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## Multiethnic Worship Representative of Heaven: A Mixed Methods Study

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MULTIETHNIC WORSHIP REPRESENTATIVE OF HEAVEN:

A MIXED METHODS STUDY

A MASTER'S THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
OF THE CENTER FOR GRADUATE AND CONTINUING STUDIES  
BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BY

SHERREE V. LANE

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS IN ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

FEBRUARY, 2009

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BETHEL UNIVERSITY

Multiethnic Worship Representative of Heaven:  
A Mixed Methods Study

Sherree Vernet Lane

February 2009

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_, Thesis Advisor

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ACCEPTED

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## ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods research studies inclusive worship of multiethnic Protestant congregations across Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. I used a model of worship based upon Liesch's characteristics of heavenly worship, examining how it applies to the multiethnic church. I observed worship services and rehearsals at Minneapolis Multicultural Church to determine how worship is constructed at this multiethnic church that became multiethnic due to changing neighborhood demographics.

In the second phase of research I surveyed multiethnic church pastors and worship leaders to determine attitudes and practices towards inclusive worship. I found a possible connection between multiethnic churches that start through inward and outward motivations and churches that have experienced the most change in music style, signaling inclusive worship. Additionally, the gospel music genre shows promise as an inclusive worship genre.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a mixed methods study of the multiethnic church in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area of Minnesota. I conducted my case study in February-April of 2008 at Minneapolis Multicultural Church.<sup>1</sup> I observed worship services and interviewed participants to discover how worship is constructed at this multiethnic church. Further, I surveyed multiethnic church leaders across the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. My goal was to determine factors that contribute to an inclusive worship style and to determine how multiethnic worship reflects heavenly worship.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

America's population has shifted dramatically in the past two to three decades. One million people now arrive each year from Mexico, Central and South America, Asia, and Africa, stepping inside America's borders (US Census 2000). These immigrants arrive with their own culture including language, religion and music. Many join immigrant churches or establish ethnic churches. Fewer join an existing multiethnic church or help establish a multiethnic church.

Most institutions have experienced racial and ethnic integration, including schools, clinics, day cares, and businesses. Churches, however, remain overwhelmingly composed of one major ethnicity and Sunday morning worship still remains the most segregated hour of the week in America (Garces-Foley 2007, 167).

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<sup>1</sup> The church and participant names have been changed to protect their identity.

As music pastor at a congregation in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area, I witnessed the changes in ethnic composition of this metro area and struggled to help the congregation I serve accept immigrants more readily. I questioned, “How can a music pastor facilitate a church becoming multiethnic?” I hoped to discover how a multiethnic church constructs worship to be inclusive and welcoming of culturally diverse peoples.

Emerson and Kim define a multiracial church as consisting of at least two major racial groups with neither representing more than 80% of the whole, thus only 8% of congregations in the United States are multiracial (Emerson and Kim 2003). Multiethnic churches evolve through several possible methods. When American neighborhoods change due to the influx of immigrants and the shifting of ‘whites’ to the suburbs, a resulting attendance decline has motivated some churches to reconfigure their identity to become multiethnic (Christerson 2003). Some churches are planted as multiethnic from their inception with **mission** stamped into their DNA to reach second and third generation immigrants, interracial married couples, and upward moving urban ethnic professionals (Davis 2003).

I reasoned, if the gospel of Jesus Christ is for all people and the Christian church is a place where all are welcomed and accepted, then why is the multiethnic church of two or more people groups uniting in worship, leadership and outreach much less common than the ethnic church? If the heavenly vision of worship is predictive of the future, “a great multitude...from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb” cry out in an overwhelming worship celebration to God (Rev. 7:9–12 NIV), why is inclusive worship not more visible on earth? Further, if most denominations in the United States have experienced either a

decline in membership or minimal growth over the decade 1995–2005 (Hartford Institute 2008), then the multiethnic church would be a logical model to follow for church growth.

An emerging body of literature speaks of building healthy multiethnic churches with models and principles described to move congregations towards including peoples of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Deymaz 2007, Ortiz 1996, and Yancey 2003). Less is written about actual worship in the multiethnic church. How does worship music in the multiethnic church function to develop a thriving Christian church? What specific changes does a worship leader make in the worship service, with music particularly, to promote unified worship in a multiethnic church?

#### NEED FOR THE STUDY

My review of literature has revealed no worship music study of the multiethnic churches in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota greater metro area to determine how they facilitate multiethnic worship and music's role in the process. My purpose began to study one multiethnic church and then extended to discover how the larger metro community of multiethnic churches affirms, includes and unites various ethnic peoples in Christian worship. Hawn indicates music by nature tends to encourage unity and, in the process, forms a group identity. "Sung prayer not only symbolizes the unity of the church gathered, it is per se an act of unity" (Hawn 2003, xvi). Corporate worship indicates the local church participates and worships as a unit, so in the case study of Minneapolis Multicultural Church (MMC) I observed worship services and the congregation's participation in worship. For true unity to occur however, understanding and appreciation of cultural differences must precede it (Maynard-Reid, 2000). I therefore observed varied examples of cultural expressions in worship. Additionally I questioned, how does

worship music in the Christian multiethnic church encourage both unity and diversity?  
What is inclusive worship? Further, how does multiethnic worship more directly mirror  
heavenly worship?

## PURPOSE

The intent of this study is to learn about inclusive worship music practices in multiethnic congregations of the greater metro area of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. The purpose of the triangulation design of this mixed methods study is to allow for convergence of both qualitative data and quantitative data. In this approach, a case study explores the importance of worship music in a local multiethnic church by collecting data in the form of interviews and observations at Minneapolis Multicultural Church Assemblies of God in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In tandem with that, a survey instrument is used to measure the relationship between thriving multiethnic churches and inclusive worship music that affirms identity and fosters unity of congregations in the broader multiethnic faith community of the Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Qualitative data is collected first as the best way to experience multiethnic worship from within the church, in order to gain an appreciation for the *emic* viewpoint. By collecting both qualitative and quantitative data I aim to build upon the strengths of both types of research and minimize the limitations of one type alone. Further, I desire to compare the results from one congregation to the broader multiethnic church population to gain a more complete picture of multiethnic worship.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The greater metropolis of Minneapolis-St. Paul has experienced a shift in population over the last three decades with a marked increase in the number of immigrants (Mayer 2007). The Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul is now considered one of the top ten “Gateway Cities” for immigrants to the US (Mayer 2008). There is a need to document worship in the emerging multiethnic church. Previous research has touched on the Chicago area (Becker 1998), multiethnic churches in the Methodist denomination (Hawn 2003), world music emerging in Catholic hymnals (Barkhymer 2004), and identity in a Hispanic Pentecostal multinational church (Arellano 2007). This study will add to Assemblies of God denominational literature through its case study of an Assembly of God congregation. These findings will further aid the denomination I serve with their focus on worship and music in the congregation. It will also reach across Protestant denominations in its survey of multiethnic faith communities from the greater metro area of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

This study will add to ethnomusicology literature with its focus on worship in multiethnic churches. The results will reinforce the world musician’s role in emerging multiethnic churches and the vital need for musicians trained in world musical understanding and performance ability enabling them to reach bi-musically to culturally diverse peoples.

Furthermore, this research will aid in the growth of new churches as it describes the worship aspects of the multiethnic church that contribute to the development process. I hope the study will reinforce to denominational leaders the importance of planting

multiethnic churches, which draw from an increasing population of prospective attendees and exhibit characteristics of heavenly worship.

With the European American population decreasing in relation to the substantial increase of the Hispanic, African American and Asian populations, European American churches face the need for racial inclusiveness to grow (Hartford Institute 2008). More than 20% of the Twin Cities population of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota are first and second generation immigrants (Mayer 2007). Over the past two to three decades, the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area, and the US, has changed markedly. Those who seek to expand the Christian church must reach this rapidly changing population. This study fosters understanding of the multiethnic church with emphasis on multiethnic worship in facilitating its growth. I hope it encourages musicians to participate in the multiethnic church growth process.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What role does music play in the worship of multiethnic congregations in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area to affirm identity and to establish congregational unity; and in the process display characteristics of heavenly worship?

- What causes the multiethnic Christian church to thrive and what role does worship music play in the process?
- How does an inclusive worship style help to facilitate multiethnic worship?
- How does worship music affirm the identity of the varied ethnicities?
- What does worship music reveal about what is important to the congregation and thus reinforce/reveal their sense of identity?
- How does worship music contribute to the congregation's gaining a unified collective identity in Christ?
- How does multiethnic worship display characteristics of heaven's worship?

## DEFINITIONS

Culturally diverse. People of differing ways of life, including culture, language, religion and race.

Ethnic church. A congregation of worshipers of predominantly one race or ethnicity.

Multiethnic church. A multiethnic church has been identified as a congregation with an attitude of inclusiveness to various diverse peoples in the life of the church including its worship and leadership; and a church where diverse peoples come and worship together (Hiebert 1996). The term *multicultural* is often used synonymously with multiethnic. Terms used in the literature will be discussed in chapter two.

Mixed methods research. Including both qualitative and quantitative research, in this thesis the qualitative case study commenced first to explore themes. A quantitative phase followed immediately, over a larger population, building upon the first phase to allow for generalizations and comparisons over the broader population of Protestant multiethnic congregations in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota greater metro area.

Worship. “The self expression of a particular church community in a public celebration of its faith...an expression of adoration and praise to God in community,” (Maynard-Reid 2000, 19). The topics of inclusive worship and worship in heaven will be discussed in chapter two as they relate to this research.

## DELIMITATIONS

This study is limited to Christian worship in Protestant multiethnic congregations across the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota metro area. Specifically, I will seek to document the manner in which worship music functions both to affirm the varied ethnicities and to unify the culturally diverse church, while displaying characteristics of heavenly worship. In the qualitative phase of this two-phase study, I interviewed leaders and participants and observed worship services at Minneapolis Multicultural Church Assembly of God. In the quantitative phase, I surveyed pastors and worship leaders

across the greater metro area multiethnic churches as to attitudes and behaviors of multiethnic worship. From the results of both research phases, data was interpreted and converged, and the research questions were answered.

### LIMITATIONS

The case study approach carries the possibility that the church interviewed could be more individualistic rather than representational of multiethnic churches across the wider spectrum. By also conducting the second-phase survey of the broader population of multiethnic churches, I have endeavored to decrease the limitations of this approach.

This case study research was conducted over a three-month time period at Minneapolis Multicultural Church. Although I was able to observe and participate in a variety of different rituals/services, the limited time spent with the congregation does not guarantee a complete picture of the church's inclusive worship practices.

The research at MMC was conducted with a limited number of participants from the congregation. I included the pastor, music director, worship leaders, and eleven worshipers, yet I recognize that limits exist to gaining a complete understanding of music's role in affirmation of ethnic identity.

In the survey phase of research, after four weeks of data collection, the response rate was 19%. Although this is common for surveys, I recognize the limits of drawing conclusions across the broad population. In writing the results, I have been very careful to present my analyses as accurately as possible.



## THEORY

The information in this section is based upon Liesch's (1988) model of heavenly worship from the Revelation. Liesch describes five worship characteristics present in heaven's model of worship: 1) the priesthood of believers—all are inside the worship space, 2) worship of Jesus Christ is central, 3) worship is response, 4) vocal and instrumental music is confirmed, and 5) worship is costly. All five of these characteristics are clearly visible in the multiethnic church and particularly applicable to the worship of MMC. I contend that multiethnic worship is representative of heaven's worship and brings us a bit of heaven on earth as the church displays these characteristics.

## RESEARCHER BIAS

I am cognizant of the fact the case study commenced at an Assembly of God church, which is within the denomination I presently serve as music pastor. I have endeavored to be very observant during research data collection to ensure that I do not assume certain things to be true without asking for clarification. At the same time, the topic and location is of special interest to me because it relates to my denomination. Having served as a music pastor in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area for the past twenty-two years, I hold a vested interest in the growth of the Protestant church in this geographical area.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

When I began studying multiethnic worship, I found only a limited number of sources that specifically covered the topic of worship music in the multiethnic church. As I expanded the search to multicultural, multiracial, diverse worship and multiethnic churches, I discovered many sources advocated starting a multiethnic church but contained only minimal reference to the use of music in worship within the multiethnic church. In this chapter, then, I have organized the related literature into five categories:

1. Research addressing changes in American demographics leading to the multiethnic church movement
2. Research related to issues encountered in the multiethnic church
3. Research on inclusive worship
4. Research on the primary ethnic group that is the focus of this case study, and
5. Literature that informed the design of this mixed methods study.

#### LITERATURE ON DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN THE US

Several authors speak of the changes occurring in American religion (Ammerman 1997, Becker 1998, Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000, and Stevens 2004). By 2000, US population reached one-third persons of ethnic diversity (US Census 2000). As America's population shifts substantially through increased immigration, the process of congregational change in response to community change emerges as a common theme in the literature. Nancy Ammerman's project described twenty-three congregations throughout the US and discovered four common responses to changing communities—1)

remain the same, 2) relocate, called “white flight,” 3) remain and become niche-like, or 4) remain and attract the neighborhood thus becoming multiethnic. Some churches have adapted and, as a result, experienced rebirth.

Becker’s (1998) case study compared two congregations in Oak Park, Illinois that were declining due to their changing community and dwindling finances. The pastors at these churches both studied church growth strategies and taught their congregations how to become inclusive through changing worship service practices in addition to stressing their local identity and their “common religious identity.” Both were successful in adopting a new multiracial identity based upon religious metaphors—“Community in Christ” and “New Testament Church.”

Changes in the composition of a congregation occur for varying reasons. Some changes may be forced upon the church while others emerge from within the church as part of an intentional mission to reach the world, starting with the neighboring community. Emerson and Kim (2003) studied a national sample of multiracial congregations regarding their origin, motivation for change, and the source of racial diversification. Although congregations tend toward homogeneity, Emerson and Kim identified seven models that describe the origin of multiracial churches. They discovered the churches originating because of an inward mission are most likely to remain multicultural. As a consequence of these studies delineating congregational change, I included questions relating to changing worship practices as response to changing church demographics in both of my research phases—interviews at Minneapolis Multicultural Church and in the survey of greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area multiethnic churches. From survey responses, I discovered a connection between churches

originating from both inward and outward motivations and churches experiencing the greatest amount of change in musical worship style (see chapter 6).

Change can be costly, particularly that experienced in a diverse congregation, as Christerson and Emerson (2003) discovered in a Los Angeles case study of a Protestant evangelical multiethnic church. They studied costs of belonging to a multiethnic congregation, while questioning why multiethnic religious organizations continue to exist despite the tendency toward homogeneity. They discovered the costs of belonging to a smaller multiethnic religious organization are borne more heavily by the minority population in the congregation. Lack of social connections plus conflicts over worship styles were sighted most often by minority groups. Despite the difficulties, most congregants felt the benefits of belonging to a multiethnic church outweighed the costs. This study suggested that I may possibly observe some relational frustrations among the minority population at the multiethnic church of my research site.

*Summary:* Literature indicates some congregations adapt to demographic change and thrive. Church origin, in particular the motivation for change, affects the outcome. In particular, musical change in response to congregational change formed a basis for interview questions in the case study and the survey of local metro area multiethnic congregations.

## LITERATURE RELATED TO ISSUES ENCOUNTERED IN THE MULTIETHNIC CHURCH

### **Defining the Multiethnic Church**

This second body of literature related to issues that either new or developing multiethnic churches face, including advocacy related to the starting of multiethnic churches, defining a multiethnic church, and finding existing, successful models of multiethnic churches. In his definitive study, VanEngen (2004) discussed the ‘homogeneous unit principle.’ This concept originally created by McGavran (1965) from observations in the overseas missions context, was articulated by Wagner (1976) as a church growth principle. The homogeneous unit principle guided church growth procedures for decades in the church growth movement suggesting the church grows most quickly when people do not have to cross over racial, linguistic or class barriers. When carried to the extreme, this principle developed an inwardly-focused church. This principle was challenged in the ensuing years (Davis 2003, VanEngen 2004) because it afforded little room for the changing ethnic composition of our communities in light of the church’s mission to reach its communities. More recent multiethnic church planting literature instructs church leaders in the principles, models and methods of building healthy multiethnic churches (Davis 2003, Deymaz 2007, Garces-Foley 2007, Ortiz 1996, Rosser 1998, Wilson 2004, and Yancey 2003).

Defining terminology related to multiethnic churches warrants discussion. Wilson (2004) and Garces-Foley (2004) define *multicultural* as a broad term including multicolored, multiracial, multiethnic, and multi-linguistic. On the other hand, Yancey (2000) excludes the term *multicultural* due to its use in US society in the broadest sense

to include gender, age and sexual preference. Garces-Foley (2004), in her ethnography of the Los Angeles Evergreen church, uses the term *multiethnic* stating this Asian American church feels *multiethnic* more accurately depicts their story with its gentler reference to diversity; and it represents a chosen identity rather than an imposed identity as *multiracial* implies.

The term *multiracial*, used by DeYoung et al. (2003), Emerson and Kim (2003), and Yancey (2003), suggests visible differences in people. Yancey points out that although *multiethnic* is closer to the groups discussed in the Bible, *multiracial* indicates more clearly the difficulties in society and thus in the church. “Usually racial distinctions create the most problems in our society” (Yancey 2000, 17). Others argue *multiracial* carries too many racial overtones and will cloud the discussion. DeYoung indicates discussion is needed leading to understanding and ultimately to racial reconciliation.

*Multiethnic* is used by Deymaz (2007), Garces-Foley (2007) and Rosser (1998). Black (2000) also defines *multiethnic* as inclusive of race, nationality and culture. I have chosen to use *multiethnic* and *multicultural* interchangeably. I have given preference to the term *multiethnic* in the title and body of this thesis as an inclusive term that more accurately represents the groups discussed in the Bible. Yet, I have included *multicultural* as the term Minneapolis Multicultural Church used to define itself.

Advocacy of the need for multicultural [his term] churches is covered by Wilson (2004). He believes that, with the advent of increased ethnic diversity, US Christian churches must embrace multiculturalism and the accompanying gifts global Christians bring to this country. He further emphasizes that churches of ethnic diversity more closely mirror the Christian church’s origins on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

Davis (2003) reinforces the need for multiethnic churches citing census data that 37.4% of the US population is composed of people of ethnic diversity (US Census 2000). Three additional factors emphasize the need for churches that are multiethnic: 1) second and third-generation immigrants desire this type of worship, 2) interracial marriages are increasing, and 3) ethnic families with higher income and education seek a multiethnic church.

Davis describes four multicultural [his term] church models that define the broad spectrum of culturally diverse churches. This explanation proved useful in determining the types of churches represented in my survey of metro area multiethnic churches. The majority of churches responding to the survey fit Davis' last category of the multiethnic church model.

- Multi-congregational model (several churches in same facility)
- Multilanguage satellite model (one church in many locations)
- Cell-celebration model (house groups plus a combined worship celebration)
- Multiethnic church model (ethnically diverse, meets together, uses one language with worship services designed to minister to the variety of groups)

*Summary:* Research stresses the importance of starting multiethnic churches in the US, with present ethnic population reaching one-third of the US population. It addresses a possible reason for the delay in this occurring—church growth advocates taught the homogeneous unit principle. Of the four multicultural church models described above, the multiethnic church model defines the type of church included in my survey.

### **On Unity and Diversity in Worship**

In the multiethnic church the seemingly opposing viewpoints of unity versus diversity in worship can create conflict of philosophy. The controversy centers not only on what should be emphasized, but on whether celebrating diversity is important. This

section will discuss various authors' viewpoints on the connection of diversity with unity as general concepts of worship and will conclude with a discussion of music's role in providing unity in Christian worship.

Aghahowa (1996) analyzed the worship at two African American congregations in Chicago, which contained two contrasting worship styles, one charismatic and one formal. She discussed the African cultural roots that influence Black American worship, such as the importance of community and the call-and-response style between the preacher and congregation. The qualities of black worship can be categorized into these areas: rhythmic song and sermon, passionate prayer and testimony, ecstatic shouting, and conversion. Aghahowa emphasized understanding the diversity of others within worship traditions as a means of fostering unity, stressing one cannot achieve unity without first appreciating the uniqueness of each other. She calls the church to "unity in diversity" relating it to unity of purpose (Aghahowa 1996, 7). Her study fostered greater understanding of the culturally inspired worship roots of the people of my research. Additionally, she included a "Worship Rating Form" to use to begin worship dialog at any church. I adapted this form and, with permission, used it at my research site to determine worshipers' level of satisfaction with worship and music at their church.

The multiethnic church faces tension surrounding how to affirm diversity while simultaneously unifying the congregation. Garces-Foley (2007) described this concept as "unity and diversity in tension." Two multiethnic congregations in Los Angeles exemplify these concepts in tension—Mosaic Church (Marti 2004) and Evergreen Church (Garces-Foley 2007). Mosaic is a popular young adult church with a membership that is 1/3 Latino, 1/3 Asian and 1/3 Anglo. The church focuses singularly on developing



young adult followers of Christ, committed to their shared identity, with a focus on using American pop music and drama as the unifying tool. The church leaders rarely speak of racial or ethnic differences. Marti terms this *ethnic transcendence*, whereas Garces-Foley considers this method mono-cultural more than multicultural. In Mosaic's model, unity supersedes celebrating or even recognizing diversity.

The alternative is *ethnic inclusion*, which acknowledges and affirms ethnic identity according to Garces-Foley (2007). She indicates Evergreen Church also attracts young adults and those in mixed marriages. The difference is the congregation dialogs about diversity and social issues, “unlike evangelical churches that frame ethnic and Christian identity as competing alliances, Evergreen affirms ethnic differences as part of God's eternal plan for humankind” (Garces-Foley 2000, 100). She sees the tension between unity and diversity as a balance and cautions churches against becoming too fragmented by overemphasizing diversity or too homogeneous to even be considered a multiethnic congregation.

VanEngen (2004) also speaks of the necessity of balance between the universality (unity) and the particularity (diversity) of the church. Following an exhaustive discussion including the pitfalls of emphasizing one over the other, first from Biblical perspective and then from church growth history, he emphasizes that the reader understand the dual nature of the Church as a whole—its theological and sociological natures. At its inception, the Church was a body consisting of many persons of varied socio-cultural backgrounds which became one in spiritual unity of faith in Jesus Christ. He suggests a guideline to use for planting multiethnic churches in North American: “Church planting

in North American should strive to be as multiethnic as its surrounding context”  
(VanEngen 2004, 32).

DeYoung (2003) suggests that a sole emphasis on developing unity can masquerade as assimilationism. He advocates that a mixture of cultures is the ideal for the multiracial church. He describes this shared culture as a *mestizaje*, a hybrid that includes aspects of the cultures represented but “reflects a new and unique culture that transcends the worldly cultures.” This shared culture expresses the new collective identity (DeYoung et al. 2003, 169). This new unity is seen in leadership, worship services and activities. DeYoung gives the Biblical basis for multiracial worship in Jesus’ actions and words (John 17). He chronicles how four multiracial congregations in the US, including one local Minneapolis multiethnic congregation, became multiracial and concludes by emphasizing the vital importance that churches intentionally start multiracial congregations in an effort to overcome the race problem in this country.

Corbitt (1998), Doran and Troeger (1992), and Hawn (2003) look at music’s role in fostering unity in the multiethnic congregation. In *Gather into One, Praying and Singing Globally*, Hawn speaks of the unifying power of congregational sung prayer to create unity. He describes the lives of five selected musicians from four continents and the contributions they have made towards worldwide congregational singing. He advocates singing songs from the world’s cultures as a means of learning something of the other’s worldview. Although music is not a universal language in the sense that all ethnic groups glean the same meaning, Hawn indicates even the early church fathers recognized the value of the congregation singing together to foster Christian oneness and church unity.

