As reported by participants, this tact resulted in significant loss of members who otherwise might have been retained. I do not mean to suggest that navigating the multiplicity of associated opinions and issues of congregants was, is, or will be an easy chore. What I do mean is that more meaningful and recognizable actions should be taken on the part of pastors to initiate and nurture education and follow-up discussion as needed. This would allow for members to come to their own conclusions based on being in possession of all of the facts, rather than based on only partial facts, or on emotionally derived opinions not entirely accurate, or even blatantly in error.

Thirdly, church members should honestly evaluate the information they are provided by their denomination along with participating in subsequent educational workshops and discussions facilitated by their pastors. Members should review the Biblical evidence featured in support of changes to their doctrine and liturgy, and take individual responsibility to study the material offered, rather than rely on dissenting group opinion. Self analysis of one's adherence to the foundational Biblical principles outlined in chapter one and reviewed in this chapter should be employed on a basis consistent with individual need, with assistance from pastors when appropriate. As reported by participants attending in some congregations, there remains what appears to be a clear lack of reliance on these principles as they pertain to music within the liturgy. It seemed to some participants in this study that some members of their congregation were more willing to appropriate towards themselves Jesus' teaching regarding loving one another, loving ones' neighbor, and acting in a manner commensurate with how they wished to be acted upon. It is therefore recommended that all church members examine themselves to honestly determine whether or not they ascribe to these foundational teachings as they pertain to their personal approach and actions towards others' musical tastes.

Recommendations offered generally and not specifically for the denomination associated with this study would primarily include encouraging intentional and genuine construction of church-based constituencies reflective of the community demographics in which they reside. I am referring here to contemporary American Protestant churches, as this recommendation may not be entirely appropriate for all denominations and churches. While consideration should be given concerning each representative racial, ethnic and cultural group, an all-inclusive rather than exclusivist policy should be articulated and rehearsed on a regular basis so that all are and remain aware of principles that define the congregation. It should be noted that this tact may not serve as an appropriate model for churches seeking to accommodate the needs of newly or recently arrived immigrants to a particular community. Such a constituency may indeed benefit from a liturgy informed by generally exclusive cultural, ethnic or racial elements as they pertain to musical and other customs. However, such continued use of racial-cultural-ethnic specifics in church liturgy without regard to the community at large may have the effect of maintaining divisions and separation amongst multiple groups residing in the same community.

It is not my intent here to discuss church planting, or how existing churches might deal with changing neighborhoods, but to suggest recommendations for churches already in existence that are multi-racial but have not reflected such diversity in their liturgy, or others seeking to become so. For these churches, I feel that focus should aim towards the Biblical Christianity illuminated by the documented teachings and actions of Jesus and others contained in the writings of the books of the New Testament, and discussed throughout this paper. Based on these and the research findings represented in this study, specific and regular attention should be given to reviewing what the apostle Paul wrote to a cosmopolitan church he established and nurtured in the major commercial and port city of Ephesus (modern-day western Turkey), one of the largest

cities in the Mediterranean world, and at the time second only to Rome in importance. In explaining to members of this church how all Christians are one in Christ, he writes: "For he himself [Jesus] is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations." (Ephesians 2:14-15a) Here Paul alludes to the natural inclinations of disparate groups to maintain a divide between themselves and others, and for such competing groups to view one another from a perspective of hostility. Paul continues his thought regarding Jesus' purpose: "His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. (Ephesians 2:15b-16) By making such an emphatic statement, Paul is declaring that whatever divisions exist between differing groups of humanity, all hostilities are now deemed ended and all are reconciled by His (Christ's) death on the cross.

Sadly, it seems that in the overall context of humanity, differing groups often attempt to maintain divisions and even at times to resurrect the metaphorical dividing wall Jesus had torn down through His sacrificial death. When this occurs in the Church it is extremely lamentable. My closing point is simply that continual emphasis should be focused on the inclusiveness Jesus spoke, taught, promoted, demonstrated, and died for. To not do so in my estimation would be to acquiesce to what comes more often than not naturally to humanity – division and hostility.

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