Corbitt speaks of music's effective role in the growth of the Christian church around the world. He illustrates with examples drawn from the missions context, discussing five roles that music fills in the Church--priest (worship), prophet (calling for justice), proclaimer (communicating the message of salvation), healer (alleviating suffering), preacher (expressing the theology of God), and teacher (transmitting knowledge and values from generation to generation). He articulates the primary purpose of music in Christian worship is to express praise to God. Particularly applicable to my research is his discussion of how music unifies in Christian worship. He gives five ways music brings unity: through texts that express corporate thought in light of Biblical truth, through musical forms expressing emotion, through songs of personal testimony, through songs of Biblical history, and through songs connecting the congregation to the broader faith community (Corbitt 1998, 72).

Doran and Troeger (1992) speak of the challenges worship leaders and church musicians face to overcome crises regarding music styles in an attempt to *unite the tribes*. They give instructions to worship leaders who, in the tradition of King David, carry the responsibility of uniting diverse congregations around our common faith. Part I covers music crises many churches face, Part II speaks of regaining harmony in the church, and Part III gives several possible models, termed maps, to revitalized worship. These principles apply to the multiethnic church and reinforce the challenge of achieving unity while celebrating diversity:

How will we lead the church to worship God in a way that draws on the best of what each tribe has to offer without reinforcing the fragmentation and the struggle for domination that characterize our culture? (Doran and Troeger 1992, 16).

*Summary:* Authors remind of the need for balance between unity and diversity in worship. Music's vital role in uniting the congregation centers on the texts and emotions of the songs. This literature propelled me to observe and discover practices local multiethnic churches incorporate regarding this dual role music fills of unifying the multiethnic congregation and of celebrating diversity. Additionally, this informed my survey tool to include questions on music that unifies multiethnic churches. Particularly, I requested particular song titles that unified each congregation.

### **Literature on Identity**

Ethnic identity, religious identity, and their connection emerge as recurrent themes in the literature. Multiethnic church identity and music identity is also discussed leading to a connection between the songs sung and the values they reveal about the multiethnic church identity in the case study.

Chong (1998) studied the way religious identity affected ethnic identity in second generation worshipers at two Chicago Korean churches. Chong observed that second generation Korean Americans have maintained a high level of participation in the ethnic Korean church, thus suggesting a connection between their religious and ethnic identities. Second generation Korean Americans have experienced a significant amount of marginalization in American society. Chong suggested the church provides a place to belong and a place to preserve their culture, thus connecting their ethnic identity to traditional moral Korean values. Cong discovered that conservative Protestant Christianity and moral Korean identity have intertwined to define Korean American Christians in these Chicago churches. Chong proceeded to explain how religion reinforces ethnicity in two ways—by sacralizing and legitimizing ethnicity.

In Benham's (2004) work, he researched the topic of identity formation as it relates to the All-Ukrainian Union of Associations of Evangelical Christian-Baptists music schools. Benham gave meticulous explanation of the basis for identity construction as he described the connection of music and identity in Ukrainian music schools. These music schools emerged in Ukrainian Baptist churches following *perestroika* and the resulting dissolve of the Soviet Union.

In explaining identity, both individual and collective, Benham cites Baumeister's identity components or units that combine to create a group or individual identity—assigned (physiological), personal characteristics (psychological), single transformation events, hierarchy of criteria, and sociological. He further indicates, music provides the two defining criteria of identity—continuity and differentiation. Music provides continuity—preservation of identity—through transmission of culture, and differentiation, which refers to distinctions that set cultures apart from other cultures.

Noteworthy to my study is the fact these music schools function within Baptist churches. These schools not only raised the status of the church within Ukrainian society, which had suffered under Russian domination, but they used music as the means of constructing Ukrainian ethnic identity. Additionally, Benham indicated these music schools reflected the values and beliefs of the Ukrainian Baptist churches. This study formed an important connection of music with ethnic and religious identity. It suggested a connection to my research at the multiethnic church, that song lyrics can indicate the church values and identity.

Hargreaves, Miell and MacDonald (2002) discuss musical identity as it relates to expressing individual and collective identity. The music that people listen to or perform

can define who they are, who they wish others to think they are, and who they are not. This can take place at an individual level or at a group level, the collective identity. This research again confirms that the music MMC sings will indicate who they are or who they wish to be relating to their denominational ties, their ethnic ties, and their desired identity in the American church.

In describing a multiethnic church identity, Arellano (2007) studied a multinational Hispanic Pentecostal church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She asked how the church described its collective identity and how that influenced their worship. She discovered that a common pan-Latino identity, *Latinidad*, enabled this multinational Hispanic congregation to successfully worship together in unity, despite their cultural differences, in two significant ways. *Latinidad* allowed them a means to interact and a culturally relevant way to express their faith.

Her explanation of *collective identity* described the varying identities influencing the participants. She discovered their spiritual identity (One body in Christ) was most influential on this multiethnic church and their Hispanic identity the second most influential. Her observations yielded a somewhat different explanation of the church's collective identity than the participants' description of their identities. I have noted this ambivalence of explanation can occur in research.

Additionally, Arellano's research location was of particular interest to me with its similar denomination and geographical area, and its being a multiethnic church—a multinational Pentecostal church in the greater metro Minneapolis area. Also, her writing methodology influenced mine as research well constructed and clearly communicated.

This last study on identity was referenced above regarding unity and diversity. Here I discuss its relevance to multiethnic church identity. From Marti's (2005) study of Mosaic church in Los Angeles, ethnic identity does not primarily define this multiethnic church. Instead, a common identity has been constructed based upon the broader mission of the church. Marti described this innovative, young adult, artistically oriented, multiethnic congregation and its Americanized culture. Ethnic identity at Mosaic can be emphasized or de-emphasized by the leaders as the social situation warrants. At Mosaic, group identity is reshaped through focusing on their common corporate mission to reach Los Angeles with the message of Jesus Christ. Respondents refer to themselves as "dedicated followers of Jesus Christ." Religious identity is consistently placed higher in importance than ethnic identity. This *ethnic transcendence* is accomplished through five significant practices, thus creating a new shared identity:

1. Common confession as follower of Jesus
2. Common rite of baptism by immersion
3. Common commitment to membership
4. Common meal in the Lord's Supper
5. Common character in attitudes and perspectives

*Summary:* Literature on identity relates to ethnic identity, religious identity, and the music connection. The multiethnic church's corporate identity emerges as it focuses on its common mission in Jesus Christ. My research will take this a step further to discover how worship music affirms ethnic identity in multiethnic churches and how it contributes to a unified collective identity in Christ.

## RESEARCH ON INCLUSIVE WORSHIP

This next body of research discusses inclusive worship. Multiethnic churches face the important issue of worship style. In Rosser's description of First Baptist Church of

Flushing, NY, a multiethnic/multi-congregational model, he refers to God-centered ethnically diverse worship as a necessary reality of the multiethnic congregation (Rosser 1998, 192). Several researchers term this *inclusive worship* (Deymaz 2007, Garces-Foley 2007, Hawn (2003) and Yancey 2003). Hawn connects the terms *diverse worship* and *inclusive worship*, “I assume that culturally diverse worship is an act of inclusion in which one’s own cultural biases have value but must at times be modified for the sake of others’ biases as all extend their boundaries” (Hawn 2003, 12).

Deymaz (2007) sets a foundation for his discussion on inclusive worship in the prayer of Jesus Christ, that His church must be one (John 17), to the church at Antioch where the believers understood that Jews and Gentiles alike were part of the church (Acts 11). He then describes seven core commitments, including a spirit of inclusion, which is vital for a multiethnic church to communicate convincingly that all people are welcome.

Deymaz indicates inclusion begins with worship and advocates incorporating prayers in other languages and varying the worship format as a means of developing inclusive worship. This is done by varying the songs sung, the way they are sung and who is participating. “In so doing, a church will expand its perspective and, in the process, experience a bit of *heaven on earth* [italics mine], as diverse people learn to worship God together as one” (Deymaz 2007, 110). Deymaz emphasized the multiethnic congregation must be led to realize inclusive worship, specifically music, means it is not about the individuals’ preferences and comfort.

Hawn (2003) discusses strategies and philosophy on practices of moving towards diversity in worship. His model pictures a spectrum of congregations moving toward culturally conscious worship, from cultural uniformity on one end, to cultural partnership



on the other end. He then discusses four areas that influence meaning in cross-cultural worship—sense of time, nonverbal cues, written versus oral traditions, and relationship between the leadership and the congregation. He follows with four case studies of culturally diverse Methodist congregations in the greater Dallas, Texas area. He follows with advice to the worship leader of the diverse congregation, titling him/her the enlivener of worship, who “is an artist, skillfully crafting the worship mosaic each week” (Hawn 2003, 127). Hawn concludes with ten worship strategies for a congregation seeking to make its worship more inclusive.

Yancey (2003), speaks to the issue of inclusive worship in multiracial [his term] churches. He gives seven vital principles that must be present in the multiracial church with inclusive worship listed first. He does not specifically indicate it is the most important principle, but he does indicate without inclusive worship, the church must carry out the other principles extremely well, “because inclusive worship is a vital tool for creating a tolerant racial environment.” He emphasizes, “An inclusive worship style signals to the visitors and members of the church that it is not dominated by any one culture” (Yancey 2003, 76–77). Although worship is not only music, altering the music style is a common method of the multiethnic church to indicate inclusiveness. His following observed methods used to facilitate inclusive worship were included in my worship and music survey to multiethnic churches.

1. Write their own songs: In this model everyone in the congregation started at the same point—all had to learn new songs, but they were written by their own people.
2. Recognize the songs of the different racial cultures: Include 1–2 songs from each ethnicity in each service.

3. Rotate the nature of worship style: One Sunday use Hispanic songs, one European, etc.

He concedes that leaders tend to shy away from varying the music for fear it will be presented poorly or be considered ethnotourism. In my conclusion, I suggest ways to avert these possible pitfalls. Worship musicians trained in ethnomusicology could dynamically aid worship leaders of multiethnic churches.

Yancey lists diverse leadership as his second principle for developing an inclusive worship style. By adding diverse leadership to a church staff, inclusive worship could be planned more easily. These two principles appear to work hand in hand. Yancey's first two principles—inclusive worship and diverse leadership—emerge as invaluable when facilitating multiethnic worship. As a result, I included these concepts in my survey questions to metro area multiethnic churches to determine how they valued these principles of inclusive worship.

Several authors (Christerson & Emerson 2003, Corbitt 1998, Deymaz 2007, Hawn 2003, Liesch 1988, and Rhodes 1998) refer to multiethnic worship as eschatological in its reflecting a bit of *heaven on earth*. When Christerson and Emerson conducted their study of the costs of belonging to a multiethnic congregation, they discovered relational and spiritual costs (referenced above). However, most parishioners still indicated the joys outweighed the difficulties. One Hispanic member said, “It’s a *taste of heaven on earth* [emphasis mine] to have people from all these different backgrounds worshipping together. I feel like my worship of God is so much more pure and authentic when I look up there and see all of the nations represented” (Christerson and Emerson 2003, 176).

Heavenly worship as revealed in Revelation 5—all nations bowing before God on his throne—becomes our model for the multiethnic church. Beginning with principles of worship, Liesch (1988), expounds upon five worship models throughout Scripture, the fifth being the Revelation model—worship in heaven. Mr. Liesch gives five confirmations that the book of Revelation provides about worship.

1. The priesthood of believers—all believers are priests, in contrast to Old Testament worship. All are inside the worship space, not outside as with the Temple. Worship is inclusive of all nations, tribes and languages.
2. Worship of Jesus Christ—prayers and thanksgiving are directed to Christ. He is the central focus of worship.
3. Worship as response—the great events of Revelation are punctuated with shouts of praise and Hallelujahs. Prompters exist to elicit response. All bow in worship to God in response to promptings of worship leaders.
4. Vocal and instrumental music is confirmed in Revelation. Whereas the Gospels and Epistles do not specifically reference instrumental music in worship, Revelation speaks of harps given to the victorious.
5. Costly worship—martyred saints are given a place close to the throne and a mission—serving and worshipping God continually (Liesch 1988, 235–237).

Liesch's principles of Revelation worship (referenced above) allow application of this Revelation worship model to the multiethnic church, which becomes a microcosm of heaven's worship on earth.

1. Its inclusivity—the multiethnic church welcomes all nations, tongues, and peoples inside the worship space, participating and worshipping God.
2. Christ is the unifier of the Church and worship is focused on Christ. When the multiethnic church centers on its oneness in Jesus Christ and its mission to tell others about Christ, it experiences unity of purpose in the midst of diversity.
3. Worship is response. The pastor and/or worship leader prompts the congregation to worship God and they respond in worship.

4. Singing and instrument playing fill a significant role in heavenly worship. Likewise, at a multiethnic church one may hear a variety of instruments depending on the cultures of the ethnicities present.
5. Heavenly worship is costly as indicated by the martyrs present. Multiethnic worship, worshipping together across cultures, is costly as it moves people beyond their comfort zones. Each must give up something of their worship style to worship in harmony together with others in the multiethnic church. It is often costly relationally, especially to the minority group present.

*Summary:* Literature on inclusive worship was particularly vital to my research by delineating the components I must observe in the multiethnic church setting—diverse worship leadership, styles and genres of songs, and other inclusive worship practices. I particularly analyzed the eschatological aspects present in MMC’s worship, thus giving worshipers a glimpse of heaven on earth.

#### RESEARCH ON THE AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS OF MY RESEARCH

The following resources informed my research of the majority ethnic people group worshipping at Minneapolis Multicultural Church as to their experiences in their native land, their immigrant presence in this metro area, and cultural musical characteristics that influence their worship. Prior to my internship/research at MMC, I read a moving account of one family’s miraculous escape from Liberia during the 1990s Liberian Civil War. William Nyanue (2005) in *Witness: The Hand of God in the Liberian Civil War* delineated the background of the civil war, enhancing my compassion for the suffering experienced by Liberian immigrants who attend MMC. Between 1800 and 1830 several freed slaves were repatriated to West Africa to the area that is now Liberia. These colonists formed cities on the coast and became the ruling class of Liberia. The natives living in the villages were not even recognized as citizens until 1904. The underlying

disparity between the Americo-Liberians and the Indigenous Tribal peoples led to inequities that festered for years. When civil war erupted, many of the ruling class of people were killed.

Nyanue emphasized that Liberia needs to seek national reconciliation so violence does not erupt again. He explained three possible approaches: 1) Amnesty approach, 2) Judicial Prosecution Approach, or 3) Truth Commission explaining each option. This history prepared me to understand and converse with the immigrants at MMC.

Mayer (2008) indicates the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota metro area contains the largest Liberian immigrant population in the US. He compiles research data to aid the Christian church in our changing culture to strategically plan for reaching our communities with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The following facts relating to the majority people group at Minneapolis Multicultural Church broadened my understanding of this people group in this geographical area.

1. The Twin Cities has the largest Liberian population in the US.
2. Liberians are the 5<sup>th</sup> largest immigrant/refugee group in the Twin Cities after Hispanics, Hmong, Somali, and Asian-Indian.
3. 89% of our 677,200 internationals are unreached with the message of Jesus.
4. The Twin Cities has over 150 multiethnic/multicultural churches out of 3,040 total churches. Mayer sent me a mailing list of 100 multiethnic churches to contact for my survey.
5. Liberians arrived since 1990 and settled in the areas of Columbia Heights, Brooklyn Park, Fridley, Brooklyn Center, Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Regarding the music of these African immigrants, Chernoff (1979) articulated characteristics of African music described in his study of African musical idioms. He reaffirmed what I had learned in an African Drum Ensemble class during my

ethnomusicology studies. First, African music is responsive. The talking drums create a *conversation*, as he terms it. This call-and-response form is a major characteristic of African music. Second, Africans' rhythmic sense is of higher importance than their melodic sense when compared to European American music. Chernoff discussed the polyrhythmic character of the music and the seeming lack of a downbeat. Thirdly, Africans make music in a social setting. Music requires participants—dancers. I particularly noticed this at a local International Music Festival. Each group of dancers performed. However, when the African Ensemble began, they asked the audience to join them and dance along to their music.

*Summary:* Liberian immigrants arrived in the US as hurting people who had fled the war in their homeland. They have formed a substantial population in this metro area, a people group meriting study. At the multiethnic church they attend, I would expect the music of their native land to influence their worship in the US with its rhythmic sense and participatory nature.

#### LITERATURE INFORMING THE DESIGN OF THIS MIXED METHODS STUDY

Several quantitative and mixed methods studies aided me in determining the best method to study MMC and the greater metro multiethnic churches of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. I settled upon mixed methods research as it combines the benefits of both a case study approach and a survey, with the possibility of gathering more data across a broader population. It necessitates the researcher becoming familiar with both qualitative and quantitative inquiry. Several previously referenced studies have modeled the case study approach (Arellano 2007, Becker 1998, Christerson and Emerson 2003, and Chong 1998). I now point to quantitative studies and mixed methods research.

Following that, I will reference textbooks particularly helpful in informing both qualitative and quantitative inquiry.

In Parker's quantitative study (1968) of "The Interaction of Negroes and Whites in an Integrated Church," he measured the number of interactions in a congregation of whites and blacks, the time spent in interacting and the seating patterns to determine how integrated is First Baptist Church, Chicago, Illinois. He determined the church was remarkably racially integrated, especially regarding its most active members and, I might add, considering its time in US history.

Although an older study, I noted the author's procedures to determine accuracy and reliability of his study, how he determined who the "most active" members were, and his ratios, graphs and conclusions. His use of quantitative data provided him with the type of information I sought at MMC. I therefore concluded it would be important to observe where the congregation sat and who they conversed with in order to determine if the congregation was well integrated, thus revealing their development of a unified collective identity as a multicultural church.

A more recent quantitative congregational study, "The National Congregations Study: Background, Methods, and Selected Results" (Chaves 1999), researched worship plus other general congregational practices in a national sample of congregations. I particularly noted this research methodology, specifically methods for obtaining samples and for questionnaire construction. Chaves gathered information on 1480 congregations in the US. He obtained a random sample of congregations by asking a random sample of persons to name their place of worship. Researchers ended up contacting 1236 congregations and data was collected in a one-hour interview with a key informant (80%

response rate). Results were listed in several areas with worship practices being one area. It was discovered two activities—singing by the congregation and sermon/speech—were the practice in nearly 100% of congregations. These were directly observable practices that revealed congregational culture. This model familiarized me with quantitative inquiry.

The following two studies model mixed methods research. Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000), in their mixed methods study of religious centers in Houston, Texas, carried out 13 case studies of religious centers in this third largest gateway city for receiving immigrants into the US. The teams of researchers conducted extensive research in the community gathering data through mapping the churches' locations, a telephone survey, a study of service coalitions serving immigrants in the city, focus groups composed of religious leaders plus women and teenagers, and field research in 13 congregations over 18 months. This mixed methods design modeled many types of inquiry and data collection showing that both quantitative and qualitative data yielded more complete research results.

Ebaugh and Chafetz reported their research by dedicating a chapter to the ethnography of each religious center and then followed up by discussing larger thematic issues covering various topics that emerged in the research. Additionally, each chapter covered the same themes in the same order so the topics could be compared in the conclusion.

Finally, Ebaugh and Chafetz include two multiethnic Houston congregations in their study—one a Catholic church and one named Southwest Assembly of God. Of particular interest to me was Southwest Assembly of God being my research site adheres



to this denomination. That chapter modeled components for writing my case study such as topics including congregational history, church structure, ethnicity and identity, the role of women, and the second generation.

In another Gateway Cities research of worship communities, Foley and Hoge (2007) combined methods in their 3-year study of immigrant worship communities in the Washington DC area. Their procedure included both quantitative and qualitative research. They conducted a survey of 200 immigrant congregations followed by ethnographic studies of 20 worship communities. Their expressed reasons state, “We also wanted to combine the depth of ethnographic study with the quantifiable data that survey research could provide” (Foley and Hoge 2007, 16). Through mixed methods, the authors were able to extract themes and draw generalizations across the broader range of religious organizations.

Foley and Hoge presented their findings in the form of thematic chapters. In one particularly useful chapter, “Who We Are,” they report that worship communities help immigrants “connect with and adapt to American society” by:

1. Offering them a refuge or a haven
2. Nourishing their difference
3. Helping them to be part of the wider society in which they live (Foley and Hoge 2007, 11).

Both these resources began with quantitative research first. I determined it would be more valuable for me to proceed with the case study first and immerse myself in the multiethnic church culture to discover themes. These themes would be followed up with a questionnaire across the broader population of multiethnic churches to gain a larger picture and determine the extent of worship music practices.

Two textbooks on designing mixed methods research (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003, Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007) yielded valuable direction on necessary facets of mixed methods studies. These authors guided my thought processes at each step and gave examples of mixed methods usage. The Creswell and Plano-Clark literature aided me in selecting the pragmatic worldview to fit my research as it orients the topic towards practice and “what works,” with a goal being to discover what inclusive worship methods are being utilized in multiethnic churches. Additionally, I discovered the four-week survey procedure from Creswell (2003). This literature was helpful in my selecting the triangulation research design as the best approach to bring together the strengths of each research method and merge the two sets of data. Further, I discovered the importance of validating the data and how to explain that process in chapter three, Procedures. These steps enabled me to determine mixed methods research would afford the best approach to answering the research questions.

*Summary:* Literature has indicated demographic change is occurring in the US precipitating congregational change and the need for the development of multiethnic churches. Further, inclusive worship practices recur as a common theme of the multiethnic congregation, signaling that all ethnicities are welcome. Multiethnic churches achieve unity by emphasizing their common religious identity.

This study will explore how worship music contributes to a multiethnic congregation’s development of a unified identity in Christ. It will further examine inclusive worship in multiethnic congregations across the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area, with specific focus on how a multiethnic congregation characterizes worship representative of heaven’s worship.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURES

#### FOCUS OF THE STUDY

In this study, I explored and surveyed worship practice and music in a multiethnic church in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota metro area. In particular, I focused on how the Minneapolis Multicultural Church Assembly of God (MMC) constructed worship with emphasis on the role of worship music in this thriving multiethnic Christian church.

I visited MMC over a three-month period, February–April of 2008. During this period, I observed worship services and praise team rehearsals and conducted interviews with church leaders and members. Further, I surveyed multiethnic churches across the Twin Cities metro area regarding attitudes and practices of worship in May, 2008 to determine factors contributing to an inclusive worship style in multiethnic churches.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

I chose a two-phase, concurrent mixed methods research design as the most appropriate method for this study to overcome the possible weaknesses in collecting just one type of data and to answer the research questions more completely. In the first phase, a case study of Minneapolis Multicultural Church, my primary data collection procedures included participant observation, direct observation, interviews, and recordings. My goal was to document their worship style, their worship music, and the congregation's participation in worship. Because I was not currently attending a multiethnic congregation, I sensed the need to immerse myself in the church culture so I could build

relationships with the people to understand them better and identify the issues they face thus gaining an appreciation of the *emic* viewpoint.

The second phase of this study was a survey of 34 multiethnic pastors and worship leaders from the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota metro area. This survey allowed me to increase my understanding of the greater multiethnic church community, while collecting a larger amount of data regarding worship music practices in the larger population of multiethnic churches. This approach also enabled me to determine the distribution of themes across the overall population of multiethnic churches, to test the concepts surrounding inclusive worship, and to answer more completely the research questions.

#### RESEARCH SITE

Over the past two years, during background study of my research topic, I visited ten ethnic and multiethnic churches (one occasion each) in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area observing worship practices and participation by the congregations. Through my contacts in the Assemblies of God denomination, in which I serve as music pastor, two churches emerged as possible research sites. The first was located in an urban area. The second church (MMC), which served as the focus of this case study, was located in the transition zone between suburban and urban Minneapolis. I chose MMC as the site for this case study due to its successful transition from a mono-ethnic to a multiethnic church, which occurred shortly after the surrounding neighborhood experienced dramatic demographic changes, including the arrival of a large number of African immigrants.

During my conversations with former and present attendees of MMC, I learned that the church's worship music reflected its own unique blend of contemporary songs and traditional hymns in addition to songs composed by local writers. I was very intrigued by what had happened in the church's music program. In addition, I was acquainted with the pastor, the music director and the former music director, so I knew that I already had a greater chance of gaining access to the community. Finally, I was interested to discover how a church that began as primarily Anglo, with associated European American worship practice and music, had evolved into a multicultural church while still under Anglo leadership.

At MMC, I interviewed Carol, the present music director, and Sue, the former music director. Additionally, I conversed with Pastor Schmitt, who is also Carol's husband. I spoke with worship team members and with the head usher captain, Bill. Further, I met with eleven church members in a focus group meeting after church one Sunday I worshiped at MMC.

## FIELDWORK

My initial contact with MMC took place in fall 2007, when I spoke with the minister of music about the study. She was interested in the concept, and after exchanging several e-mails, arranging logistics, and coordinating schedules, I was able to meet with her for the first time in February 2008. I obtained verbal approval to conduct my research at MMC at that time, including permission to talk with leaders and worshipers, and also to observe worship services and rehearsals on-site. She also gave me some basic background information about her own personal story, and the story of how MMC had made the transition from a mono-cultural/mono-ethnic church to a multiethnic

church. She also shared some of the challenges and frustrations that accompany such a significant change.

I received official written approval to conduct the research following that meeting in February 2008. Together we specified a three-week period in March–April 2008 as the timeframe for my internship and research project. At the interview, she had mentioned that the third Sunday of the month was a designated “Missions Sunday,” where many attendees in the congregation wear traditional garments and sometimes the Africans sing their native music, so I included this date on my research schedule.

Unfortunately, I had to contact the music minister again to request permission to change the initial dates we had chosen, because Easter took place in March 2008 and I could not take leave from my own church responsibilities to visit MMC until after Easter. She agreed that we could change the dates, and we selected the three Sundays: March 30, April 13, and 20, with the corresponding Wednesday rehearsal night between.

During our conversation, I discovered that another researcher had interviewed the pastor approximately a year ago, while studying church growth. The music director confirmed that the researcher had not done on-site research of the congregation at that time. I determined not to peruse his writings so as not to influence or bias my own potential findings.

My interview with the pastor was limited because of his recent surgery. However, the music director—his wife—answered the interview questions for me. When I questioned something she did not know for certain, she did ask him the details and reported back to me.

I also interviewed Sue, the former music director of MMC. Her tenure spanned the first few years of MMC's process of evolving into a multiethnic church. Still serving in a leadership position at MMC, Sue was able to provide a wealth of insight.

On the Sundays that I attended MMC, I observed and participated in Sunday school classes and the worship services. I audio-recorded two services and video-recorded the music in the third service. Additionally, I purchased audio recordings of the service from the church. The recordings done by the church itself included the sermon only. I also talked with congregants before and after worship services to get better acquainted with them.

On the second Sunday, I met with eleven worshipers after the service in the adult Sunday school classroom and introduced my research topic to those present, distributing consent forms and short worship surveys. The music minister had suggested she contact the persons whom I could interview about the worship music of the church. She said that would result in greater participation than listing it in the bulletin. She already had developed relationships with the people and they would respond to her personal request.

That Sunday, she introduced me to the congregation and publicly announced those she contacted should meet me after the service. After the service, I discovered we would all be in the room together at one time, so I would not be able to interview each person individually. This then became a focus-group research strategy. Later I worked to supplement the answers given in the group by also talking with those persons on an individual basis after the Wednesday night rehearsal and the next Sunday's service. The eleven who participated represented a cross-section of the congregation by age, ethnicity,

and length of time attending MMC. I distributed a prearranged set of questions adapted from Brenda Aghahowa's *Worship Rating Form* (1996).<sup>2</sup>

In addition to rating music and worship at their church, this questionnaire presented to worshipers did include an open-ended question in which they were to write about their most spiritually meaningful worship service at the church. I gained quotes from their answers and coded them for themes.

### DATA COLLECTION

During the occasions I visited MMC, I recorded two Sunday services on my small Sony IC recorder. Each service I sat in a different section of the church to observe worshipers. The third Sunday, I recorded the African ethnic music and the youth choir's songs on my camcorder. Throughout the services, I took copious notes in a small notebook. The information that I included in my field notes included names of songs used in the service, names of participants, the highlights of the sermon, and general observations of the multiethnic church.

When I met with worshipers in the Sunday school room on the second Sunday, they were each given a consent form and the one-page Questionnaire for MMC Worshipers. This form was adapted from Aghahowa's (1996) suggested worship rating form. The last question yielded responses about worshipers' most memorable or spiritually meaningful worship service at the church that I compiled into a list of quotations. Aghahowa suggested this form as a "...basis for dialogue about worship at your church" (1996, 193) in her research on appreciating the worship form of the other. It

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<sup>2</sup> Brenda Aghahowa provides this form as helpful in starting conversations about worship music in your church. Permission to use was granted in her book and also online (see Appendix B, Questionnaire for MMC Worshipers).



seemed an appropriate tool to use in a church where the majority ethnic group was a different ethnicity than the pastoral and music leadership.

I also collected material evidence from Minneapolis Multicultural Church, including worship bulletins and written history of the church. Additionally, I collected order of service listings from each Sunday's service with song titles included.

In the second phase of this concurrent study, I developed a survey instrument in the form of a "Worship and Music Survey for the Multiethnic Church" (see Appendix C) to collect data from a larger number of multiethnic churches across the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota metro area. I developed the survey instrument to measure attitudes towards multiethnic worship, practices of the inclusive church, how diverse the worship leadership is, and worship planning techniques of the multiethnic church. My purpose was to generalize from one multiethnic church to the greater population of multiethnic churches in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. A survey also allows for a greater amount of data to be collected over a shorter period of time.

I developed the survey instrument from my review of survey tools, collected during the review of literature; including one question based upon Yancey's observed inclusive worship-planning techniques (2003, 74-75). The survey instrument for worship leaders was prepared slightly different from the survey instrument for pastors because of the different roles each fulfilled. I obtained a master list of multiethnic churches from John A. Mayer of City Vision, a non-profit research organization that develops resources for strategic planning and vision to reach the growing diversity of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. The list of 100 churches was derived from my email to Dr. Mayer requesting a list of the multiethnic evangelical churches in the Twin Cities area for this

project and my addition of a couple churches to the list from informal contacts of people familiar with my research.

On May 1, 2008 I sent a letter to the 100 pastors and 100 worship leaders in those churches, stating the goals of the research and alerting them a survey would be mailed to them in a few days. I asked for their response. A week later I sent the second letter including the survey along with a stamped return envelope. The pastor of my church gave permission for me to use the church address and telephone number for all correspondence. The third week I sent a follow-up postcard to all pastors and worship leaders telling them “thank you” for their returned survey and reminding those who had not completed a survey to take a few minutes to do so. The final week of May, I initiated telephone calls to pastors of churches from the list who had their own building and who I was uncertain whether they had returned their survey. These phone calls resulted in additional responses.

During the survey process, sixteen unopened envelopes were returned because they had an incorrect address or an explanation that the church had moved. I ultimately received worship surveys from 16 pastors and 20 worship leaders, a response rate of 19.6%. The survey was anonymous, although some respondents did include their return address. Thus, I could not determine if some churches had completed the survey for both the pastor and the worship leader. I sent the survey to both pastors and worship leaders in hopes of getting the greatest number of responses and to afford me the possibility of comparing results between the two sets. The final completed survey was returned in mid-June. I separated the data for each group of respondents into two charts—one for pastor responses and one for worship leader responses.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### **Minneapolis Multicultural Church**

I transcribed my field notes, interview records, and recordings of worship services. I also analyzed the worship interview forms, comparing the ratings given by the worshipers for worship and music in their church. I calculated the average score for each question, while the individual worshiper comments were entered into a separate document. During the data analysis process, common themes emerged. Each theme was given a unique code, which was used for all of the various forms of data collected during the research process.

The triangulation process included not only comparison and analysis of the various types of data that I collected, but also member checking, which occurred when notes from interviews were submitted back to the music director, former music director, and usher for their input. These suggestions were incorporated into my findings.

### **Worship and Music Survey of Multiethnic Churches**

I commenced data analysis of the worship and music surveys. Two worship leader surveys were disallowed from analysis because their surveys revealed that the churches were not multiethnic, with 90% or more of the congregation of one ethnicity. The data from the pastor and worship leader surveys was compiled into an Excel document. With the help of a marketing researcher, the data was coded and imported into SPSS, one of the most common software programs for analyzing statistical data. Statistical data, including percentages and means, was examined as to its meaning and application. Although the low sample size prevents generalization of results to the broader population

of multiethnic churches, one question yielded statistically significant data and another approached significance. The database was further examined as to how it addressed each research question. Answers to open-ended survey questions were coded for themes.

Finally, the two sets of data were compared; and research questions were answered using both qualitative and quantitative data. Observations and conclusions were written.

### VALIDITY

Validity in mixed methods research is specifically addressed in mixed methods textbooks. Creswell defines validity within a mixed methods context as, “the ability of the researcher to draw meaningful and accurate conclusions from all of the data in the study” (Creswell 2007, 146). Potential difficulties can surround the using of different individuals in the different data collection periods or that two types of data do not address the same research question. I have addressed the issue as follows:

- In the case study, I studied one multiethnic church as to its worship practices, interviewing the worship leaders, worshipers and talking with the pastor. Then in the survey, I gathered data on many multiethnic churches from their pastor and worship leader as to their worship practices.
- I submitted the case study report to MMC and received an affirmative response regarding the accuracy of my portrayal of this multiethnic congregation.
- In both sets of data, I coded themes in similar fashion.
- I addressed the research questions with both sets of data.
- The results would have been less comprehensive without both sets of data.

### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The privacy rights of each individual participating in this study were respected at all times. Initially, I contacted MMC for permission to study multiethnic worship.

Permission was granted by the music director on behalf of Pastor Schmitt and the church. The goals of this research were communicated to each participant in written form along with consent forms to the worshipers and leaders interviewed. Pseudonyms are used for each participant, and all identifying information about the participants and the church itself (including the church name) have been changed or removed. Written documentation was submitted back to the present music director and the former music director for their approval vis-à-vis privacy rights.

In the survey phase of research, the rights of each individual church, pastor and worship leader were also respected. A letter accompanying all surveys sent stated that “only aggregate data would be presented” in the findings and that “no one would be identified or identifiable.”

#### RESEARCHER PERSPECTIVE

I am cognizant of the fact the case study phase of research commenced at an Assemblies of God church, which is the denomination in which I presently serve as music pastor. I have endeavored to be very observant during research data collection to ensure that I do not assume things to be true without asking for clarification. At the same time, the topic and location is of special interest to me because it relates to my denomination and my geographic area. By including the second research phase of data collected from metro multiethnic churches, I have attempted to overcome any possible denominational bias by surveying many multiethnic churches across Protestant denominations.

## CHAPTER IV

### MINNEAPOLIS MULTICULTURAL CHURCH

This chapter will cover Minneapolis Multicultural Church's community, its denominational roots in the Assemblies of God and its core beliefs. Further, I will explore the church's history and the heritage of its primary immigrant people group. Finally, I will describe its worship service format.

In chapter five, I will cover my interviews with participants at MMC, the focus group participants, and the musical content of the services from my experiences observing and worshiping with the congregation. Conclusions will be drawn concerning the inclusive worship character of MMC and its reflections of heavenly worship.

### MMC AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The geography, demographics, community population shift and the current situation define present day Minneapolis Multicultural Church. MMC sits off a boulevard in a northern community of the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota metro area. When the church began in the 1950s, the congregation met in a school. As the church grew, the congregation purchased the present site and dedicated the sanctuary in 1970.

MMC began as a European American church with European American leadership in what was then considered a Minneapolis suburb. The community has changed steadily over the previous two decades. Now MMC's community is considered the transitional zone between urban and suburban regions of the city. In the 1990s, the proportion of ethnic groups rose by 20%. By 2000, the city's ethnic groups, composed of primarily African Americans and Asians, were nearly one-third of the city's population

(Metropolitan Council 2008). This change in community make-up precipitated a parallel change in the MMC congregation.

People from diverse ethnic backgrounds began attending MMC as the neighborhood changed. According to Carol, the music director at MMC, people from the surrounding community visited periodically for a service but did not make it their church home. The transformation began approximately eight years ago when a young Liberian woman attended MMC. This Liberian woman was a member of the Assemblies of God denomination in her native country, so when she moved to Minneapolis she attended MCC, which was the Assemblies of God church in her new community. In Liberia, the Christians were told the white American church would not accept them. To her surprise, when this woman attended MMC, the congregation accepted and welcomed her. Then she brought her husband. When her parents moved to Minnesota, they attended the church also. Her father was very well-respected in the Liberian immigrant community, having served as a government official in his native country. By his leadership skills, he gathered Liberians together at the church, and over a period of time, a community of Liberians formed at MMC. Now this church, that originally was predominantly Caucasian, is 75% native African including some African Americans and 25% Caucasian and Asian.

## ASSEMBLIES OF GOD DENOMINATIONAL ROOTS OF MMC

### **Foundation in Pentecostal Movement**

MMC belongs to the Assemblies of God fellowship, whose roots stem from Pentecostal revival meetings in the early twentieth century (Olsen 1998, 16). During

services at Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission in Los Angeles, California, believers in Jesus Christ were ‘filled with the Holy Spirit’ and spoke in other languages reminiscent of Pentecost, as found in Acts 2.<sup>3</sup> The twentieth-century Pentecostal revival emphasized this Holy Spirit baptism as a spiritual experience to be sought following personal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The revival transcended religious, ethnic and national backgrounds with William Seymour, an African American former student of evangelist Charles Parham, leading the Azusa Street mission.

### **Core Beliefs of MMC**

The Assemblies of God, one of several denominations to emerge from this Pentecostal revival, formed as a fellowship in 1914. Sixteen statements of faith establish Assemblies of God core beliefs.

1. WE BELIEVE...**The Scriptures are Inspired by God** and declare His design and plan for mankind.
2. WE BELIEVE...**There is only One True God**—revealed in three persons...Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (commonly known as the Trinity).
3. WE BELIEVE...**In the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ**. As God's son Jesus was both human and divine.
4. WE BELIEVE...though originally good, **Man Willingly Fell to Sin**—ushering evil and death, both physical and spiritual, into the world.
5. WE BELIEVE...**Every Person Can Have Restored Fellowship with God Through 'Salvation'** (accepting Christ's offer of forgiveness for sin). [1 of 4 cardinal doctrines of the A/G]
6. WE BELIEVE...and practice two ordinances—(1) **Water Baptism by Immersion** after repenting of one's sins and receiving Christ's gift of salvation, and (2) **Holy Communion** (the Lord's Supper) as a symbolic remembrance of Christ's suffering and death for our salvation.
7. WE BELIEVE...**the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a Special Experience Following Salvation** that empowers believers for witnessing and effective service, just as it did in New Testament times. [1 of 4 cardinal doctrines of the A/G]

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<sup>3</sup> The day of Pentecost occurred 50 days after Jesus Christ was crucified (on the Jewish Passover), and coincided with the Hebrew Feast of the Harvest celebration. On the day of Pentecost, the 120 believers “were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues” (Acts 2:4, NIV).



8. WE BELIEVE... **The Initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is 'Speaking in Tongues,'** as experienced on the Day of Pentecost and referenced throughout Acts and the Epistles.
9. WE BELIEVE...**Sanctification Initially Occurs at Salvation** and is not only a declaration that a believer is holy, but also a progressive lifelong process of separating from evil as believers continually draw closer to God and become more Christ-like.
10. WE BELIEVE...**The Church has a Mission** to seek and save all who are lost in sin. We believe 'the Church' is the Body of Christ and consists of the people who, throughout time, have accepted God's offer of redemption (regardless of religious denomination) through the sacrificial death of His son Jesus Christ.
11. WE BELIEVE...**A Divinely Called and Scripturally Ordained Leadership Ministry Serves the Church.** The Bible teaches that each of us under leadership must commit ourselves to reach others for Christ, to worship Him with other believers, and to build up or edify the body of believers—the Church.
12. WE BELIEVE...**Divine Healing of the Sick is a Privilege for Christians Today** and is provided for in Christ's atonement (His sacrificial death on the cross for our sins). [1 of 4 cardinal doctrines of the A/G]
13. WE BELIEVE...in **The Blessed Hope—When Jesus Raptures His Church Prior to His Return to Earth** (the second coming). At this future moment in time all believers who have died will rise from their graves and will meet the Lord in the air, and Christians who are alive will be caught up with them, to be with the Lord forever. [1 of 4 cardinal doctrines of the A/G]
14. WE BELIEVE...in **The Millennial Reign of Christ** when Jesus returns with His saints at His second coming and begins His benevolent rule over earth for 1,000 years. This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel and the establishment of universal peace.
15. WE BELIEVE...**A Final Judgment Will Take Place** for those who have rejected Christ. They will be judged for their sin and consigned to eternal punishment in a punishing lake of fire.
16. WE BELIEVE...and look forward to the perfect **New Heavens and a New Earth** that Christ is preparing for all people, of all time, who have accepted Him. We will live and dwell with Him there forever following His millennial reign on Earth. 'And so shall we forever be with the Lord!' (Assemblies of God 2008).

### **Local Beginnings**

The twentieth-century Pentecostal movement spread from California to the Midwest. Prayer groups meeting in Minneapolis heard of the revival and wrote a letter to the Los Angeles mission. In 1907, two men were sent from Los Angeles to Minneapolis to speak to the prayer groups. As a result, many people were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The first Minneapolis Assemblies of God church, Minneapolis Gospel Tabernacle, was founded in 1921 and called its first pastor. By 1922, emerging Assemblies of God churches throughout the five state region formed the North Central District with Rev. F. J. Lindquist elected as superintendent (Christ's Church 1991).

### **Mission Work**

Overseas missions work resulted immediately from the twentieth century Pentecostal revival. Assemblies of God leaders believed that evangelism formed the twentieth-century church's reason for being and that the Holy Spirit would empower them to bring the gospel around the world. At the second denominational General Council meeting in November 1914, the Assemblies of God committed itself to "the greatest evangelism that the world has ever seen" (McGee and Rodgers, 2008). By 1919, Assemblies of God missionaries were working in Africa, as documented by reports that, "donations of nearly fifteen hundred dollars had paid for a saw mill to facilitate the construction of adequate housing for missionaries in Liberia" (Blumhofer 1989, 291). These beginnings formed the denominational basis of the Assemblies of God immigrants who found a new church home at MMC.

### **THE HISTORY OF MMC**

MMC was founded by a European American pastor in 1956 and the first service was held in a school, with 27 persons attending. The congregation soon purchased property and in 1959 dedicated an educational unit. The church continued to grow and the congregation dedicated the present sanctuary in 1970. When the founding pastor left to start a new church in 1979, Pastor Bob Schmitt, who had been the associate pastor,

became the senior pastor. Subsequently, the church constructed a Family Life Center, including a gymnasium.

Pastor Schmitt has continued to serve MMC as pastor to the present. His wife, Carol, directs music at the church and family members participate on the worship team and as sound technician.

Over the past decade the church demographics have transformed from primarily European American to a majority ethnicity of African immigrants, many having emigrated from Liberia. The European American attendance has decreased, however the European Americans who attend have welcomed the immigrants. Several native Africans now serve in leadership at MMC as prayer counselors, teachers, ushers, worship team members, and one serves on the deacon board.

#### THE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY AT MMC

The present Liberian wave of immigration to the United States followed the Liberian Civil War of the 1990s when many Liberians fled their country for fear of their lives. Some of these immigrants settled in New York. Many Liberians have now settled in the greater Minneapolis area, which contains the largest population of Liberians in the US (Mayer 2008).

A clan of Liberians moved to Minnesota from New York. They brought their cluster of relatives to MMC and a strong core of Africans formed in the church. When other Liberian immigrants moved to the Minneapolis area, the leader referenced above encouraged them to attend MMC as well, and many did so.

As this core of Liberians increased, the Board of MMC decided that a Liberian should serve on the church board. Mr. David Conner, the former Liberian government

leader mentioned earlier, was placed on the board in 2001. He proved to be very helpful in visiting parishioners with the pastor and by interpreting for Liberian members.

Unfortunately after six years, he unexpectedly passed away, creating a vacancy in the church. Subsequently, a man named Emmanuel was selected to fill the Board position.

Sons and daughters of the immigrants participated in worship at Minneapolis Multicultural Church. Several served as ushers and as singers in the youth choir.

Although no European American teenagers attended MMC, some students appeared of multiethnic heritage. Children of immigrants and of European Americans attended MMC.

Three young lady worshipers participated in the focus group discussed below and responded to my interview questions. They differed from first generation immigrant worshipers in their music preferences. They behaved respectfully and dressed nicely.

#### WORSHIP SERVICES AT MMC

My observations at MMC focused on observing its typical worship service format to determine its inclusive worship style, particularly leadership on the worship team and also the songs selected for worship. These songs spoke of the role worship music filled at MMC. I observed the congregation's response in worship, noting the unique identity of this multiethnic church. Additionally, I observed special worship occasions, in particular how worship at MMC displayed characteristics of heavenly worship as revealed in Revelation 5: inclusive, Christ-centered, worship as response, instrumental and vocal music given high priority, and costly worship.

## Typical Worship Service Format

From my observations of worship services at MMC, at 10:30 AM on Sundays the worship team stepped to the platform and began playing. One of the singers, whether male or female, invited the congregation to join in worship and the singing began. The worship team consisted of three or four male and female singers with microphones in hand, with music stands in front of them. Three or four instrumentalists accompanied the singing, including a drummer, and guitarists and Carol, the music director, playing a Petrof grand piano. She gave the musical introductions to the worship songs. The pastor added his saxophone virtuosity to the mix. He stood on the left side of the platform at the pulpit, in his place of leadership and authority, playing his instrument. In addition to the worship team's accompaniment from their location on the platform, two ladies in the congregation, one seated and one standing, played tambourines. One of these ladies appeared of African descent and the other of European American descent.

Music held a prominent role in the worship services of MMC. Worship music connected the entire first half of the service as a finely woven thread. Worshipers entered the sanctuary to recorded contemporary Christian music (CCM). The service itself usually opened with a song or medley of songs that facilitated the congregation clapping. This was either an originally-composed song ("Ev'rybody Praise the Lord" or "Lead Me to the Rock") written by Pastor and Carol; or a selection of contemporary Christian music such as "That's Why We Praise Him." Then worship continued with two more contemporary songs, "You are Holy" and "Blessed Be Your Name." The team led the congregation in singing each song two to three times. After approximately three songs, the offering was introduced and the singing continued. The offering song, most often a

gospel-style hymn, included verses and a chorus (“Such Love” or “I Know Whom I Have Believed”). These were familiar to me, having grown up singing them in an Assemblies of God church. There were few breaks in the music as the worship team continued singing and playing their instruments.

The musical thread continued after the offering song when another contemporary worship song such as “Your Name” led into prayer time. Prayer team members moved to the altar and faced the congregation. Pastor Schmitt invited the congregation to come and receive prayer. Music continued to play the entire time. Each of these four or five prayer team members, mostly of African descent, touched the person’s forehead with a bit of oil, called ‘anointing.’ Then, each one placed their hand(s) on the person’s head or shoulder and prayed aloud for the person. Team members prayed aloud simultaneously for each one who came for prayer as music continued to fill the sanctuary in a blending of audible worship and prayer. The pastor prompted the worship team and congregation to sing the song again several times until the prayer time was completed.

After the pastor preached the sermon, the congregation sang a concluding song, either a hymn or a song in call-and-response style. Then prayer concluded the service and we exited the sanctuary to contemporary Christian music playing on CD. The service lasted nearly two hours. Music played a visible, prominent role throughout by connecting the parts of the service and undergirding prayer and worship.

The congregation participated by singing, clapping to the rhythm of the songs, and by saying “Amen” or ‘Hallelujah” in response to the pastor or person praying. Some congregants raised their hands during singing or prayer and some swayed to the worship songs. At first when I observed the services from my pew, I concluded the congregation

was not participating as much as I expected. However, later upon transcribing my recordings of the worship services, I discovered considerably more verbal response of “Amen” and “Hallelujah” and more clapping than originally observed.

*Summary:* The typical worship service included men and women in leadership, although few multiethnic members were involved on the worship team during my research. Worship band instruments accompanied singing with the addition of two tambourines from the audience. Pastor’s skillful saxophone playing filled a notable role. Worship music connected the first half of the service and song selections included primarily contemporary Christian music and hymns. The congregation responded in worship following their pastor’s promptings, particularly surrounding prayer for needs and at the concluding song.

### **Special Occasion Worship**

During research at MMC, I observed special worship occasions including communion (*alt.*, the celebration of The Lord’s Supper), extraordinary prayer times, and Missions Sunday. These experiences illustrated characteristics of MMC that reflected heavenly worship, particularly the responsive nature of MMC’s worship; they revealed aspects of the church’s collective identity through its communion songs; and they demonstrated practices MMC had incorporated to affirm ethnic diversity through music.

The responsive nature of worship at MMC was particularly visible one Sunday at the conclusion of the service. The pastor stepped down from the platform to the floor level and led the hymn, “Great is Thy Faithfulness.” As Pastor Schmitt repeated the chorus, he encouraged the congregation to worship and praise the Lord. The congregation responded with audible “Amen” and “Hallelujah” to the pastor’s words. The people lifted

their voices in praise and Pastor Schmitt led the chorus again with an extended ending. The people again responded with audible “Hallelujah!” This worship moment occurred as the congregation responded to their pastor’s promptings. A focus group participant reinforced this occasion citing meaningful worship as, “the musical worship when our pastor comes down to minister and pray for the congregation.”

Another worship occasion also reinforced the responsive character of MMC’s worship. Additionally, it illustrated the significant role of instrumental music in the service, the role of the pastor in prompting the congregation to worship, and the important role of the ethnic prayer team’s leadership. Prayer time the day of the focus group had proven especially memorable. When prayer team members came forward and those desiring prayer were invited to come, Pastor Schmitt began playing saxophone to the song, “He is Able.”

He is able, more than able to accomplish what concerns me today.  
He is able, more than able to handle anything that comes my way.  
He is able, more than able to do much more than I could ever dream,  
He is able, more than able to make me what He wants me to be (Noland & Ferguson, 1988).

Slowly people began responding to the invitation to come and receive prayer. Prayer team members prayed aloud, vociferously and intensely, for each person who came. This continued for several minutes as Pastor Schmitt and the worship team played and sang while audible prayers and praise ascended from prayer team members and people gathered at the altar. Pastor Schmitt stopped playing to encourage the congregation to respond.

I tried moving along, but the Lord instructed me somebody today needs to know that He is able to handle your circumstances. The great God in heaven says you are the apple of His eye. He is able. I don’t know if we are going to sing it for a



half hour. God wants to meet someone today through this song. Until we get the message that God is able we are going to keep singing it.

More congregants responded that day, than other Sundays I observed, to come forward for prayer at the promptings of their pastor. The singing and beautiful saxophone music moved me that day also. A focus group participant additionally affirmed this as a meaningful worship experience, “today with all the anointing and prayers.”

A third worship experience revealed aspects of the church’s collective identity and occurred during ‘communion’ at the end of service one Sunday. Pastor Schmitt again moved down to the sanctuary floor level, this time to lead the communion commemoration. Four African communion servers passed the wafers and the tray of individual cups to the congregation. Pastor led the congregation in singing “The Old Rugged Cross.” After Pastor prayed and instructed the congregation to take the wafer and cup, he led the congregation in singing “Amazing Grace” and “Grace Greater than our Sin.” I particularly observed that this immigrant-style multiethnic congregation sang confidently on these well-known hymns common to evangelical and Pentecostal churches, more strongly than on other songs. Carol had said, “The Liberians may not know all the hymns we know or exactly the way we know them, but they like hymns.” Possibly due to early missionary work in their native country and their knowledge of the English language, these common Christian hymns have formed part of their worship heritage. A worshiper from the focus group later confirmed this occasion as meaningful worship, “We regularly have singing that moves me. During communion we have extended worship often. This is a blessing.”

*Summary:* Worship during the communion commemoration was referenced as effective and included the singing of common Christian hymns useful in unifying this multiethnic congregation.

An additional special occasion included Missions Sunday worship that demonstrated practices MMC had incorporated to affirm its ethnic diversity through music. The congregation worshiped to ethnic African worship songs that day. When Sue first introduced me to her Liberian friends at MMC, we talked about their singing and they asked if I would video tape them. I agreed! Carol, the music director, had asked them to sing on Missions Sunday. Bill, the usher captain, talked to them each Sunday reminding them we were looking forward to their singing on Missions Sunday. Finally, the time arrived. Several African ladies, beautifully dressed in native garments and head pieces, processed up the aisle singing, clapping and dancing. As they processed they encouraged others to join them at the front near the altar. Although initiated by a Liberian lady, other African ethnicities joined them in celebration, including a man and the youth choir members, who were scheduled to sing next in the service. They sang, danced and clapped while playing the saa-saa (their beaded gourd rhythm instrument) and the tambourine. This continued for several minutes with one voice lifting up over the others in a call-and-response style. Lyrics to one song sounded like the English words, “We will praise our God.”

From the back of the sanctuary where I videotaped, Bill, the head usher, while clapping in rhythm to the song, excitedly told me, “We needed this!” A large majority of the congregation also responded by clapping rhythmically. I observed more corporate response at this worship experience than I had witnessed on other worship singing. It was

a powerful moment when the immigrants expressed their African roots and the congregation affirmed their worship.

When the ethnic African music finished, the second generation followed. Eight female teenagers positioned themselves on the risers in a semicircle format with their director on the floor level. This was only half of the youth choir who had rehearsed the previous Wednesday. They began singing their two songs, accompanied by CD background tracks. They sang “Show Us Your Ways,” the slower song first, then the upbeat song, “This is the Way We Praise Him.” They moved energetically in rhythm, clapping in time, “This is the way we praise Him, clap your hands.” The students stepped in towards the circle and then out in time to the music, smiling as they sang. The audience clapped in rhythm on the second (upbeat) song. Again I noticed much corporate participatory response from the congregation on these songs.

Several factors indicated the important function this Missions Sunday experience afforded MMC. The leaders’ continued emphasis to the African immigrants that ‘we want to hear you sing your song’ indicated its importance to the leaders. The congregation, by their enthusiastic response to the singing, placed their approval upon it. Additionally, Bill’s reiterating over and over, “We needed this. We used to have more of this in the past, we needed this!” showed that he felt this an intrinsic part of who this congregation is, its identity as a multiethnic congregation.

*Summary:* Worship occasions such as prayer time re-emphasized the responsive nature of worship at MMC. The communion commemoration displayed the hymn genre as important in unifying the congregation through its lyrics and tunes a majority of the congregation knows and sings confidently. African worship on Missions Sunday

reaffirmed the ethnic identity of the immigrants also unifying this multiethnic congregation through corporate response.

## CHAPTER V

### PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS AT MMC

This chapter covers my interviews with participants at MMC, the eleven focus group participants, and the musical content of the services from my experiences observing and worshiping with the congregation. Conclusions will be drawn concerning MMC's inclusive worship character and its reflections of heavenly worship.

#### LEADERS

Leaders of MMC were interviewed because their choices affected the nature of the worship service, particularly by determining who served on the worship team and songs selected for worship. Through the leaders I could discover MMC's level of inclusivity in worship. The choices and changes worship leaders made in altering the worship service to reflect its ethnic diversity would signal a level of inclusivity. Additionally, I met with worshipers to determine how inclusive they viewed their church to be and their sense of satisfaction with worship and music at MMC. I discovered a high level of satisfaction in every category except one, the use of men and women of the various cultures in worship leadership. Further, I discovered several cultural frustrations MMC faced which contributed to the relational costliness of being multiethnic. All these factors reflected the Revelation worship characteristics of this multiethnic congregation. In this following section, I report the results of my interviews with various church leaders and members.

### ***Pastor Bob Schmitt***

Pastor Schmitt has served MMC as pastor for nearly 30 years as the primary spiritual authority. My conversations with Pastor Schmitt, although limited due to his recent surgery, sought to discover what he had done to facilitate inclusive worship. He led the worship service each Sunday and preached the sermons, except for one of the services I attended. Ultimately, I discovered he primarily filled the role of worship prompter in this multiethnic church.

As I observed Pastor Schmitt in the worship services, three aspects emerged as vital in explaining his role: his musicianship, his worship prompting (Liesch, 1988), and his preaching. Pastor Schmitt played saxophone, skillfully and beautifully. One Sunday particularly, the saxophone began the first verse of “He is Able,” leading the congregation into prayer time. As the researcher, I was moved deeply that Sunday by the beautiful soulful saxophone sound and the lyrics reminding me, and the congregation, that God is the One to call upon as He is able to do more than we can imagine. Pastor Schmitt played his instrument from a visible location of authority, the pulpit, and facilitated the worship flow by his playing.

Pastor Schmitt also composed worship songs. His song, “Ev’rybody Praise the Lord,” was arranged ten years ago, around the time the immigrants started attending. Therefore I questioned whether it was composed in response to a particular need he sensed, for example to facilitate the congregation entering into worship. This would help me discover whether he and the music director had changed the worship music much in response to changing demographics. I was told there was no special purpose behind the song, just that the Lord gave it to him. Although the song was not purposefully composed

for that function, it served particularly well as a “call to worship,” an opening praise song facilitating congregational participation through singing and clapping due to its upbeat rhythm and 4/4 timing.

Pastor Schmitt filled the role of worship prompter at MMC when he encouraged the congregation to worship the Lord. This occurred during singing and prayers when he encouraged the congregation to repeat a song again and again. This responsorial characteristic of worship at MMC was also particularly evident at the service conclusion. During concluding prayers, Pastor questioned the congregation with, “Hallelujah?” and they responded to him with verbal, “Hallelujah!” Then he said, “Amen!” and the congregation responded with, “Amen!” This not only added a sense of spontaneity to the service, it also fit the congregation’s participatory nature and Pentecostal identity. It additionally demonstrated the pastor’s personality as he filled his role of worship prompter eliciting congregational response.

The pastor’s third role at MMC was preaching. He was preaching through a series on Revelation, which was noteworthy considering my research focused on multiethnic worship representative of heavenly worship. Pastor Schmitt seemed to connect with the immigrants’ experiences when he preached, “It’s a hostile world. People are so angry. It seems justice is not served. But God’s payday is certain.” From Revelations 12, he referenced the centrality of Christ when he spoke of the war in heaven and the conflict surrounding who will control the universe and who will be worshipped—God or Satan. The congregation listened attentively as he preached.

*Summary:* From my interview and observations of the pastor, few changes emerged as methods of facilitating inclusive worship. Through his leadership at MMC,

however, several characteristics of heavenly worship were particularly evident in this multiethnic church—the priority of instrumental music, the centrality of Christ in worship, and worship as response.

### *Carol Schmitt*

Carol Schmitt, music director at MMC, served as my key contact. Her perspective was vital in gaining an understanding of MMC's steps to inclusive worship. I hoped to discover changes she made in MMC's worship style since the immigrants arrived, in other words, her attempts to affirm the ethnic identities of the cultures present. What emerged was her succinct explanation underlying her choices of worship music plus several frustrations she experienced in the church's transformation to multiethnic.

A trained musician, she functioned well with a wide variety of church music styles. Carol valued orderly, planned worship insisting that worship team members must attend rehearsals. She prepared the list of songs prior to rehearsal and wrote parts for the singers and musicians. The worship team rehearsed on Wednesday prior to Sunday, at which time she taught them new songs by playing parts for the singers. This aspect was important because it revealed the dichotomy between the diverse ethnicities of the congregation. Whereas the music director valued planned worship and the necessity of attending rehearsals, the majority ethnic group had difficulty attending rehearsals and valued more spontaneity. This may explain why I observed few multiethnic members on the worship team, although after reviewing this chapter Carol told me three African members were on maternity leave and would return shortly.



Her attempts to incorporate the African cultures into the worship leadership, one method of developing an inclusive worship style, referenced the frustrations experienced in the process:

One of the Liberian ladies is on the praise team and others have been on the praise team. I offered to learn some of their music, but I never received any words so that did not work. Commitment, on the part of the immigrants, to come to rehearsals and to teach Sunday school is much different than on the part of the Americans. And, their concept of time is so different from ours.

Carol recognized the need for African cultural music. She facilitated the development of a Liberian Praise Team for Liberian gatherings and events such as funerals. Incorporating them into the worship service on a regular basis, according to my observations, was less common. "On occasion the Liberians would get up and sing. Someone would lead in singing. It was not necessarily planned or organized," Carol stated.

Her frustrations resurfaced in another misunderstanding that arose over the kids' choir Christmas music. When nothing was being done by the person assigned, Sue, the former music director, stepped in to help with preparations at the last minute. Carol indicated, "The difficulties are so great and they are where you least expect them." These frustrations displayed the costliness of being a multiethnic church, where one group must 'fill in the gaps' when commitment levels differ.

When I asked Carol if she had changed the worship style since the church became multiethnic and how she selects music for worship, she put it succinctly, "Basically, the younger people enjoy contemporary music and the older people enjoy hymns. So we use both. The African songs are too hard to learn..." Carol attempted to incorporate African

worship styles into the worship service, but she found the difficulties too great to accomplish on a regular basis.

*Summary:* Carol attempted to develop ethnic leadership on the worship team with some success. Her choices in worship music most often fit the Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) and hymn genres. She made attempts towards including African styles of music in worship, but indicated the difficulties were too great. Ethnic African music was included in Missions Sunday services occasionally and in the African Sunday school class.

In effect, Carol was saying she had made little change in music of MMC's worship since becoming multiethnic. Despite what she articulated, my observations noted she included two songs representative of the call-and-response style plus the youth choir songs of the black gospel genre which would be considered inclusive style songs as discussed below. Drawing upon my observations of MMC's congregational singing, I concluded Carol understood the music her congregation enjoyed and could sing. Further, the misunderstandings and frustrations she experienced in the transformation process reinforced the costliness of multiethnic worship.

### ***Sue***

The former music minister carried an historical perspective having served MMC as music director when it began transitioning to multicultural. Sue has continued to participate on the worship team as a singer. Her responses shed light on the responsive worship nature of the immigrants' worship and reaffirmed the worship songs they know and enjoy. She also spoke of the cultural misunderstandings experienced at MMC over

the past decade, which again spoke of the relational costs involved in multiethnic worship.

When I attempted to discover if the African members were engaged in worship and responded in a participatory manner to the music, I asked if there were any particular songs to which the Liberians started spontaneously dancing in worship. She said it might possibly be a Jewish-style song. I assumed she meant a rhythmic worship song in a minor key, accompanied by tambourine, clapping, and dancing. Incidentally, only one similar song was included in worship during my time at MMC and no dancing ensued. Sue talked of the upcoming Missions Sunday when the Africans would sing “their” music. I indicated my desire to witness dancing in the worship service as a spontaneous response, not planned as I assumed the Missions Sunday presentation would be. “Actually their dancing is never planned, it is always spontaneous,” Sue replied.

On issues of inclusivity in worship leadership, in agreement with Carol, Sue also said the worship team included more varied ethnic peoples in the past but two women are pregnant and have chosen not to be on the team at present. Regarding inclusive worship songs, Sue wished there could be more integration of worship styles—more Africans teaching their songs. From her statements and from my observations, we agreed the congregation does know and love the hymns and sang confidently during communion.

Sue spoke of cultural differences MMC had bridged such as differing understandings of time and concepts of congregational participation in a church event. She indicated open dialog through the African board member was a key: “We talked about how easy it could have been to allow this cultural difference [regarding a wedding]

to cause hurt within the congregation. Rather, people understood and there were no hurt feelings.”

*Summary:* Cultural misunderstandings and frustrations have accompanied relational experiences at MMC indicating the costliness of the ethnicities working together. Sue played a key role in fostering relationships between the ethnicities. She also clarified the spontaneous nature of the immigrants’ worship and their love of hymns.

### ***Bill***

Conversations with the head usher centered on his affirming the immigrants to sing “their” song and the cultural differences experienced working with diverse peoples. Bill played a key role at MMC as usher and bus driver, transporting worshipers to the services. He also sang on the worship team periodically. Bill displayed a genuine kindness and compassion for the varied peoples of the congregation.

Bill filled a vital role by encouraging the African singers each week to sing “their song” on Missions Sunday. Being careful to not step beyond his authority, he nevertheless reminded them over and over. When they did sing, he beamed with pride and affirmed them with clapping in rhythm to their songs. As the Africans sang that Missions Sunday, he told me, “We needed this. We haven’t had this for a while. We needed it!” His response indicated how important he viewed this worship experience of traditional African singing for this multiethnic congregation. Bill later referenced that my presence as researcher in this immigrant-model multiethnic church served as a catalyst prompting the Africans to sing ‘their’ song.

Bill also spoke of the frustrations experienced in working together with diverse peoples, in particular the differing concepts of time and commitment. This was

particularly evident on Missions Sunday when the youth choir was scheduled to sing. As I videotaped the traditional African worship, Bill leaned over and half laughing said, “The youth choir director has just arrived!” The service was nearly half over.

*Summary:* Bill understood the frustrations over cultural differences. Yet, he appreciated and served the diverse peoples at MMC. It was extremely important to Bill that he reaffirm to the immigrants the importance of expressing themselves through traditional African worship on Missions Sunday.

*Summary of Interviews:* Interviews with each of the leaders highlighted vital themes. The pastor filled his role as worship prompter and modeled the importance of music in worship, both instrumental and vocal. He was particularly adept at encouraging the responsive aspects of MMC’s worship. Carol articulated how she chose songs for worship. Hers was a limited definition of inclusive worship. She included songs chosen along generational lines, with African ethnic worship less common in the typical worship service. Sue desired to see more African ethnic songs in worship, but agreed hymns were very familiar to the immigrants. Bill encouraged affirmation of ethnic identity by repeatedly encouraging the immigrants to sing “their song.” Revelation worship themes emerged—worship is response and multiethnic worship is costly.

## FOCUS GROUP WORSHIPERS

Whereas the choices leaders made in worship reflected the worship identity of the entire congregation and much of the worship music at MMC did not reflect Liberian traditions, I met with worshipers in a focus group to determine if worshipers at MMC sensed inclusiveness through the worship service. How they rated the services as to their

level of spiritual meaning and sense of unity gained in worship was examined through a questionnaire at a focus group meeting.

Carol invited twelve worshipers to a focus group meeting. Eleven worshipers met with me in a Sunday school classroom to give response on a questionnaire regarding their satisfaction with worship and music at Minneapolis Multicultural Church (Appendix B).

Members of various ethnicities and ages from teenagers to adults participated. Worshipers included those attending MMC varying time lengths from those attending a short time span (less than one year) to those attending ten or more years. The largest number of worshipers in the focus group attended MMC for 3–10 years. All eleven worshipers indicated they attend MMC nearly every Sunday.

These eleven worshipers were asked to rate four aspects of *worship* at their church on a 1–10 scale, with 10 being most satisfied.

- Is well put-together
- Is of appropriate length
- Nourishes me spiritually
- Utilizes men and women of the various cultures in worship leadership

Additionally, they were asked to rate *music* in their church's worship in seven areas, also rating each on a 1–10 scale.

- Has spiritual power or “anointing”
- Helps me enter into the presence of God
- Helps me sense I am part of the Church Body
- Uses instruments I enjoy hearing/playing
- Includes a good selection of hymns
- Includes a good selection of contemporary songs
- Includes a good amount of congregational singing

On the final question, which was open-ended, they were asked to recount their most memorable or spiritually meaningful worship service at their church. Several of those responses have been quoted throughout this chapter.

All focus group participants awarded all questions an average of 9.45/10 or higher except two questions. “Worship is of appropriate length” averaged 9.36/10 and “Worship utilizes men and women of the various cultures in worship leadership” averaged 8.7/10, the lowest rating of all questions. This lowest rating of 8.7/10 in the category of worship leadership confirmed my observations that a low percentage of multiethnic persons participated on the worship team compared to the large percentage of African immigrants in the congregation.

In spite of this, worship music at MMC “helps me enter into the presence of God” was rated the highest of all questions, with an average of 9.8/10. And, music’s ability to unify the congregation at MMC by “help[ing] me sense I am part of the Church Body,” was close behind with an average of 9.7/10. We conclude that this focus group exhibited a high level of satisfaction with worship and music at their church, sensing spiritual meaning and inclusion that they functioned within the worship space of the congregation (Liesch 1988).

Second generation worshipers rating worship and music in their church were identifiable due to their similar comments about youth camp. Notably, they all rated worship and music with particularly high averages—all 10’s. In other words, they were very pleased with worship music in their church. Several factors may have influenced the second generation’s top ratings of worship. It appears that the music director has connected with their present identity as Americans, in an American church, and this most likely figures significantly into their satisfaction with contemporary Christian music.

It was noted that few written comments from focus group participants to the open-ended question referred to music from different cultures in the worship services. This

could be explained by the fact the focus group met the Sunday prior to Missions Sunday, the day Africans sang and worshiped with traditional music. It would tend to indicate less importance was given to ethnic worship by the immigrants themselves. One worshiper did cite MMC's fiftieth anniversary celebration when "the worship was amazingly well-organized, multiculturally rich and inclusive songs of different decades and was richly blessed by the two or three hours of worship as we thanked God for the many blessings this congregation has received from him."

*Summary:* One can conclude worshipers recognized the worship team should be more inclusive with more men and women of the various cultures participating. Notwithstanding, worshipers believed strongly they were included and that music at their multiethnic church meets their spiritual needs, holds a high spiritual value for them, and brings unity to the congregation. It was unclear whether worship at MMC fulfilled worshipers' expectations of being truly multiethnic.

## CONGREGATION

At MMC, I observed the congregation as a means of determining their inclusiveness of the various ethnicities and their participation in the worship services. By observing their involvement in the worship service, how they responded to their pastor and how they interacted, I could determine characteristics of their worship that exemplified heavenly worship, specifically whether they all functioned within the worship space and whether worship was responsive.

The church was filled one-half to two-thirds with people sitting comingled throughout the sanctuary. Africans and non-Africans sat in each section and greeted each other easily. A specific inclusive worship practice that played a key role at MMC,



although not involving music, was the extended Welcome/Greeting time. “Greeting time was an outgrowth of Pastor encouraging the people to not just be friendly, but to be friends,” Carol indicated. It functioned well as a culturally appropriate way to include the diverse ethnicities. Most worshipers walked around the sanctuary and shook hands with as many people as possible, greeting them. This continued for at least five minutes. Cecilia, of multiethnic background, has attended MMC for twenty-six years and sang on the worship team one Sunday. She told me the congregation is truly friendly to one another, not gossiping nor just pretending to be friends.

The congregation participated by singing, clapping to the rhythm of the songs, and by saying “Amen” or “Hallelujah” in response to the pastor or person praying. They particularly responded on Missions Sunday to the worship of their fellow ethnic congregants, some joining the celebration at the altar and others clapping in rhythm from their pew. In the typical worship service, some raised their hands during singing or prayer and some swayed to the worship songs. As common in any congregation, there was less than 100% participation and one Sunday the congregation remained relatively quiet. Generally, however, the congregation of MMC did follow the promptings of their pastor and participated as he encouraged them.

*Summary:* From observation of the congregation, all were welcomed and included in worship. Worship as response was particularly evident surrounding prayer times and on Missions Sunday during the African ethnic worship and the youth choir’s singing.

## MUSICAL CONTENT

Worship service music at MMC mostly represented sacred song genres of contemporary Christian music and hymns of both traditional and gospel style. Ethnic African worship was heard only on Missions Sunday and in the African Sunday school class. Thus, worship music on a 'normal' Sunday basis was mostly Americanized with a smattering of inclusive songs in call-and-response form. Only one ethnic rhythm instrument was included.

### *Contemporary Christian Music (CCM)*

The younger generation influenced the song choices the music minister made each week. When Carol stated, "the adults love hymns and the teens love contemporary music, so I use both," she considered their preferences as she chose worship music. Although students participated in the traditional African worship experience, their verbal responses declared their preference for contemporary Christian music.

One Sunday, I informally questioned several teenage girls after service. I asked, "What is your favorite worship song?" One said, "Shout to the Lord." Another said, "The song that has 'behold he comes.'" (That would be "Days of Elijah.") These students confirmed what Carol had said, "The young people like contemporary songs." Another student responded, "The last one we sang today." That had been "Victory Chant," in a call and response style. Either she could not think of another song or she validated my theory that call-and-response was an appropriate style to incorporate into this immigrant-type multiethnic congregation. By her song choices, Carol fostered the second generation's sense of connection to their church; hopefully it will retain them in the church.

Generally, the congregation of MMC knew contemporary Christian songs. One Sunday as a second offering was received, the contemporary Christian song, “Here I Am to Worship” was played on DVD. Spontaneously, the congregation began singing it.

*Summary:* The CCM genre was sung most commonly at this multiethnic church. Carol viewed it as important to the second generation worshipers enhancing their participation in their American church.

### ***Hymns***

Hymns were the second most common music genre included at MMC. Some important worship moments at MMC were mediated by the singing of hymns, as addressed previously. At a service’s conclusion, the pastor led the congregation in singing “Great is Thy Faithfulness.” The building of the song with repeated endings and the pastor’s promptings of “Amen!” yielded response from the congregation, “Amen,” “Hallelujah” and verbal prayers. Additionally, the communion commemoration included a set of hymns focused on Christ and his death on the cross. It was clear from observing the congregation, they sang confidently as if they knew these hymns well. Carol’s words were confirmed, “They know the hymns. They may not sing them all exactly the way we do, but they know the hymns.” Her statement, spoken of the immigrants, applied also to the European American members, who knew the hymns also.

*Summary:* Hymns served an important function of mediating worship occasions. They especially served to connect the cultures as worship music commonly familiar to the majority.

### ***Gospel music***

Several hymns at MMC could be subcategorized as gospel hymns with their focus on personal conversion experience and their strophic structure of verses and a chorus. “Such Love” and “I Know Whom I Have Believed” were commonly sung in Assemblies of God churches in past decades and would tend to reinforce MMC’s heritage and denominational identity.

Further, the black gospel music genre was visible at MMC. When the youth choir sang, although they had given prior verbal preference to contemporary music for worship, their selections fit the black gospel music genre. They sang “Show Us Your Ways,” the slower song first, then the upbeat song, “This is the way we praise Him.” They moved energetically in rhythm to the music, clapping in time. The congregation responded with enthusiastic clapping. Their director had selected this CD from a local Christian bookstore.

*Summary:* Gospel music connected MMC to their denominational heritage. Black gospel music resonated with second generation immigrants by expressing participatory worship and inviting the congregation to respond.

### ***Ethnic Music***

Occasionally, one could hear Ethnic African music in the worship service. As described above, on Missions Sunday ladies processed down the aisle to the altar singing and dancing accompanied by saa-saa, tambourine and clapping. Two or three worship songs followed in call-and-response style, one with the lyrics, “We will praise our God.” A voice led and the others followed. The congregation participated by clapping rhythmically in general affirmation of its fellow members.

Every Sunday, however, in the African Sunday school class one can hear African music sung by the immigrants. Downstairs in a corner of the fellowship hall approximately ten older Liberian men and women were seated around a table for Sunday school. They were singing *a cappella* in heterophonic texture with a lady's voice rising over the top of the men's voices. It was sung in the Krahn Liberian dialect, I discovered later. Most of the song was one phrase repeated over and over, accompanied by rhythmic clapping.

It was difficult communicating with these older immigrants because they spoke slang English that Carol called Liberian English. They agreed to allow me to tape their singing and proceeded to explain the song's meaning. One gentleman said, "If we come to God, He will come to us." I asked, do you mean the scripture, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you?" (James 4:8 NKJV) They agreed and began singing what sounded like, "Aye-o, Aye-o..." in a call-and-response style of music. Pick-up beats started the song and then three claps followed as the other singers joined in response to the song leader.

*Summary:* Ethnic music in the African Sunday school class afforded first generation immigrants a place of comfort and belonging as they transitioned into their new country and new worship culture. Liberian worship music was included occasionally on Missions Sunday and the congregation responded by affirming its African members.

### ***Call-and-response style***

Two worship songs at MMC could be categorized in the call-and-response form. One was of the contemporary Christian music genre, "You are Holy," and the other a 1980s song, "Victory Chant" (Vogels 1985). These two worship songs included elements

that could bridge the diverse ethnicities represented in the church. These two songs functioned in the call-and-response song form with leaders singing a phrase and the congregation responding by repeating the same phrase. From my observation, it was especially effective to incorporate this stylistic element of African music into the worship of this multiethnic church. A teenager reinforced this when she referenced the “Victory Chant” as her favorite worship song.

*Summary:* Call-and-response could be one effective song form used to increase the inclusivity of the worship service. This form not only illustrated an inclusive worship practice, it simultaneously indicated the responsive nature of worship at MMC as discussed below.

### *Lyrics*

Song lyrics sung at MMC focused overwhelmingly on Christ. Lyrics included, “On Christ the solid rock I stand” and “That’s why we praise Him” to “The Lord is my Light” and “Wonderful, Merciful Savior.” Communion hymns also carried the focus to Christ’s death on the cross. These lyrics would be expected at a Christian church. However, it was notable that every song at MMC carried strong lyrics guiding the worshiper to Christ. Other non-musical worship forms, such as prayers and sermons, additionally reinforced the centrality of Christ. MMC clearly reflected heavenly worship in this aspect of Christ being the central focus of worship.

*Summary:* MMC sang contemporary Christian music most often as songs commonly heard in the Christian culture. CCM resonated with second generation worshipers and signaled their American identity. Hymns were the second most common song genre at MMC facilitating unified worship because of their familiarity to first

generation immigrants and the other ethnicities. Gospel music and the call-and-response song form helped to signal a level of inclusive worship at MMC; and ethnic music, though included only occasionally, functioned as a means for the congregation to affirm its diversity.

## SUMMARY OF MMC

### **Assemblies of God Identity**

MMC's denominational identity was inferred through talking with Sue, the former music director, through songs chosen for worship, through worship practices, and in educational literature. It was not articulated often, however.

Sue told me of the immigrants, "they were Assemblies of God in Liberia, they will be Assemblies of God in America" to indicate their strong denominational fellowship ties and their commitment to this congregation, the Assemblies of God church in their neighborhood. Exactly how important their denominational identity remained to the congregation was only visible in some songs chosen by leadership for worship as referenced above, in the denominational literature taught in the adult Sunday school class, and in the open method of congregational praying. At the same time, the worshipers did not refer to their denominational ties often. I would suggest their Assemblies of God identity formed an underlying worship view they commonly assumed.

### **Reflective of Heavenly Worship**

MMC exhibited characteristics of heaven's worship as revealed in Revelation—Christ-centered, inclusive, worship as response, instrumental and vocal music given high priority, and costly worship. Surprisingly, the pastor was preaching a series of messages

from the book of Revelation when I attended for research. He said, “God is doing some amazing things. He is bringing us together as various cultures to worship Him. In Revelations we read, ‘I saw a great multitude in heaven from every tribe, tongue and language bow down in worship to the Lamb’” (Rev. 5:9 NIV).

Worship at MMC was Christ-centered as I observed in Pastor Schmitt’s sermons, in worship song lyrics, and in prayers. Pastor Schmitt preached on the war in heaven and he reminded the congregation, “The war in heaven is over who will be worshiped—God or Satan...The time will come when Christ will resume his control.”

All genres of worship songs consistently focused worshipers towards Christ. From “Your Name” of the CCM genre, to “I Know Whom I Have Believed” of the gospel hymn genre, the service was clearly Christ-focused. Even the official prayer for needs prayed by a deacon board member or by the youth pastor clearly reinforced the focus: “Lord, we come to you this morning, and we know that you are able to meet any need...Lord, we know that you have all the power. God, I pray for the leadership in this church, that we would continue to focus on You...”

MMC exhibited a welcoming inclusive attitude of the varied ethnicities. Cecilia, the multicultural worship team member referenced above, had attended MMC for 26 years and told me, “The people are genuinely friendly here, not gossips. They seem to get along.” Women and men were equally involved in worship leadership, whether on the prayer teams or in ushering. From observing its worship services, it appeared all ethnicities functioned ‘within the worship space’ of this multiethnic church sharing in aspects of worship and leadership (Liesch 235, 1988).



Regarding the inclusive nature of MMC's worship team leadership, the worship team was minimally visibly representative of the congregation's multiethnic make-up during my research. The music director indicated multiethnic members had served on the worship team and would be returning to the team after their babies arrived. Inclusive worship leadership was included regularly into other non-musical leadership roles.

Two worship songs at MMC included elements that visibly signaled inclusive worship. These two songs functioned in the call-and-response song form with leaders singing a phrase and the congregation responding by singing the same phrase. This form not only illustrated an inclusive worship practice, it simultaneously indicated the responsive nature of worship at MMC as discussed below. However, including African ethnic music into the worship service occurred only on Missions Sunday.

Worship was response at MMC. The congregation echoed the Pastor's promptings, "Hallelujah!" The people responded, "Hallelujah! Amen!" The congregation's responsorial characteristic particularly emerged during prayer times when their response formed a crescendo of simultaneous praying and praise. Additionally, two worship songs referenced above fit a call-and-response song form with worship leaders initiating and the congregation answering. Worship as response was particularly evident at MMC.

Worship at MMC illustrated the priority given to instrumental and vocal music in worship. Pastor's saxophone playing from his place of authority, standing at the pulpit, along with his promptings to sing the song again, added his affirmation of the vital role given music. The worship team took time and effort each week to prepare. The team included three or four singers harmonizing in three or four-part harmony each Sunday

along with guitarists, a drummer and Carol at the piano. Worship music filled a prominent role as it connected the entire first half of the service.

MMC experienced many frustrations working through cultural differences between ethnicities and races. Paradoxically, this also afforded glimpses of heavenly worship. Heavenly worship is costly, as Liesch indicates (1998). In Revelation worship, martyrs who have paid the supreme cost by giving their lives for Christ are given a key role in heaven. On a smaller scale, multiethnic worship is costly. MMC experienced over and over the difficulties of working together with very diverse people. Each leader spoke of the cultural differences and their attempts to understand these differences surrounding time, commitment, ownership, and cultural traditions. Sue teased her friends, “Now is this African time or American time?” Other misunderstandings arose over use of the instruments and who was coordinating children’s choir music.

Sue recounted her experience when cultural misunderstandings arose over an African wedding the majority of the non-African members did not attend because they had not been ‘invited!’ The European American segment of the congregation did not understand that when the Liberian community has a special occasion, the entire community is invited whether or not they receive a formal ‘invitation.’ While Sue and the African deacon served together on an anniversary committee, it opened dialog for them to talk about the wedding issue. They discussed how easy it would have been to allow cultural differences to cause hurt within the congregation. Rather, through dialog they built understanding and there were no hurt feelings. The church later hosted a reception for the couple to compensate for the misunderstanding.

*Summary:* The pre-existing congregation, of necessity, made some changes to welcome the immigrants. The costs involved caring enough to foster friendships with diverse people, taking time to communicate, trying to understand the other culture, giving up some of their own ways, or leaving this multiethnic congregation. The immigrants had to fit into this American congregation, thereby giving up some of their worship practices in the process. Multiethnic worship has been costly as experienced at MMC.

### **Conclusion**

An observer of worship services at MMC would conclude the worship music style is largely characterized by contemporary Christian music and hymns. MMC defined its inclusive worship in the worship services according to generational preferences. These included hymns for the first generation immigrants and contemporary Christian music for the second generation.

Upon further analysis, I discovered inclusive worship practices emerged in the extended greeting time, some originally-composed songs and call-and-response songs, an ethnic rhythm instrument, and a few multiethnic worship team members, although multiethnic leadership was primarily visible in areas other than on the worship team during my research.

Ongoing attempts to affirm its ethnic identity centered on the African Sunday school class where older immigrants gravitated to sing in the Krahn dialect and to teach and converse together. Occasionally, Missions Sunday worship included African traditional worship music, dancing and ethnic instruments. On these occasions, adults and students participated and a majority of the congregation joined in affirming the Africans with rhythmic clapping.

Services at MMC were conducted in English and the American church identity emerged as most prominent judging from the majority of songs of the contemporary Christian music genre. MMC's Assemblies of God denominational identity influenced their music choices to a limited extent.

MMC reflected all five characteristics of heavenly worship as indicated in Revelation—an inclusiveness, Christ-centered, worship as response, instrumental and vocal music given high priority, and costly worship.

## CHAPTER VI

### METRO MULTIETHNIC CHURCHES SURVEYED

In May 2008 I commenced the second phase of research by sending worship music surveys to 100 pastors of multiethnic churches in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota area. I also sent surveys to the 100 worship leaders of these churches (Appendix C, Worship and Music Survey for the Multiethnic Church). My purpose was to study the role music plays in worship across the broader range of Protestant multiethnic congregations in this geographic area, drawing data from these two different leadership roles within the churches. The survey measured attitudes towards and behavior regarding the inclusiveness of multiethnic worship within these Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area multiethnic churches. It also measured worship practices that affirm ethnic diversity and worship music that fosters unity in these churches. I aimed to gain a larger amount of data regarding actual worship practices and then to compare and contrast the results with my findings at Minneapolis Multicultural Church, the first phase of my research. In this chapter, I will explain the survey findings. In Chapter VII, the results of both types of data will be compared and the research questions answered.

The data base of multiethnic churches was obtained from John A. Mayer of City Vision, a local non-profit ministry that compiles data on the changing nature of the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area for strategic planning by the Christian church. Returned surveys yielded eight churches that had either closed or their mail was not deliverable. After the four-week data collection process, of the 184 possible surveys, 36 completed surveys were received for a 19.6% response rate. Of these 36, two surveys

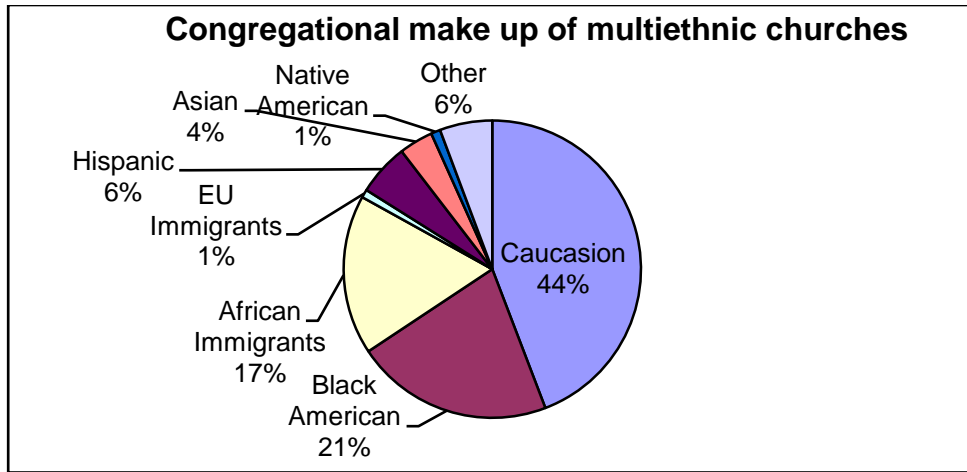
were disallowed from analysis because the churches' ethnic make-up was over 90% of one ethnic group.

All 34 surveys were analyzed together and recoded with a computer statistical program made by SPSS, commonly used software to analyze statistical data in academia and market research. On two key questions, pastor's responses were compared with worship leaders' responses. Some questions requested ratings on a scale of 1–10, some involved making an appropriate choice, and others were open-ended soliciting a written response.

Given the relatively low response rate and thus low sample size, I recognize limitations exist in drawing definitive conclusions across the entire population of multiethnic churches with any significant level of reliability. However, this being the first multiethnic worship music survey of protestant churches in this geographic area, it will begin the process towards understanding the role of music by suggesting certain leanings of the data, and will point towards certain basic understandings of emerging multiethnic churches in this geographic area.

## CHARACTERIZING MULTIETHNIC CHURCHES

First, in order to understand the basic composition of these multiethnic churches, pastors and worship leaders were asked to characterize the multiethnic/multicultural make-up of the church they serve. We noted in chapter one, "Emerson and Kim define a multiracial church as consisting of at least two major racial groups with neither representing more than 80% of the whole" (quoting myself page 6). Caucasian population in these 34 multiethnic churches averaged 44%, with Black American and African Immigrant population combined averaging 38%.



***Ethnic Composition Comparisons in Multiethnic Churches***

Further comparison of Caucasian population with other ethnicities in these churches suggested there were two kinds of multiethnic churches represented in our sample, one with a majority of Caucasians and one without a majority of Caucasians. The majority (62%) of churches in our sample reported fewer than 50% Caucasians in their congregations.

Table 1. Caucasian Population in Multiethnic Churches

	N of Churches	% Other Ethnicities
Non-Caucasian majority	21	62
Caucasian majority	13	38
TOTAL	34	100

When comparing this multiethnic make-up with the general population, in chapter 2 we noted, “Davis (2003) reinforces the need for multiethnic churches citing census data that 37.4% of the US population is composed of people of ethnic diversity” (quoting

myself chapter 2, page 15). For the greater metro area of Minneapolis-St. Paul, ethnic population totals more than 20% of first and second generation immigrants, previously noted in chapter one (Mayer 2007). Interestingly, the Caucasian-majority multiethnic churches in our sample are more multicultural than the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro ethnic population, but amazingly close to ethnic population distribution in the United States.

African immigrants represented the third largest ethnicity in the multiethnic churches in our sample. Since my first-phase research had commenced at a congregation with a majority of African immigrants, I further analyzed whether African immigrants identified more often with the Caucasian majority multiethnic church or with the Black American majority multiethnic church. Table 2 suggests, for the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area, African immigrants tend to gravitate towards Caucasian majority multiethnic churches.

Table 2. Ethnic Composition Viewed Through the Lens of a Super Majority

Dominant Ethnic Composition 60% or greater	Af. Im.	Cauc.	Blk.Amer.	Eu.Im.	Hisp.	Asian	Nat. Am.	Other
African Immigrant	68.8	27.5	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5
	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Black American	1.0	18.8	77.0	0.0	1.4	1.0	0.2	0.6
	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Caucasian	4.8	68.8	7.6	2.7	7.6	0.1	0.5	8.0
	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0	11.0
Asian	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	75.0	0.0	0.0
	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Split (no super majority)	19.6	39.2	19.5	0.0	7.7	3.4	2.2	7.1
	13.0	13.0	13.0	13.0	13.0	13.0	13.0	13.0
Total	17.3	44.0	21.4	0.9	5.6	3.7	1.0	5.7
	34.0	34.0	34.0	34.0	34.0	34.0	34.0	34.0

From the first line of Table 2, we note that when African immigrants are a super-majority of the congregation, 60% or more, Black Americans are rare, only 1.3%. When

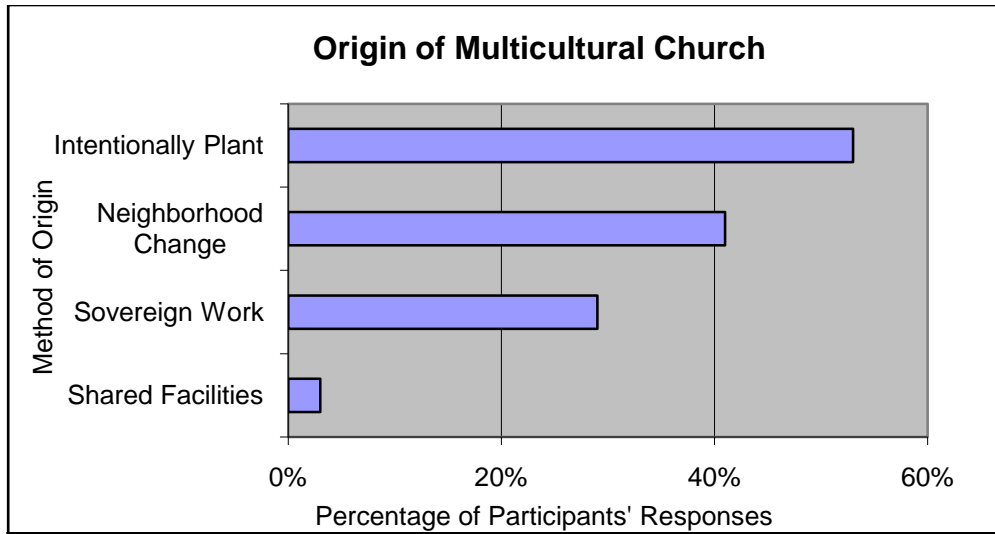


Black Americans are a super-majority in the congregation, that is 60% or more, African immigrants are rare, only 1%.

Also, Table 2 indicates in churches where African immigrants comprise the majority, few other ethnicities, except Caucasian, are present. Note the statistics at the top of Table 2: 68.8% African immigrants, 27.5% Caucasian, 1.3% Black Americans and 2.5% other ethnicities. Note the second line statistics for Black American majority church: 77% Black Americans, 18.8% Caucasian, and only 1% African immigrants. This supports that African immigrants tend to gravitate towards Caucasian majority multiethnic churches, and MMC, case study in the first-phase of research, fit that model when the immigrants began arriving. (It has since transformed into an African-immigrant majority multiethnic church.)

### ***Church Origin***

Leaders were asked how the church they serve became multicultural. Taking into account that several leaders chose more than one reason, 53% indicated the church intentionally set out to plant a multicultural church and 41% cited the neighborhood changing. Only one church indicated several congregations share the same facility, or what is considered the multi-congregational model (Davis 2003). The data suggests we have multiethnic model churches in the sampling, which Davis defines as “ethnically diverse, meets together, uses one language with worship services designed to minister to the variety of groups” (Davis 2003, 118).



### IMPORTANCE OF MULTIETHNIC MUSIC TO LEADERS

Recognizing the influence leaders' attitudes exert on the church overall, pastors and worship leaders were asked to rate the importance they place on multiethnic worship in the church on a 1–10 scale. With "1" meaning they strongly *disagreed* and "10" meaning they strongly *agreed*, 68% of the respondents rated multiethnic worship as very important in the church ("8" or higher) and 88% enjoy music from different cultural backgrounds very much ("8" or higher). The questions did not specify whether this rated the importance of multiethnic peoples worshiping together or whether the responders agreed multiethnic worship music must include diverse cultural musical styles. However, these ratings from multiethnic church leaders do indicate a strong attitude of valuing the multiethnic church movement, which we would expect.

Leaders' attitudes toward affirming ethnic diversity in worship musical style was further covered in the following questions. When asked if the church they serve should be more proactive in promoting multiethnic worship, 62% answered "yes." Additional understanding of the value of multiethnic worship to leaders was gained from their

comments covering the spectrum from “We are about right,” to “We’ve tried and are in process,” to “We are not intending to become multiethnic in style of music.” Further, 86% of pastors responded, “yes,” when asked if it is important to consider ethnic/cultural background when selecting music for worship. One remark indicated, “Yes... but one should be sensitive to what’s the best common expression of worship.” Written responses referenced the formation of ethnic music groups or praise teams as methods they had used to promote multiethnic worship within the congregation.

*Summary:* Leaders of multiethnic churches mostly value multiethnic worship and feel it very important to consider ethnic/cultural background when selecting music for the church. Their positive attitudes form a strong basis for growth of diverse worship in multiethnic churches.

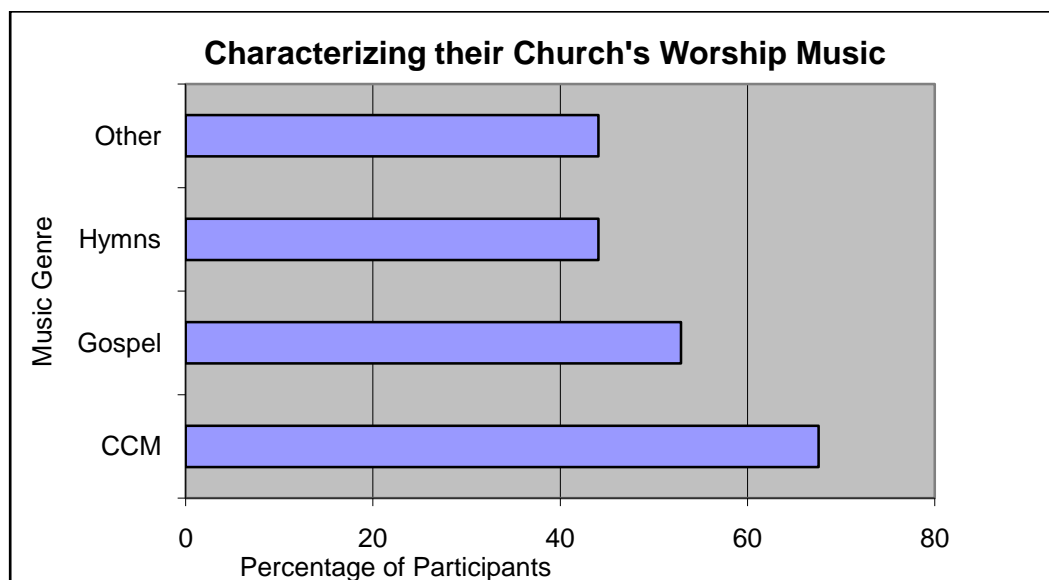
## WORSHIP GENRES IN MULTIETHNIC CHURCHES

To determine if one particular genre of music functioned best in multiethnic churches and how inclusive their music was, pastors and worship leaders were asked to characterize their church’s worship music. Four categories were listed as possible choices—Contemporary Christian Music (CCM), Gospel, Hymns, and “Other,” in which they could write a selection. They were not given definitions at this point; they were only asked to self-identify their worship genre.

Later in the survey, I requested that each leader list a specific song facilitating congregational participation, and then I identified (coded) the music genre of each (See Appendix D, Genre of Songs Facilitating Congregational Participation). Their self-characterization of their worship genre compared to my coding of songs that unify the congregation will be noted below.

Contemporary Christian music would include songs heard commonly on religious radio stations and on CDs, made popular by Christian pop/rock recording artists over the past two decades. Gospel music, in the broad sense, would include black gospel and white gospel, characterized by texts speaking of the individual's personal spiritual experience. Commonly sung in Protestant churches, gospel hymns and songs are strophic, including verses and a chorus. Black gospel music rose around the turn of the twentieth century as the Pentecostal revival blossomed. Black gospel borrowed elements from 'white' gospel music, but added its unique rhythmic, melodic and harmonic qualities (Eskew et al. 2008). Hymns include more formal religious song focused towards God and often accompanied by an organ or piano.

The majority of leaders chose more than one category to characterize their music. Four pastors and four worship leaders, 24% of participants, selected contemporary Christian music (CCM) as the only music they sing. A majority of leaders responding (67.6%) indicated their church does sing CCM music in worship.



Interestingly, although CCM is very popular and its use is widespread, over 53% of these multiethnic leaders indicated their church sings gospel music. Additionally, 44% incorporate hymns and other music styles in worship. Other genres include a great variety from jazz and heavy metal rock to global and classical. Possibly, this variety of song genres in the multiethnic church reflects the cultural diversity of this metropolitan area.

Further, to determine if genre/style of music is determined or affected by the multiethnic make-up of the church, the two questions were cross tabulated—multiethnic make-up and worship genre of the church’s worship music. The results tend to suggest churches with a lower Caucasian population (non-Caucasian majority) have a higher use of Gospel music and hymns than Caucasian majority churches. However, the sample size is too small to determine its connection with confidence.

Table 3. Worship Genre in Churches with High/Low Caucasian Population

Worship Genre	Non-Caucasian Majority	Caucasian Majority
	<i>Percentage of Respondents Singing a Genre</i>	
CCM	66.7%	69.2%
Gospel	57.1%	46.1%
Hymns	47.6%	38.5%

*Note:* Respondents could choose multiple genres. Therefore, percentages will not add to 100.

Further results below will expand upon the possibility of the gospel music genre as useful in promoting a sense of congregational unity within multiethnic churches.

*Summary:* Multiethnic churches incorporate the contemporary Christian music genre widely. Additionally, the gospel music genre emerged as worthy of further testing to determine its role in the multiethnic church. Finally, the majority of participants chose more than one genre to characterize their music, possibly indicating they have incorporated a blended style.

## MUSIC'S ROLE IN UNIFYING THE CONGREGATION

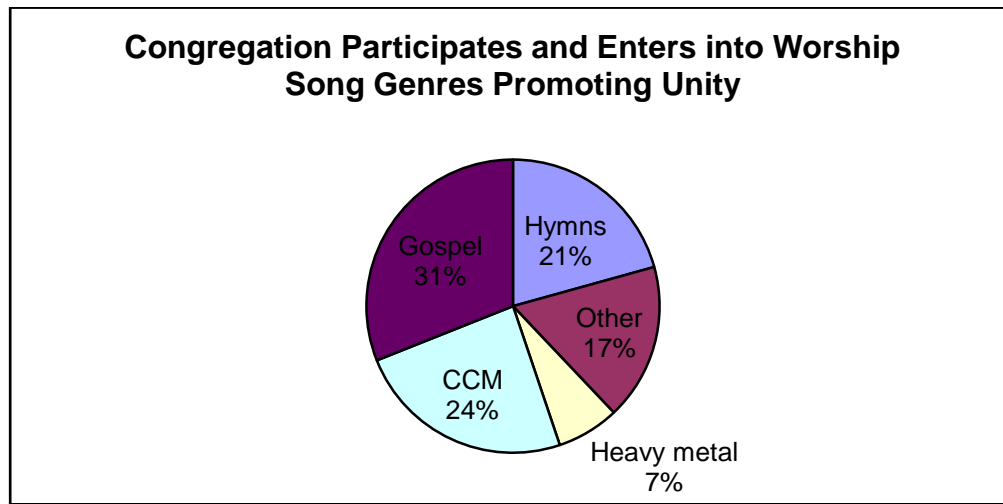
### *The Importance of Music in Uniting Congregation*

We turn next to music's role in uniting the multiethnic church. In chapter two, I referenced the tension between promoting unity versus celebrating diversity. Through the survey, I attempted to determine the importance of music in uniting multiethnic churches and asked respondents to rate their agreement of its role. 73% of participants awarded an "8" or higher rating to agreeing worship music plays a huge role in uniting the multiethnic church. While supporting this high rating, 57% of leaders, mostly pastors, listed other factors playing a larger role in establishing unity other than worship music. Pastors cited these factors: a genuine heart for the people, fellowship/relationships, multicultural leadership, and the Word—liturgy, teaching and preaching—as unifying the multiethnic church. Only one worship leader cited a factor other than worship music as unifying the congregation—people's desire to BE a multiethnic community [participant's emphasis]. The importance of multicultural leadership will be developed below.

### *Specific Songs that Unify*

To test specific songs and genres that united the congregation, pastors and worship leaders were asked to list one or two specific songs a majority of the

congregation participates and enters into worship. From my experience as a church musician, I then coded their songs by indicating genre, whereas in a previous question each leader characterized their church worship music genre. If I questioned a song's genre, I deferred to their previous characterization of their church music. This chart indicates most songs the participants listed as unifying these multiethnic congregations fit the gospel music genre.



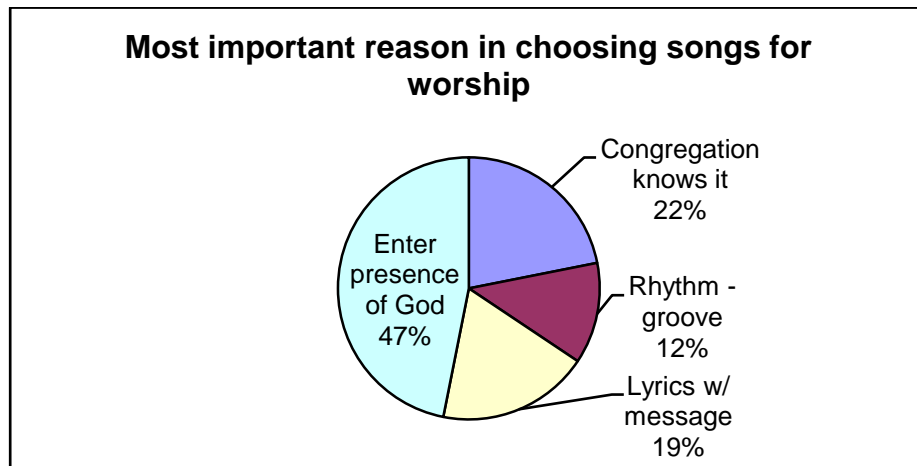
There was little duplication in actual song titles the leaders submitted indicating the uniqueness of each congregation. It is vitally important to note diverse songs were listed as uniting the congregation (included in “Other” genres 17%). Titles included “Bayete Kosi” (South African), “Thuma Mina” (“Send Me, Lord,” South African), and “Santo, Santo, Santo” (“Holy, Holy, Holy,” Argentine). Some multiethnic churches have incorporated diverse songs into worship and these songs are now known and sung by the majority of the congregation.

*Summary:* Several diverse songs were listed as unifying these multiethnic congregations. From my coding of their songs that unify the congregation, it appears a gospel genre song does so most often. Comparing this with their self-characterization of

their worship genre, they had chosen CCM as characterizing the worship music sung most often in these churches.

### ***Reason for Choosing Song***

Leaders were asked their most important reason in choosing a song for worship and were given four possible choices. The most common reason chosen was that the congregation enters into the presence of God. This would indicate pastors and worship leaders value music’s unifying role in congregational worship as centering on its spiritual value more than on its rhythm or groove, which would reveal its style or genre.



The reasons leaders gave for choosing worship songs were also analyzed by comparing pastor responses with those of worship leaders to determine if ministry responsibility determined their answer to any extent. The response, “enter into the presence of God” still received highest ratings for both pastors and worship leaders. Notably, however, their second highest selection differed for each office. Pastors more often answered, “The lyrics dovetail with the message of the day,” in keeping with their role of preaching the message. Worship leaders responded with their second highest



selection, “The congregation knows it and will participate,” in keeping with their role of facilitating congregational participation in singing.

*Summary:* The gospel music genre emerged as a possible unifying genre for these multiethnic churches. Although this may reflect the African American influences within these churches, it is nonetheless noteworthy and would merit further study. The spiritual value of worship songs to unify multiethnic congregations outweighed song genre.

## AN INCLUSIVE WORSHIP STYLE

Inclusiveness in multiethnic worship was referenced in previous chapters as vital for all participants to sense they belong within the worship space. The survey measured these aspects of inclusive worship—amount of change in worship style and methods used to develop inclusive worship. Amount of change in worship style was compared to origin of the church and to church ethnic composition to determine any possible connections.

### *Changing the Worship Style*

Altering the worship style is a commonly used method to signal inclusive worship in a multiethnic church (Yancey 2003). In my first research phase, I had questioned the music director about this issue of change in music with minimal response. With our changing communities in the Minneapolis-St. Paul greater metro area, this was an important issue in determining whether multiethnic church pastors and worship leaders had adjusted the church music style in response to changing ethnicities to develop more inclusiveness. In the survey, when asked whether music at the church has changed since the congregation became multiethnic, 80% of participants rated “some” to “very much” change in music since becoming multiethnic. The converse holds true also, 20% of

respondents indicated they had changed the church's music little or not at all. Whether these churches with little change had begun as multiethnic with multiethnic worship from the start, as two pastors indicated; or whether some felt it not important to change the worship style or format was unclear. Therefore, I analyzed how the churches became multiethnic in comparison with their degree of musical change.

### ***Changing Worship Style Connected to Church Origin***

To explore this possible connection between degree of musical change and how the church became multiethnic, I analyzed question three below.

*Question 3:* The church you serve became multicultural through:

- a. Intentionally setting out to plant a multicultural church
- b. The neighborhood changing
- c. Several congregations meeting at different times in same building
- d. Sovereign work of God/happened in His way and timing

27 of the 34 respondents (79%) chose "a" and/or "b" by answering either "a or b"

or both "a and b." In other words, the church became multicultural through intentionally setting out to plant it and/or the neighborhood changing. Those leaders answering both "a and b" on question three also rated the highest amount of musical change at their church.

To clarify, those whose churches became multiethnic through intentionally planting a multiethnic church and the neighborhood changing said music at the church has changed very much since the congregation became multiethnic. This is the highest amount of musical change in these multiethnic congregations for all responses in relation to how the church became multicultural. It is the consistency of high answers given to change within group four, in Table 4, that merits attention.

Table 4. Musical Change in Worship Related to Origin of the Church

Group	Origin of Church	Avg. Amount of Change Mean
1	Neither a nor b	3.8/10
2	a=yes, b=no	4.8/10
3	a=no, b=yes	5.7/10
4	Yes a + b	9.3/10*

*Note:* Origins of the church: a=intentionally setting out to plant a multicultural church, b=the neighborhood changing  
 \*Group 4 is different from each of the other three groups (one-way ANOVA, LSD post hoc test ( $p < .01$ )).

Thus one of the most important questions on the survey (change in music), resulted in statistically significant data when compared to church origin. I would suggest churches that intentionally started as multiethnic have considered the diverse cultural needs of their community from the start and have taken steps to construct the music accordingly. They would mostly likely be inwardly motivated to make the multiethnic church succeed. As for neighborhoods changing, census data clearly indicates this has occurred in the metro area over the past two to three decades. I would consider this to be external motivation, from outside the church. We can conclude that both these origins of multiethnic churches in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area, when combined, form a strong impetus for musical change leading to inclusive worship.

***Music Change Connected to Church Ethnic Composition***

The analysis of musical change suggested another comparison with ethnic composition of these churches. Possibly the churches with the highest degree of musical

change were adapting to the newest wave of immigrants—the African immigrants. Thus I compared musical change to multiethnic church composition to determine if there is a positive correlation between the percentage of African immigrants and the higher degree of musical change. In fact, there is positive Pearson Correlation at .29 which is higher than all other ethnicities compared (approaching statistical significance  $p < .108$ ). Due to small sample size, it limited the ability to draw definitive conclusions, but it may be supportive of the connection.

Table 5. Musical Change Related to Church Ethnic Composition

Ethnic Group Dominant	Avg. Amount of Change Mean	N of Churches
African Immigrant	6.5/10	4
Black American	4/10	4
Caucasian	6/10	10
Asian	3/10	1
Split (no super majority)	5.6/10	13

Note: The highest average amount of musical change has occurred at the African Immigrant majority multiethnic churches.

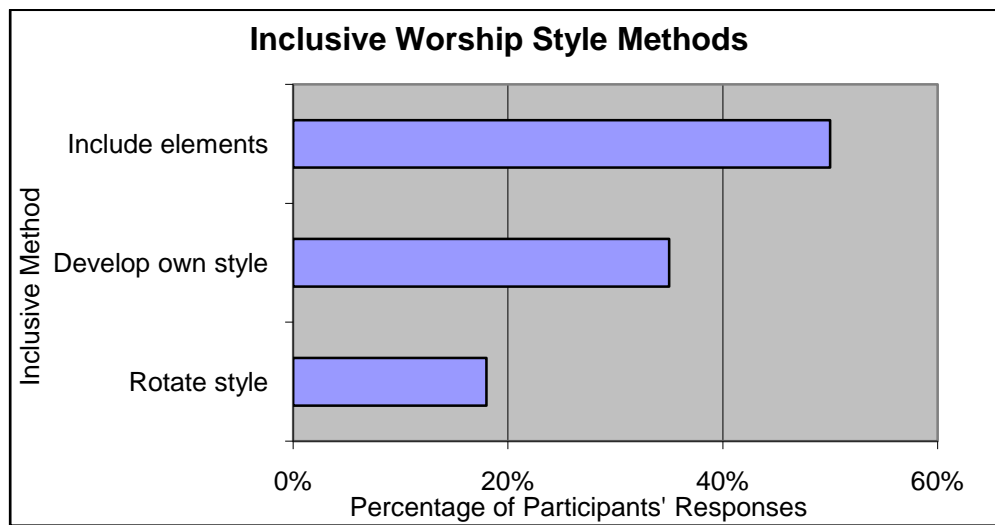
To further test these connections, the individual surveys of the pastors and worship leaders represented by this group of high degree of musical change, were perused to determine any commonalities. These four churches included a strong contingent of African immigrants or African Americans. Their written responses referred to African music styles in their worship. It suggests they are making intentional efforts to

blend worship formats or as one wrote, “we are multiethnic on an on-going every Sunday basis.”

### ***Methods Used to Develop Inclusive Worship***

In order to determine useful methods for developing inclusive worship, pastors and worship leaders were requested to list specific methods they have used to include the multiple ethnicities in the worship service. This list included multiethnic leadership, development of ethnic music groups, changing the songs, using songs with lyrics in different languages, and including ethnic instruments (See Appendix E, Useful Methods for Developing Inclusive Worship). Their responses have been incorporated into chapter six in answer to the research question on inclusive worship.

Further, leaders were asked to rate the three most common worship techniques used to develop an inclusive worship style (Yancey 2003). 50% of pastors and worship leaders include elements of different cultures in their services. One pastor expanded by writing that a church can only effectively include two or three ethnic backgrounds in each service. 33% of leaders indicated their congregation has developed its own worship style.



*Summary:* Including elements of different cultures in worship services was the most common method used by participants to signal an inclusive worship style. Congregations whose origins centered on intentionally starting a multiethnic church AND the neighborhood changing reported the highest amount of change in music styles. The consistency of answers within this group of high musical change, in contrast with the other groups, produced statistical significance. The connection of worship music change in response to a particular ethnicity present within the congregation was less clear.

### ***Worship Leadership***

Two further methods of signaling inclusiveness in the multiethnic church include ethnic worship leadership and use of ethnic instruments (see below). The literature indicates ethnic worship leadership is vital (Yancey 2003) and many survey participants noted the importance of visible multiethnic leadership on the worship team and in choir. Leaders were asked to rate how often persons from the various ethnic groups serve on the platform and/or in worship leadership. They were given three choices: seldom, once in awhile, or most every Sunday. 79% responded, “most every Sunday.” This seemed a higher percentage than expected upon considering my observations of the case study worship team. What was unclear in the question, was the exact definition of worship leadership. Interpreted broadly, it would include worship team, prayer team, communion servers, scripture readers, and anyone on the platform. Narrowly, it would include only worship team members. It appears leaders defined it broadly.

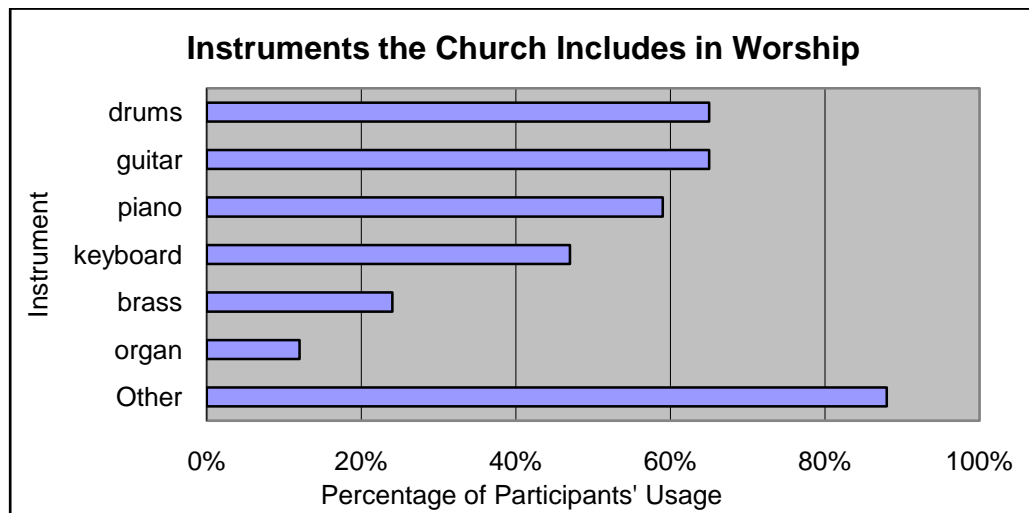
The question also did not specifically define “most every Sunday.” Participants could have defined it as “once a month” to “three times a month” and still it would be considered more than the next category on the survey, “once in awhile.” Yet, the results

would have differed considerably in analysis. Additionally, the question did not define whether multiethnic participation was to be representational of the congregation’s make-up or simply to include at least one multiethnic person on the platform, irrespective of the cultural make-up of the congregation.

*Summary:* Taking the participants’ responses at face value, I determined that multiethnic church leaders in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area understand the importance of multiethnic leadership for the sustainability of the multiethnic church. Additionally, leaders wrote of the importance of the individual’s qualification to serve in leadership, not just as a means to fulfill a quota for multiethnic persons on the platform.

### ***Instruments in Worship***

Diverse or ethnic instrumentation can also signal an inclusive worship style in multiethnic churches. Worship leaders were asked to list instruments the church they serve uses in worship.



Notice, drums and guitars each were listed by 65% of the worship leaders, with piano just less than that at 59%. During coding, the category “drums” only included responses that specifically read, “drums.” Other individual percussion instruments were

listed in “other.” Possibly the most interesting information here is the “other” instruments being used in worship because “other” represents the highest percentage of usage.

“Other” included strings, percussion and turntables, djembe, saa-saa, congas, harmonica and accordion. One worship leader wrote, “all forms of instruments, drums are important.”

*Summary:* Numerical results and written responses indicate utilizing ethnic percussion instruments and drums would be a good method to foster an inclusive worship style in these multiethnic churches.

## CONCLUSION

In the survey, I set out to determine attitudes of multiethnic church leaders towards multiethnic worship in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. The results indicate pastors and worship leaders in participating churches view multiethnic worship as very important and value music from different cultures very highly.

Secondly, I wished to determine inclusive behaviors in these multiethnic churches. The most common method used to develop an inclusive worship style was to include elements of different cultures in the worship services. This took various forms such as including multiethnic leaders on worship teams and in other worship leadership, incorporating different styles of music, using songs with lyrics of another language, and including ethnic instruments in worship. Drums and percussion were listed most often as inclusive instruments. Some participants listed resources they consult for multicultural worship methods. In view of practices they have encouraged, the majority of these church leaders still believe their church should be more proactive in promoting multiethnic worship.



The issue of changing worship genre/style to signal inclusiveness was discussed at length, concluding that the highest degree of musical change was experienced in multiethnic churches that started intentionally as multiethnic in addition to, or possibly in response to, neighborhood change.

Worship practices encouraging ethnic diversity in multiethnic churches took various forms. Churches developed music groups such as an African Praise Team or a Philippine Dance Team. They also included songs with Spanish lyrics, for example, to affirm the Hispanic members of the congregation. Several participants indicated the necessity of being intentional in this process of promoting multiethnic worship.

Lastly, worship music genres fostering unity yielded contemporary Christian music which is sung widely. Additionally, the gospel music genre emerged as a possible unifying genre in the multiethnic church. This would merit further study including precisely defining gospel music and conducting on-site observations of several multiethnic churches in the metro area. Leaders stressed the multiethnic church is all about the ministry of reconciliation and the most important requirement is that music connect the congregation to God's Spirit in worship. Additionally, two written comments referenced the importance of multiethnic worship as displaying the diversity and one-ness that gives a glimpse of heaven's worship. The spiritual value of music to unify the multiethnic congregation in Christ outweighed song genre or style.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this final chapter I address the research questions in two parts. Part I will focus on the case study of Minneapolis Multicultural Church. Part II focuses on the survey conducted with the multiethnic churches in the Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul Metro Area. Finally, I will compare the results from each of these parts, examining similarities and making comparisons. I will then connect MMC to the broader population of multiethnic churches utilizing both the qualitative and quantitative data to gain an integrated answering of the research questions. In conclusion, I will discuss the dynamic role the ethnomusicologist may hold within the multiethnic church setting in the United States and give recommendations for further study.

### SUMMARY OF RESEARCH RESULTS

Liesch's (1988) heavenly worship characteristics served as the model for the multiethnic church as representative of heavenly worship. Each of these five characteristics was present in the case study of MMC: worship is inclusive, Christ is the unifier of the Church, worship is response, singing and instrument playing hold a significant role, and worship is costly.

The second phase of research--the survey--resulted in three noteworthy findings. First, African immigrants tend to gravitate more readily to a Caucasian-majority multiethnic congregation than to a Black American majority multiethnic congregation. Secondly, inward and outward motivations for origin of a multiethnic church form a strong impetus for change in worship style leading to inclusive worship. Third, the

spiritual value of worship songs to unify the congregation outweighed song genre. This finding was supported both by focus group participants at MMC and by church leaders of metro multiethnic churches surveyed.

Finally, where one type of research was deficient, the other filled in the gaps for a thorough answering of all research questions. For example, in measuring inclusive worship, the survey yielded more complete results; whereas, observing worship as response was only visible in the case study.

In the following section, I provide a more thorough discussion of specific issues related to each research question.

## RESEARCH ANSWERS

**#1 What causes the multiethnic Christian church to thrive and what role does worship music play in the process?**

### **Minneapolis Multicultural Church**

MMC developed into a thriving multiethnic church in a northern suburb of Minneapolis over the past decade. Several keys contributed to its successful transformation: pastoral leadership, African leadership, inclusive worship elements in the services, and denominational loyalty.

Pastor Bob Schmitt desired that MMC become multiethnic as the neighborhood began changing. He articulated his vision to the leaders and the congregation. Through his present preaching, Pastor Schmitt seems to connect with the immigrants' experiences. He facilitates the responsive nature of worship at MMC very adeptly. He prompts the congregation to worship God and they respond to these promptings, particularly

surrounding prayer times. Additionally, he facilitates the flow of the worship service with his skillful saxophone music.

A key African community leader filled a vital role at MMC for six years, helping to gather a large core of immigrants to the church. The resulting sense of community reinforced their sense of belonging at MMC. After he passed away, a young African man was elected to fill this role on the board at MMC. He has facilitated the process of the ethnicities working together.

MMC thrives through including elements in the worship services that affirm and include the immigrants, demonstrating a willingness to adjust the service through an extended greeting time, and African leadership in aspects of the worship service. MMC also affirms the immigrants' ethnic identity through an African Sunday School class and multiethnic worship on Missions Sunday.

The music director articulated her definition of MMC's inclusive worship style, "The older people like the hymns, the younger ones like contemporary, so we do both." Singing Pentecostal and evangelical hymns connects the ethnicities and resonates with first generation immigrants as music they know. Contemporary music in the worship services signals to the younger generation this is their church and their church is attuned to contemporary American society. I will further discuss MMC's level of inclusiveness below at research question #2.

The immigrants hold a strong loyalty to the Assemblies of God denomination. That loyalty initially drew the immigrants to MMC and presently establishes them in this Assemblies of God congregation within their community. Denominational loyalty, although not articulated often, forms a strong foundation for their participation in MMC.

## **Thriving Metro Area Multiethnic Churches**

Multiethnic churches across the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area thrive best when their origins derive from both inward and outward motivation, when in certain ethnic groupings and when they consider the cultures of those present. Most churches participating started as multiethnic from their inception. The majority of Minneapolis-St. Paul area multiethnic churches cited “intentional church planting” as the most common origin of their church. This suggests denominations are making decisions to reach the diverse peoples of our communities.

Further, the survey suggests the multiethnic church seems to thrive best in certain ethnic groupings. African immigrants tend to gravitate more readily towards European American and Hispanic majority multiethnic churches than to Black American majority multiethnic churches. That finding is confirmed at MMC, which began its transformation as a European American majority church and has now transitioned into an African immigrant majority multiethnic congregation.

Multiethnic churches flourish by considering the culture of those present. 68% of respondents rated multiethnic worship as very important in the church. 88% further indicate they enjoy music from other cultures very much. 86% of pastors responded that it is very important to consider ethnic/cultural backgrounds when selecting worship music. In fact, three ethnically diverse songs were listed as unifying the congregation—songs the majority of the congregation knows and enters into worship. Written responses reinforce the importance that leaders assign to the dual role music holds in both affirming ethnic identity and promoting a unified congregational identity. One worship leader wrote,

We ask the congregation to sing a lot! We don't have a choir, so each Sunday the congregation sings an entrance into worship, 3 hymns, offertory and offertory response, which varies. By having so many opportunities to sing, we can do a better job with providing diverse music.

Another responded, "Music is very important to all cultures. Many multicultural churches are not very intentional about integrating different forms of cultural music." A pastor warned of confusing generational differences with ethnic differences.

You cannot effectively reach out to more than three or four ethnic groups in one service. This is a social matter, not a musical/worship issue. 2) A culture is much more than its musical expression. 3) Your location defines also the make-up of your church. 4) Don't confuse generational differences with ethnic differences.

*Summary:* Upon comparing the case study with the survey results, MMC's origin exemplifies "neighborhood change," the multiethnic church emerging and thriving through changing demographics, whereas the larger community shows intentional church planting has occurred most often. The case study indicates worship music was chosen primarily along generational lines, whereas metro multiethnic church leaders articulate their understanding of the need for diverse music. Song choices and what they reveal about the churches' values will be discussed in answer to question #4. The survey did not measure denominational loyalty in the multiethnic church. Some survey respondents reported denominational resources they use to promote multiethnic worship. While denominational loyalty factored significantly into the stability of MMC and somewhat into its music choices, further study of area multiethnic churches, including onsite observations, would be needed to determine the denominational effect on their choices of worship music.

## **#2 How does an inclusive worship style help to facilitate multiethnic worship?**

### **Minneapolis Multicultural Church**

Altering the music style, including instrumentation, is a common method used to signal inclusivity along with including multiethnic leadership on the platform (Yancey 2003). Inclusive worship speaks volumes: “we like your music,” “we are willing to change so all will sense they are welcomed into worship,” and “we value you in leadership.” Whereas MMC’s music director described her philosophy simply as hymns for the older generation and contemporary Christian music for the younger generation, varied styles and genres of music were observed in the services spanning contemporary to black gospel and hymns to African traditional songs with accompanying rhythm instruments. In the typical worship service, however, contemporary Christian music and hymns predominated. African traditional songs emerged in the African Sunday School class, the occasional Missions Sunday service and the special occasion celebration. Inclusive worship included the youth choir’s ‘black gospel’ songs, call-and-response style songs, and the pastor’s originally composed praise songs.

Carol, music director at MMC, indicated she has altered the worship music little since the church became multiethnic. She is cognizant, however, of what the varying age groups prefer and uses their general preferences to guide her music choices. Inclusive worship at MMC means including songs for the various generations. As for engaging the generations in the worship service, my observations on site noted that people of all ages and ethnicities sat comingled throughout the sanctuary participating in singing. Additionally, all worshipers in the focus group, including students, gave high ratings of satisfaction with worship and music at their church. However, observed response of the

congregation was greatest on Missions Sunday when they worshiped to African ethnic music and the gospel music of the youth choir.

As for teaching African songs in the service and including African worship leadership on the Sunday morning worship team, MMC does this infrequently. The present and previous music directors both desire more integration of worship styles. MMC does, however, incorporate non-musical elements into its worship services that welcome the varied ethnicities and contribute to inclusive worship.

Musical instruments played in worship at MMC included tambourines, saa-saa (beaded gourd idiophone), drums, piano and guitars. African members played three of these--a tambourine and the saa-saa on Missions Sunday and a guitar one Sunday. More traditional instruments or additional percussion instruments would facilitate a more inclusive worship style.

As for multiethnic musicians on the worship team, more are needed at MMC. With the African majority nearing 75%, an observer can quickly ascertain this ambivalence. Worshipers also noted this lack in their ratings of worship at their church. Later I learned that three multiethnic worship team members were on maternity leave. MMC has included multiethnic leadership in areas other than music, such as prayer team members and communion servers, and this visibly signals a level of inclusivity in the worship service.

### **Inclusivity in Greater Metro Area Multiethnic Churches**

The survey of multiethnic churches measured inclusive practices and methods of developing an inclusive worship style. 'Including elements of different cultures in the worship service' was selected the most common method to achieve inclusivity (50% of



respondents). When pastors and worship leaders listed a song that facilitates the congregation entering into worship, 31% indicated it would be a gospel song. Further, when asked to rate how often persons of the various ethnic groups serve in worship leadership, 79% of leaders responded, “Most every Sunday.” Written responses from the pastors and worship leaders reinforced over and over this need to “include visible leadership of the different races.”

Churches surveyed refer often to singing lyrics in different languages as a method of fostering inclusive worship. Spanish was the language listed. These churches would be including Hispanics, the largest immigrant people group in this metro area. This specific need does not exist at MMC where English remains the common language, aside from the African Sunday school class where they sing and communicate in the Krahn dialect.

Musical instruments in metro multiethnic churches include an overwhelming percentage of drums and percussion instruments. Worship leaders responding to the survey listed drums and guitar being used most often at 65%. The “other” category lists a wide range of musical instruments from strings to brass, but also includes rhythm instruments along with congas, djembe, and other percussion which contribute to an inclusive worship style. One participant specifically stated that drums are important in multiethnic worship.

Inclusive worship differed in each multiethnic church as indicated by the wide variety of individual songs that promote unity. Their response indicates pastors and worship leaders are striving to include people helping them sense they have truly worshiped God in a culturally appropriate way. “People will be drawn to music that

they're used to hearing and that can be enough to get someone interested..." a leader noted.

Finally, regarding the issue of changing their worship to become inclusive, 20% of leaders indicated their church had not changed its music at all since becoming multiethnic. The converse holds true also—80% have made “some change” to “very much change” in worship music. Some leaders have tried with some success or others tried with resistance. The responses span a continuum from, “We are **not** [emphasis mine] intending to become multiethnic in style of music. All of the musicians are Anglo and ethnic music would be difficult for them to do well”; to “We are multiethnic on an ongoing, every Sunday basis.” Those churches who experienced the most change in music most often originated as intentionally planted.

*Summary:* We notice a difference at this point between the greater church and MMC, which has focused primarily on music each generation prefers. Inclusive worship is emerging in these metro multiethnic churches as church leaders recognize, “Our world and our neighborhoods ARE multiethnic.” This inclusivity most often means including multiethnic peoples in worship leadership, changing language of songs, incorporating different music styles, or changing song genre.

### **#3 How does worship music affirm the identity of the varied ethnicities?**

#### **Minneapolis Multicultural Church**

Music can make a powerful assertion of identity, especially when considering its emotional aspects, (Stokes 1997, 48). On special occasion services, MMC celebrates its

African cultures through music. Mostly women participants, from several African nations, unite in a traditional worship expression of their pan-African heritage.

“Will you videotape us? [our singing and dancing],” the deacon’s wife asked me. This signaled the importance of this occasion for these Liberian immigrants at MMC. Yet, they needed much encouragement to sing *their* music. The European American leaders reminded the Africans each week of their desire to hear them sing on Missions Sunday. When the Africans did sing and dance to “We will praise our God,” ladies dressed in their colorful African dresses and head coverings, it sparked the congregation to response of “Amen,” spirited clapping, swaying, and raising hands to affirm the participants.

The lyrics were begun by one voice and echoed by the others in a call-and-response style accompanied with singing, dancing, clapping, and rhythm instruments. To the first generation immigrants, this music resonated with them as music they knew, a level of comfort and security. At the same time, it strengthened their spiritual connection through lyrics of praise to God occurring as part of their worship service in their church.

This was a special occasion for MMC. On a more frequent basis, however, aspects of the worship service affirm the participatory nature of the African cultures. Their responses of “Amen” and “Hallelujah,” clapping, and audible prayers reaffirm their ethnic identity, this is who they are.

### **Affirming Ethnic Identity in Greater Metro Area Multiethnic Churches**

To determine how multiethnic churches in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area affirm ethnic identity, I note again the leaders’ high level of enjoyment of music from different cultural backgrounds (88%) and that 86% of pastors feel it is important to

consider ethnic/cultural background when selecting music for worship. Several leaders facilitate the development of ethnic praise teams, such as a Philippine Worship Dance Team and African Praise Team with singers, instrumentalists and African songs. One said they “Pay attention to balancing styles of music, choosing music from different cultures; learn about worship and music in different cultures.” Another church has developed a worship mission statement (below) to reflect their affirmation and appreciation for the varied cultures within their congregation.

We are committed to glorify God in our worship ministry through accurately communicating biblical truths, artistically representing His Character, creatively incorporating our congregation’s rich cultural diversity, and enthusiastically encouraging all present to earnestly and joyfully worship God.

One participant affirmed all cultural expressions of worship provided they fit in harmony with the Bible.

We can be as creative as the Lord leads in developing worship settings that meet the needs of God’s people...All worship expressions should be allowed as long as they are in harmony with the Biblical criteria.

Another stressed the importance of affirming through ethnic music, “but not at the expense of what God wants. It’s not about beat or personal preference, rather about the hunger for God.”

*Summary:* Leaders of multiethnic churches realize the vital necessity of incorporating music of the ethnicities, but warn of the need for balance so worship of Christ is central and Biblical truth is communicated in the process. MMC reaffirms ethnic identity through music and worship occasionally on Missions Sunday by giving the immigrants a place to sing “their song” thus reaffirming their ethnic connection.

**#4 What does their worship music reveal about what is important to them and thus reinforce/reveal their sense of identity?**

**Minneapolis Multicultural Church**

Multiple identities emerge and intertwine in the worship setting. From observations of songs selected for worship services and interviews with leaders, MMC values family, their Pentecostal heritage, their spiritual heritage, the contemporary American church and their own uniqueness as a multiethnic congregation.

From the leaders' viewpoint, MMC values blended worship. They value meeting the needs of all congregational ages plus the varied ethnicities. They sing songs appealing to their older members (hymns) and songs for their younger members (contemporary Christian music).

MMC values its Pentecostal heritage. Hymns, whether gospel or traditional, comprise the second most common music genre MMC sings in worship. The gospel hymns suggest their identity as a Pentecostal congregation. Singing of contemporary worship songs is also a common practice in Assembly of God churches. Remember Sue told me, "they were Assembly of God in Liberia, and they will be Assembly of God in America." Assemblies of God identity was additionally reinforced through other non-musical factors as the A/G literature taught in Sunday school and the responsive "Amen" and "Hallelujahs."

Further, MMC values their spiritual heritage. The traditional Christian hymns sung on Communion Sunday, such as "The Old Rugged Cross," conveyed the meaning of the *ritual* to the congregation. The congregation, as a whole, sang these hymns confidently. The hymns not only unified the congregation but also connected this

multiethnic congregation with the historical Christian church throughout the centuries and the greater evangelical Church around the world.

MMC sings Christian contemporary worship songs most often suggesting their desired identity as Americans in the contemporary church. The second generation, particularly, desires to be part of their contemporary culture. Two of their favorite songs include, “Shout to the Lord” and “Days of Elijah.” MMC includes their younger members, through worship music. In fact, the majority of the songs sung while I attended would be categorized as contemporary Christian music. This suggests that their desired identity as members of the American contemporary church supersedes their other worship identities.

A unique component of MMC’s worship music is its originally written praise songs. These function as calls to worship, successfully engaging the congregation to participate by singing and clapping. The songs are quickly learned and easily sung so everyone can participate, thus facilitating unified worship. I asked the music director whether these songs, such as “Ev’rybody Praise the Lord” copyrighted in 1998, were composed to meet a specific need in worship with the immigrants in mind. She said “No, they were just given by the Lord, no special purpose in mind.” To my knowledge, these original praise songs are not sung at other congregations, so their use at MMC reflects something of the unique identity of this congregation.

Finally, MMC values its multiethnic identity, to a limited degree. Affirming the African pan-ethnic identity on Missions Sunday reinforced MMC’s collective identity as a multiethnic church and in the process unified the church. As cited earlier, Foley discovered a similar phenomenon (Foley 2007, 188–190). MMC included African

worship songs on Missions Sunday sung by all desiring to participate. Although occurring infrequently, from my observations, this worship experience not only affirmed the Africanness of its immigrants, it also reaffirmed the church's collective identity as a multiethnic church. The congregation was standing and clapping as its African participants sang, danced, played instruments and praised God. No other worship experienced at MMC evoked that amount of visually observed corporate participation. "We needed that. We haven't had that for awhile," Bill, the usher, told me excitedly as he clapped along to African worship. His beaming smile reinforced his words.

### **Worship Identity in Greater Metro Area Multiethnic Churches**

To answer the question of what worship music reveals about the identity of multiethnic churches in the greater metro area, I first note how commonly contemporary Christian music is sung in these churches, possibly revealing the importance of the contemporary American identity. Then I note the emergence of gospel music as a possible unifying genre.

The majority of churches chose contemporary Christian music as one of the styles of worship music they sing. As with MMC, it is possible these churches desire to identify primarily with the contemporary American Christian church. Also, it is probable that they desire to retain the younger generation in the church acknowledging their sons' and daughters' desire to participate in American culture. One church leader wrote of this tension between blending styles towards becoming more multiethnic, versus the necessity of considering their youth and children.

We are working toward a blended style of worship. But there is some resistance from a few Anglo members. And some reluctance to teach African style songs, because of the difficulty of translating and the angularity of Ethiopian melodies;

and because their youth and children are more interested in contemporary American Christian styles of worship and music.

Interestingly, when I coded the style of worship songs pastors and worship leaders identified as songs a majority of the congregation participates or enters into worship, the majority of songs were categorized as gospel style. This included gospel style hymns and gospel style contemporary worship songs. Possibly, the pastors and worship leaders would code their styles somewhat differently from me. However, when the style of a particular song they listed was not apparent, I deferred to their worship characterization from a previous question.

The gospel song genre may indicate the influence of the ethnic population on the worship music of the multiethnic churches in this metro area. Perhaps leaders are finding this a viable worship music style to adopt for the multiethnic church as a method to gain unified collective worship. More research on site at local multiethnic churches would be needed to determine if that is, in fact, occurring.

*Summary:* MMC sings hymns and contemporary Christian music primarily, along with some originally composed music. The greater metro multiethnic churches use predominantly gospel songs and CCM. However, overall contemporary Christian music strongly remains the common genre to reinforce the desired identity of multiethnic congregations as members of the contemporary American church and, in the process, will help them retain the second generation.



**#5 How does their worship music contribute to the congregations' gaining a unified collective identity in Christ?**

Unity emerges as vitally important in the multiethnic church and in the universal church. Its Biblical foundation was articulated in the words of Jesus and reinforced by the Apostle Paul.

Jesus values oneness and unity of believers so highly because it exemplifies His relationship with His Father (John 17:20–23 NIV), it distinguishes believers as like Christ, it displays a witness to the world, it represents what God has restored to his alienated human creation, and it strikes at the core of why the Church exists. In Christ, the dividing wall between races and ethnicities has been broken down, the Apostle Paul attested (Eph. 2:14 NIV). Ethnicities who had been divided and separated were brought together, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13 NIV). For the universal Christian church, our unity is based in Christ, the Savior of ALL [emphasis mine] (Eph. 4:4 NIV). These Biblical truths form the basis of unity in Christian worship.

Connected to unity are the terms, “collective identity,” referred to by previous authors. “The terms *collective identity* suggest something that is shared or owned by more than one person” (Arellano 2007, 100). However, just because oneness is the prescription for the Christian church, does not mean it naturally occurs, but collective identity must be carefully constructed as Benham (2004, 62) determined, “it is socially constructed rather than naturally generated.”

Further, Corbitt (1998, 72) indicates music’s role of providing unity in Christian worship centers on the texts, the emotion, songs of personal testimony, the connecting of

worshippers to Biblical history, and through connecting the congregation to the broader faith community.

### **Minneapolis Multicultural Church**

At MMC, contemporary Christian music united the congregation. The texts and tunes commonly heard on Christian radio and on CDs were readily recognized. During an offering, the congregation spontaneously began singing “Here I am to Worship” as the DVD played. No worship leaders prompted this response.

The text and emotions of the youth choir’s Black Gospel songs also united the congregation. As the students sang animatedly, “This is the way we praise Him, clap our hands,” the great majority of the congregation responded enthusiastically with clapping. The congregation affirmed the second generation. In so doing, they collectively worshipped as a congregation.

A call-and-response style song of personal testimony united the MMC congregation. One service concluded with the Victory Chant. The lyrics, “Hail Jesus, You’re my King,” initiated from the worship team and were answered strongly by the congregation.

Singing hymns unified MMC by connecting the congregation to the greater faith community. The congregation knew the words and tunes and participated collectively. This was particularly evident on communion Sunday when they sang confidently “The Old Rugged Cross” and other familiar hymns. Both the music director and the previous music director had stressed, “They know the hymns.” These songs connected them to the broader Christian faith community around the world and across the generations.

Additionally, one worshiper related a most meaningful worship experience when “one

time the (almost) whole congregation broke out in worshipful music and praise to the Lord—in unity—without being led into it (after singing).”

### **Unity in Greater Metro Area Multiethnic Churches**

Music unifies multiethnic churches in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area. Church leaders rated the role music plays in establishing congregational unity. 73% strongly agree music plays a huge role. 57% indicated other factors also play a large role in establishing unity, citing multicultural leadership and the Word as two of these factors.

One church referenced previously envisions singing as a unifier, “We ask the congregation to sing a lot.” Another indicates, “We try to sing gospel songs.” And another sees the meaning of the songs as unifying the congregation, “Repeat new songs during the following Sunday worship services, so that the church members can become familiar to the new style/rhythm and language, and so they can find spiritual meaning to the songs we are singing.” Another encourages everyone to engage in worship, “... We encourage everyone to be as actively engaged in worship as they choose to be—through music, shared prayer, comments about sermon and the Scripture lesson.”

To focus on specific worship music that unified the congregation, leaders listed a song in which the majority of the congregation participates. There was little duplication of song titles from church to church, yet the leaders knew what songs facilitated unified collective worship in their particular congregation. One pastor wrote,

...One should be sensitive to what’s the best common expression of worship. This will be different for a church in the ex-urbs as opposed to the inner city, one that is primarily white, African, Hmong, black, Ukrainian, etc.

The majority of pastors and worship leaders cited the spiritual value of songs as the most important reason for choosing a song for worship, “the congregation enters into

the presence of God.” We noted in chapter six, page 106, that the spiritual value of worship songs to unify multiethnic congregations outweighed song genre. A leader attested to this fact by answering whether the church should be more proactive in promoting multiethnic worship with, “We choose to promote Christ and Him glorified.” We conclude that worship of Christ is the unifying center of the multiethnic church.

Reconciliation also recurs as a common goal in multiethnic churches. And reconciliation means restoring peoples/races to harmony and communion, in other words, becoming one in worshiping Christ.

The mature church engages in the ministry of reconciliation, which is what the multicultural church movement is all about.

Being a smaller church, under 100, it is imperative for individuals and families to buy into the message (word) of reconciliation and seeing the body of Christ as one and not divided by color or economics. There has to be side by side service of multiethnicities to forge friendships versus hand outs/downs from one “well off” or suburban church to “needy” or poor inner city ministries.

*Summary:* Unified worship at MMC was observed particularly through the hymn song genre as the congregation sang confidently during the communion commemoration. The greater multiethnic churches expand upon unity beyond song genres to their mandate of reuniting the races in worship. Music plays a prominent role in unifying the congregation if leaders find the common expression of worship enabling them to construct the collective identity of the church. The collective identity is based on their common faith in Christ. The song texts unite for a spiritual oneness helping the congregation to enter God’s presence. Reconciliation of races and ethnicities in worship becomes their overarching goal.

## #6 **How does multiethnic worship display characteristics of heaven’s worship?**

In chapter one, we adopted Mr. Liesch’s (1988) affirmations of Revelation worship as our model for determining heaven’s worship characteristics. We now apply this model to the multiethnic church.

- 1 Its inclusivity—all are within the worship space.
- 2 Christ is the unifier of the Church.
- 3 Worship is response.
- 4 Singing and instrument playing hold a significant role.
- 5 Revelation worship is costly.

### **Minneapolis Multicultural Church**

#### ***Characteristic 1—Its inclusivity—all are within the worship space.***

Heavenly worship is revealed throughout the book of Revelations. We note particularly its inclusive nature in Revelations 5. The worship setting pictures four living creatures around the throne of God. Twenty-four elders surround them. When they lead in worship, they praise God and the Lamb, standing in the center of the throne, who made it possible for people from every tribe, tongue and nation to worship God. Then all the angels of heaven bow down in worship, followed by every creature in heaven and on earth bowing before the throne of God and the Lamb in worship. Every nation, tongue and tribe of people is included in worship along with all beings in heaven and all created ones on earth.

At MMC, African immigrants along with African-Americans, Asian-Americans and European-Americans join together in worship. All ethnicities sit comingled throughout the sanctuary. Pastoral staff is European-American; other leadership throughout this multiethnic church includes male and female, Africans, Caucasians and

people of mixed ethnicity. The adult Sunday school class is also integrated and taught by a Liberian member.

Pastor Schmitt reinforced this inclusive attitude in his preaching. He referenced the book of Revelation, “God is doing some amazing things. He is bringing us together as various cultures to worship Him. In Revelation we read, ‘I saw a great multitude in heaven from every tribe and tongue bow down in worship to the Lamb’” (his paraphrase of Rev. 5:9 NIV). He was preaching a series on the book of Revelation.

This inclusivity was sensed by the worshipers. One referred to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration as a meaningful worship time with inclusive songs.

The worship was amazingly well-organized, multiculturally rich and inclusive songs of different decades and was richly blessed by the two or three hours of worship as we thanked God for the many blessings this congregation has received from him.

Another said spiritually meaningful worship at MMC included, “the good preaching of God’s word from Pastor and good music from different cultures.”

Inclusive worship at MMC also embraced and affirmed its African members on Missions Sunday as they sang and danced to the accompaniment of rhythm instruments and clapping. This multiethnic church, as a microcosm of heaven’s worship, places all nations, tongues and peoples inside the worship space, participating and worshipping God.

### ***Characteristic 2—Christ is the unifier of the Church.***

In Revelation’s unveiling of heavenly worship, Christ the Lamb, in the center of the throne, holds the central place in worship as the focus of all creatures in heaven and on earth. “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the

throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders” (Rev. 5:6 NIV). All are facing towards God/the Lamb and all are bowing to worship God/the Lamb.

MMC’s pastor indicated this Christ-focus in his sermon, “In the book of Revelation, the war in heaven is over who will control the universe—who will be worshiped.” Christ is the focus of this multiethnic church. Over and over, worship song lyrics emphasize this message at MMC.

- That’s why we praise Him
- Wonderful Merciful Savior
- Hail Jesus, You’re my King
- On Christ the solid rock I stand
- There is none like You

During one offering song, several worshipers around me began spontaneously to sing along to the lyrics:

Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down, here I am to say that You’re my God... I’ll never know how much it cost to see my sins upon that cross (Hughes 2000)

The communion *ritual*, remembering Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, unified the congregation through the music and through its religious meaning. “We regularly have singing that moves me. During communion we have extended worship often. This is a blessing,” one worshiper reaffirmed. Another worshiper added that spontaneous worship centered on the Lord united the congregation. “...One time the (almost) whole congregation broke out in worshipful music and praise to the Lord—in unity—without being led into it (after singing).” MMC’s worship clearly focused on Christ through its songs, preaching and prayers.

***Characteristic 3—Worship is response.***

In Revelation worship the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders initiate worship by falling down before the Lamb and singing their praise (Rev. 5:8 NIV). Then the angels respond in worship to God followed by “every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing” (Rev. 5:13 NIV) their response of worship to the Lamb. Heavenly worship results when worshipers follow in response to the prompters who initiated it. These ever-enlarging concentric circles of participants form a crescendo of praise that results in a transcendent experience of worship. Additionally, throughout Revelation, God initiates action and the people respond.

Response in worship was particularly evident at MMC. Around prayer time or at service’s conclusion, the pastor initiated worship with, “Hallelujah!” As if he was coaching them, the congregation responded verbally to his prompting with “Hallelujah!” After a lady gave her testimony of God healing her, the pastor asked, “That’s something to be excited about, isn’t it?” The people responded, “Amen!”

Additionally, responsive worship was observed at the end of a service when the congregation sang “Great is Thy Faithfulness.” The pastor led into a repeat of the chorus. After the song, response erupted with audible “Hallelujahs” and praise to God on the part of the pastor and the congregation. Pastor Schmitt led the chorus again and extended the ending. The pastor ended the song with “Hallelujah” and the congregation responded again, “Hallelujah!” It sounded reminiscent of the heavenly worship vision with the corporate *Amens* and *Hallelujahs* in response to the Pastor’s promptings (Liesch 1988, 237).



***Characteristic 4—Singing and instrument playing hold a significant role.***

In contrast to the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament which do not specifically mention instruments in worship, singing and instrument playing are given paramount roles in Revelation worship (Rev. 5:8–13; 14:2–3 NIV). As previously stated (chapter four, page 53), at MMC “worship music connected the entire first half of the service as a finely woven thread.” Worship music, including singing and instrumental music, serves as the connecting framework for entering into worship, for praying, and for giving. It also fills the sanctuary with sound as a vehicle to convey God’s presence to the congregation. “We regularly have singing that moves me,” a worshiper concluded.

A unique feature at MMC was Pastor Schmitt’s skillful saxophone playing, during worship, as a member of the worship team. He stood at the side pulpit in his place of authority. The ethos of the saxophone sound moved the congregation, particularly surrounding prayer time. The Pastor’s location on the platform and the fact the lead spiritual authority played the instrument, gave a significant role to instrumental playing in the service. The Petrof piano played by the music director also held a central position on the platform with its lid wide open. The singers’ location in center front on the platform also indicated the significant role music held in the worship service. Yet, it did not overtake the significance of the Word. The pastor preached for a considerable amount of time and the people listened intently, signifying their honor of the Word and of their spiritual leader.

***Characteristic 5—Revelation worship is costly and so is multiethnic worship.***

Heaven honors costly worship. The martyrs who gave their lives because of their faith in Christ are given an honored position near the throne in heaven and a continual function of praising and worshiping the Lamb (Rev. 7:13–15; 14:1–4 NIV).

Likewise, multiethnic worship has been costly. MMC leadership experienced significant frustrations in working together with the ethnicities to unify a diverse congregation. “The cultural differences are so great and they are where you least expect them,” the music director lamented. In spite of the difficulties, MMC has taken significant steps to welcome the immigrants (extended greeting time and multiethnic leadership in various areas) and to affirm their ethnicity (Missions Sunday and special event music). They have moved beyond some rough times and are working together, as mentioned above in chapter four. Multiethnic worship is costly emotionally as it moves people out of their relational comfort zone.

MMC has also invested their time and financial resources into this congregation. The church runs a bus each week into the community to transport people to worship. They have not moved away from the community in response to changing demographics. Instead, they have embraced the community.

*Summary:* MMC resoundingly displayed all five characteristics of heavenly worship in this multiethnic church.

## **Heavenly Worship Characteristics in the Greater Metro Area Multiethnic Churches**

The greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area multiethnic church speaks to the issue of Revelation worship as indicated in the following survey results. Some characteristics were not observable due to the survey method of data collection.

### ***Characteristic 1—Its inclusivity—all are within the worship space.***

The 34 multiethnic leaders participating in the survey painted a picture of multiethnic worship that is inclusive of the ethnicities. Congregational make-up of multiethnic churches in this geographic area yielded an average of 56% ethnicities other than Caucasian. These included Africans, Asians, Hispanic and Native American peoples. The pastors and worship leaders also listed specific points of action they have taken to include the multiple ethnicities in the worship service/worship music (See Appendix D, Useful Methods for Developing Inclusive Worship). One responded, “We have always done things to include multiethnics. That is our mission!!” They have taken steps to include all within the worship space. Yet, when asked if the church should be more proactive in promoting multiethnic worship, 62% said “Yes.” Some reasoned,

Yes, because that’s what heaven will look like.

Yes, the Gospel is for all nations!

Some pastors gave balance to this issue by indicating the focus must not be on making worship diverse for its own sake.

To plan to be multicultural/multiethnic can be a God directive. However I feel that we could also hinder the gospel by emphasizing that all churches must intentionally and regularly participate in such diverse worship on an ongoing basis. That approach I feel would be a mistake. Ultimately, it is the work of the Holy Spirit that should bring people together to worship and work together.

Multiethnic churches often referenced the need for inclusive worship and have taken steps to include all within the worship space recognizing inclusion characterizes heavenly worship. Yet, they quickly add a reminder of their central focus—Christ.

***Characteristic 2—Christ is the unifier of the Church.***

Church leaders pointed us towards Christ as the central focus of the multiethnic church. “We choose to promote Christ and Him glorified,” one pastor responded to the question of whether the church should be more proactive in promoting multiethnic worship. Another leader responded, “Yes, it brings all into seeing Jesus in worship.” The consensus was that it is important to consider ethnic/cultural issues when selecting worship, in other words to be inclusive in worship style, “but not at the expense of what God wants. It’s not about beat or personal preference, rather about the hunger for God.”

When asked their primary reason for choosing a song for worship, they most often indicated it was that the song helps the congregation enter into the presence of God. Therefore, pastors and worship leaders pointed us directly to Christ as the central focus and unifier of the multiethnic church.

***Characteristic 3—Worship is response.***

Worship as response was not directly observable through the survey. More research would be needed on site at these multiethnic churches to determine this worship characteristic. My case study at MMC, however, illustrated that worship of God occurred in response to prompters who initiated it.

***Characteristic 4—Singing and instrument playing hold a significant role.***

Singing is vitally important at these multiethnic churches as indicated by this response, “We ask the congregation to sing a lot!” Every worship leader answering the survey, except one indicating a new church, listed at least one instrument the multiethnic church uses in worship of God. The majority listed several instruments they use to worship God. Additionally, a wide variety of instruments were included: guitar, drums, percussion, strings, brass, and ethnic instruments. A pastor wrote, “all worship expressions should be allowed as long as they are in harmony with the Biblical criteria (one example, ‘...in spirit and in truth’).”

***Characteristic 5—Revelation worship is costly and so is multiethnic worship.***

Costly worship, experienced in the frustrations of diverse ethnicities working together, was not as observable from the survey as it was in the case study. A leader did write of “...some resistance from a few Anglo members and some reluctance to teach African style songs” in the process of working towards a multiethnic blend of worship. We additionally remember that 20% of these multiethnic churches had not changed the church’s music at all since becoming multiethnic. We noted possible reasons in chapter five. Clearly, this suggests the difficulties multiethnic churches experience in determining the best response to changing demographics. Change is costly and the challenge remains to change worship music enough to affirm the ethnic groups present and yet develop unified corporate worship. Multiethnic worship costs each ethnicity their comfortable way of ‘doing church’ in order to construct the collective identity of a multiethnic church.

*Summary:* Four of the five heavenly worship characteristics were also perceivable from the survey of multiethnic churches. Worship as response would only be observable on site.

## FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Multiethnic churches across the greater metro area have taken significant steps towards developing inclusive worship. The most important conclusion MMC afforded was the discovery that its worship displayed all five heavenly worship characteristics: inclusive worship, Christ as the unifier of the Church, worship as response, singing and instrumental music playing a significant role, and costly worship. MMC provided the real-life backdrop against which these characteristics were displayed week after week.

MMC does, however, differ from the greater metro multiethnic churches in its limited definition of inclusive worship. Based almost exclusively upon generational differences, their inclusive worship could be expanded by adding more musical elements signaling inclusive worship—more ethnic worship team leadership, more ethnic percussion instruments, and more integrated song genres.

Multiethnic churches across the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota metro area defined inclusive worship more widely and afforded a list of practices they incorporate into worship. Most importantly, the issue of changing the music style in response to changing demographics emerged in multiethnic churches as significant when compared to origin of the church. Leaders rated the amount of musical change consistently higher in churches that originated through inward motivation (intentionally setting out to plant a multicultural church) **and** in response to outward motivation (the neighborhood changing).

## **Role of Ethnomusicologist**

A researcher is cautioned against disturbing the research site more than necessary in order to experience it and preserve its integrity. What actually occurred, my presence at MMC was viewed in a positive light and I became a catalyst to encourage the majority immigrant group to once again “sing their song.” Additionally, I did not expect the positive influence the music researcher can have in encouraging music education. A worshiper asked me to suggest a place her son could receive guitar lessons in a guitar class setting.

A trained ethnomusicologist could dynamically assist the multiethnic church in these and other important ways. Of prime importance, an ethnomusicologist is interested in diverse ethnicities and is trained in various world music styles. An ethnomusicologist would start making music with people of diverse ethnicities and would ask to be taught their songs.

An ethnomusicologist would teach and articulate the role of worship in the multiethnic church and would investigate multiethnic music resources. He/she would be able to ascertain practices within the congregation that are inhibiting the congregation from becoming more inclusive in their worship and would be equipped to help them incorporate positive change.

Uniting the ethnicities by finding the best common form of worship expression would be prioritized for the congregation. This would require discussion with members and would possibly include surveying the congregation to determine what music style/genre fulfills that role.

The ethnomusicologist would come alongside church musicians helping them to evaluate their habits and practices, to begin including ethnic musicians on the worship team while expecting them to meet necessary qualifications both musically and spiritually. Ethnic rhythm instruments would be encouraged as well as the development of an ethnic praise team, praise band or dance team. The ethnomusicologist would assist the worship team in teaching the congregation worship songs from the varied traditions represented.

And finally, the ethnomusicologist would encourage the congregation to affirm the ethnicities present in worship, for when the multiethnic congregation corporately affirms the diversity present in worship, they simultaneously reinforce their unique identity as a multiethnic church. Frequency of this occurrence naturally resides with leadership in each individual multiethnic church.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The first phase of this study focused largely upon African immigrants as part of the multiethnic church. Further study is needed of other immigrant groups with significant populations in the greater metro area of Minneapolis-St. Paul to determine if they are being reached by the multiethnic church movement and whether music or language is hindering them from participating.

To facilitate greater response on a survey, an online survey should be emailed to participants. Online reporting and tabulation should also be developed for ease in analyzing. Additionally, it would be prudent to meet with a statistical analyst prior to development of the survey tool to ensure that the tool measures exactly what is intended and any possible cross-tabulations that could be important.



Finally, the gospel music genre could be studied further, onsite at several multiethnic churches, to determine its function as a unifying music genre. Further study should also focus on musical instrument usage in the local multiethnic churches of the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area with onsite observations of their use and function.

My thesis studies proved invaluable giving me the tools to meet the multicultural changes occurring in our communities and thus in our churches. It reinforced the challenges inherent in the multiethnic church movement. I discovered the gospel music genre is utilized in the multiethnic church as a possible unifying genre. I learned how to properly conduct research, how to access literature online, and how to write research results academically. I took steps toward becoming bi-musical by taking salsa piano lessons. This program afforded me additional tools within my discipline to meet this twenty-first century.

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

You are invited to participate in a study of the multicultural/multiethnic church. I hope to learn the effect worship music has on establishing unity of the congregation and on affirming the identity of the various cultures. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you worship at a multicultural congregation. This research is undertaken as a project I am researching for my Master’s Thesis in ethnomusicology at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota.

If you decide to participate, I will interview you asking questions regarding how you would characterize the music at your church, your participation in worship and its spiritual meaning in your life. This will take 20 minutes of your time.

Any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only aggregate data will be presented. This research will be useful to ethnomusicology students and to the growth of the multicultural church. While risk is minimal, some of the questions may produce stress or be deemed potentially divisive. If you feel this is the case, you may skip any question.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with your church in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without affecting such relationships.

This research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel’s Levels of Review for Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participants’ rights or wish to report a research-related injury, please call John Benham at Bethel University, 651.635.8015.

You are offered a copy of this form to keep.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness (when appropriate)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Interviewer

APPENDIX B  
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MMC WORSHIPERS  
(adapted from “Worship Rating Form” by Brenda Aghahowa)

I attend Minneapolis Multicultural Church: \_\_\_\_\_ Nearly every Sunday  
\_\_\_\_\_ Once a month \_\_\_\_\_ Other

I have attended MMC for: \_\_\_\_\_ Less than 1 year \_\_\_\_\_ 1–3 years  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3–10 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10–25 years \_\_\_\_\_ more than 25 years

Rate the following on a scale of one to ten.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10  
Least satisfied most satisfied

**Worship at our church:**

Is well put-together \_\_\_\_\_

Is of appropriate length \_\_\_\_\_

Nourishes me spiritually \_\_\_\_\_

Utilizes men and women of the various cultures in  
worship leadership \_\_\_\_\_

**Music in our church’s worship:**

Has spiritual power or “anointing” \_\_\_\_\_

Helps me enter into the presence of God \_\_\_\_\_

Helps me sense I am part of the Church Body \_\_\_\_\_

Uses instruments I enjoy hearing/playing \_\_\_\_\_

Includes a good selection of hymns \_\_\_\_\_

Includes a good selection of contemporary songs \_\_\_\_\_

Includes a good amount of congregational singing \_\_\_\_\_

My most memorable or spiritually meaningful worship service at MMC was:

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---



8. List at least one specific thing you and/or the music pastor-worship leader have done to include the multiple ethnicities in the worship service/worship music.

---

9. Choose the worship-planning technique that best illustrates the method you and your staff have utilized to develop an inclusive worship style.

Church develops own style & musicians write songs for congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Include elements of different cultures in the services \_\_\_\_\_

Rotate the worship style (one service Latino, one African, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

10. List one or two songs a majority of the congregation participates and enters into worship.

---

11. Your most important reason for choosing a song for worship:

Possible reasons:

- a. The congregation knows it and will participate
- b. The congregation responds to the rhythm/groove
- c. The lyrics dovetail with the message of the day
- d. The congregation enters into the presence of God

12. Persons from the various ethnic groups serve on the platform and/or worship leadership?

Seldom            once in awhile            most every Sunday            (circle one)

13. Should this church be more proactive in promoting multiethnic worship? Why/why not?

---

14. Is it important that the church consider ethnic/cultural background when selecting music for worship? Why/why not?

---

15. Other thoughts:

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Thank you very much for your help with this study of worship in the multiethnic church!



8. List at least one specific thing you and/or the pastor have done to include the multiple ethnicities in the worship service/worship music.

---

9. Choose the worship-planning technique that best illustrates the method you have utilized to develop an inclusive worship style.

Church develops own style & musicians write songs for congregation \_\_\_\_\_

Include elements of different cultures in the services \_\_\_\_\_

Rotate the worship style (one service Latino, one African, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

10. List one or two songs a majority of the congregation participates and enters into worship.

---

11. Your most important reason for choosing a song for worship:

Possible reasons:

- e. The congregation knows it and will participate
- f. The congregation responds to the rhythm/groove
- g. The lyrics dovetail with the message of the day
- h. The congregation enters into the presence of God

12. Persons from the various ethnic groups serve on the platform and/or worship leadership?

Seldom          once in awhile          most every Sunday          (circle one)

13. Should this church be more proactive in promoting multiethnic worship? Why/why not?

---

14. What instruments does the church use in worship music?

---

15. Other thoughts:

---

Thank you very much for your help with this study of worship in the multiethnic church!

APPENDIX D

GENRE OF SONGS  
FACILITATING CONGREGATIONAL PARTICIPATION

Pastors Listed These Songs:

<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Hymns</b>
Call Him Up	Children of the Heavenly Father
I Go to the Rock	Doxology
Jesus Can Work it Out	Majesty
Lord, You are Good	Oh, for a Thousand Tongues
Victory in Jesus	
We Lift our Hands in the Sanctuary	

<b>CCM</b>	<b>Other</b>
Above All	Let There Be Peace
Agnus Dei	Santo, Santo, Santo (Argentina)
Days of Elijah	
How Great is Our God	
I Will Call Upon the Lord	<b>Heavy Metal</b>
Lord, I Lift Your Name on High	Eternal Life
Open the Eyes of My Heart	Hosanna

Worship Leaders Listed These Songs:

<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Hymns</b>
Because of Who You Are	Amazing Grace
Dance Like David Danced	Come Thou Fount
Do Lord	How Deep the Father's Love for Us
I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me	Old Rugged Cross
Lord, You are Good	Victory Shall Be Mine
Say the Name	
Victory Shall Be Mine	
You are the Living Word	

<b>CCM</b>	<b>Other</b>
Blessed Be the Name of the Lord	Bayete Kosi (S. African)
Come, Now is the Time to Worship	Thuma Mina (African)
Look What the Lord Has Done	We Offer Praise (Spanish)
Mighty to Save	
One Way	<b>Heavy Metal</b>
Open the Eyes of My Heart	Eternal Life
Trading My Sorrows	Step By Step
You are My King	



## APPENDIX E

### USEFUL METHODS FOR DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE WORSHIP

(Gleaned from Pastor and Worship Leader responses on  
Survey of Multiethnic Churches)

#### **Leadership**

- The expectation is set by the pastor.
- To reach anyone we believe you start where the “other” is and build back.
- Put in visible leadership of the different races on the worship team that leads music on Sunday, mix them when possible.

#### **Worship Format/Song Genre**

- Blend traditional liturgy with contemporary format.
- Change worship songs to contemporary.
- Sing gospel songs.
- Pay attention to balancing styles of music, choosing music from different cultures; learn about worship and music in different cultures.
- Repeat new songs during the following Sunday worship services, so that the church members can become familiar with the new style/rhythm and language, and so they can find spiritual meaning to the songs we are singing.
- Deliberately choose songs with different languages, Spanish lyrics mentioned repeatedly. Include several bilingual services a year.
- Use multicultural music and liturgy sources as well as visuals.
- Use African music in various ways.

#### **Musical Groups**

- Facilitate the formation of various musical groups, such as an African Praise Team or a Philippine Worship Dance Team, who perform periodically and at special functions.
- Invite guests to play and sing.

#### **Instruments and Musicians**

- Hire musicians that are capable of playing multiethnic music.
- Encourage ethnic instruments.

#### **Suggested Resources**

United Methodist Hymnal  
Songs of Zion (African American)  
The Faith We Sing  
OneLicense.net

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